

HB2368 as amended

Improving WV Early Childhood Programs

Fact Sheet

HB2368 which requires a report a child fatality and new fatality report from the Commissioner of the Bureau for Children and Families to the Legislative Oversight Commission was amended by the State Senate to include provisions that improve WV's Early Childhood System. **We urge the House to concur in the Senate amendments to HB2368.**

The amendment was adopted unanimously by the Senate and affirms the critical importance of the first years of life and recommends the state establish priorities for the next 10 years to expand and strengthen programs that help young children and their families thrive.

The amendment includes:

- Legislative findings citing research on the importance of early childhood programs.
- Provides for continuance of the WV Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) created by the Governor by 2010 W.V. Executive Order No. 9-10 as required by the Head Start Reauthorization Act and describes membership of the Council.
- Recommends the Council be guided by the following priorities as identified by the Early Childhood Planning Task Force 10-year plan, *"Building a System for Early Success: A Development Plan for Early Childhood in WV"*:
 1. Create an integrated data system across all early childhood programs;
 2. Statewide expansion of West Virginia home visitation program;
 3. Expanded eligibility definition for West Virginia birth to three;
 4. Implementation of quality rating and improvement system, including incentive payments;
 5. Raising family income limits for child care subsidies, and increasing provider reimbursement rates for subsidized children;
 6. Implementing a statewide full-day, high-quality early learning and child care program for three-year-olds;
 7. Improving system planning, evaluation, development and governance;
 8. Expanding perinatal drug abuse prevention and treatment; and
 9. Providing quality tax credits for early childhood programs, staff and families.

The proposed legislation is based on the consensus recommendations of the Governor's Early Childhood Planning Task Force, <http://www.wvecptf.org/>, which included participation from every sector. More than 1,200 West Virginians provided input through community forums, study groups, an online survey and key informant interviews. The Task Force report outlines a proposed 10-year plan to make West Virginia's Early Childhood System the best in the nation.

The findings note that research shows a substantial return on investment with every dollar invested in quality early childhood development programs yielding more than \$5.20 in immediate and long-term savings. Quality early childhood programs outcomes include improved health, school readiness, better support for working families, reductions in child maltreatment, and many others.

For more information please contact:

Jim McKay, State Coordinator, Prevent Child Abuse WV, jim@teamwv.org, 304-617-0099