

**WORKING DRAFT**

HOUSE BILL NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Quality child care incentives.

Sponsored by: Joint Labor, Health and Social Services  
Interim Committee

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to child care facilities; providing for an  
2 early childhood development system within the department of  
3 family services as specified; providing criteria for the  
4 quality rating of child care facilities as specified;  
5 providing incentives for the professional development of  
6 child care staff as specified; providing program priority  
7 for at-risk children as specified; requiring reports;  
8 granting rulemaking authority; providing an appropriation;  
9 declaring legislative findings; and providing for an  
10 effective date.

11

12 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

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14 **Section 1.** W.S. 14-4-201 through 205 are created to

15 read:

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## ARTICLE 2 - EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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**14-4-201. Early childhood development system established.**

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(a) An early childhood development system is created for the purpose of providing quality early childhood development services to children and families. The system shall be administered by the department of family services and shall consist of a quality rating system, support for the participation of children and families in quality early childhood development programs participating in the system, incentives for the professional development of early childhood staff and a public awareness program.

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(b) All rules and regulations that the department promulgates under this article shall be done in consultation with the department of education, the department of workforce services, the department of health and early childhood specialists at the University of Wyoming.

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1           (c) The state's responsibility for payments under this  
2 chapter shall be limited to the amount of funding provided  
3 for the early childhood development system by the state  
4 legislature. The department may receive donations from  
5 foundations or other private sources and may distribute  
6 those in accordance with the provisions of this article.

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8           **14-4-202. Quality Ratings.**  
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10           (a) The department shall establish by rule and  
11 regulation a process for evaluating and rating the quality  
12 of early childhood development programs.

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14           (b) Any early childhood development program defined  
15 in 14-4-101(vi), including preschools and developmental  
16 preschools, may apply to the department to be evaluated and  
17 rated.

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19           (c) The criteria to assess levels of quality shall be  
20 defined by rule and regulation and shall include:

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22           (i) Indicators of quality child care, which  
23 shall include but not be limited to:

24

1 (A) Child to staff ratios and group size;

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3 (B) Staff qualifications and education;

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5 (C) The learning environment, including  
6 positive behavioral supports;

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8 (D) Program management; and

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10 (E) Family involvement.

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12 (ii) Access to developmental services for  
13 infants and preschool children with developmental delays  
14 and disabilities. Children served under the early  
15 childhood development system who qualify for disability  
16 services shall receive these services through a regional  
17 developmental preschool that is supported by state funding  
18 for this purpose, provided the parents or caretaker agree  
19 to these services. These disability services shall not be  
20 reimbursed through system payments provided under W.S. 14-  
21 4-103;

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23 (iii) Access to programs that provide healthcare  
24 or health care coverage for children;

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2 (iv) Access to programs that offer educational  
3 and workforce training, including access to counseling, for  
4 the parents or caretakers of the children being served  
5 under this program;

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7 (v) A partnership with the public health nurse  
8 infant home visitation program that provides assistance to  
9 expectant and new mothers of low income families;

10

11 (vi) Preschool education that offers:

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13 (A) An age-appropriate curriculum,  
14 including positive behavioral supports;

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16 (B) Class sizes as recommended by  
17 professional standards; and

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19 (c) Instruction by a certified teacher with  
20 the appropriate certification or endorsement in early  
21 childhood education.

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23 (vii) Engagement of parents and caretakers in  
24 the provision of early childhood development services,

1 including activities that parents and caretakers can pursue  
2 at home that promote early childhood learning and  
3 development; and

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5 (viii) Other research based criteria that  
6 promote social and cognitive development.

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8 **14-4-203. Program Payments.**

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10 (a) The department shall establish through rules and  
11 regulations a method of providing payments to early  
12 childhood development programs rated under the provisions  
13 of this article to support the participation of children  
14 and families in the programs. The payment to a program  
15 shall be determined by a sliding fee schedule based upon  
16 the level of the program's quality rating and the level of  
17 family income of the participating child.

18

19 (b) In the event state funds appropriated in support  
20 of the early childhood development system are not  
21 sufficient to provide payments for the participation of all  
22 children, payments shall be provided first for the support  
23 of at-risk infants and preschool children.

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1           (c) For the purposes of this section, the term "at-  
2 risk infants and preschool children" means children from  
3 birth through five (5) years of age who have one or more of  
4 the following characteristics:

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6           (i) Residence in a family with income not  
7 exceeding two hundred fifty percent (250%) of the federal  
8 poverty level;

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10           (ii) A parent with a documented history of drug  
11 or alcohol abuse;

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13           (ii) A parent who has been found guilty of a  
14 felony;

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16           (iii) A developmental disability or delay;

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18           (iv) A health related condition that indicates  
19 the child may not arrive at kindergarten with the same  
20 skills or ability to learn as the majority of children  
21 entering kindergarten.

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23           (d) Children who are receiving public funding for  
24 early childhood development services under another state or

1 federal program shall not be eligible for funding for those  
2 services under this article.

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4 (e) In the delivery of services, early childhood  
5 programs that receive funds under this article shall not  
6 discriminate against any individual on the grounds of sex,  
7 color, race, religion, national origin, disability, or age,  
8 other than the age of the qualifying child.

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10 **14-4-204. Incentives.**

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12 (a) The department by rule and regulation shall  
13 establish incentives to encourage the staff of programs  
14 participating in the early childhood development system to  
15 attain certificates or degrees in early childhood  
16 development or a related field. These incentives may  
17 include scholarships and salary enhancements. Payments  
18 under this section shall be conditioned upon:

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20 (i) The recipient of the incentive agreeing to  
21 work for the participating program for a specified period  
22 of time after receiving the certificate or degree; and

23



1           (ii) An in-cash cost sharing contribution from  
2 the program employing the staff member, which may include  
3 financial assistance to the staff member in attaining the  
4 certificate or degree or increased wages or benefits after  
5 acquiring the certificate or degree.

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7           (b) The department may provide incentives to early  
8 childhood programs participating in the system to achieve a  
9 higher quality rating or to provide care for infants or  
10 other children whose care may otherwise be difficult or  
11 impossible to obtain in a community.

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13           **14-4-205. Public Awareness.**

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15           (a) The department shall develop and distribute  
16 materials that:

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18           (i) Promote knowledge of the early childhood  
19 development system;

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21           (ii) Promote an understanding of the benefits  
22 that accrue to children, families and communities from  
23 quality early childhood development programs, as based upon  
24 the latest findings in research reports and studies; and

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2           (iii) Emphasize the importance of parental  
3 responsibility and the involvement of the family in quality  
4 early childhood development.

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6           **Section 2:**

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8           (a) The department of family services shall annually  
9 report to the joint education interim committee, the joint  
10 labor, health and social services interim committee and the  
11 joint appropriations interim committee by October 1. The  
12 report shall include:

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14           (i) The department's progress in establishing  
15 the early childhood development system;

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17           (ii) The participating programs and their  
18 ratings;

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20           (iii) The indicators and evaluation plan the  
21 department has developed to assess the impact of the early  
22 childhood development system on children, families and  
23 communities, including but not limited to improvements in  
24 cognitive and social development;

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2 (iv) The measurable impacts of the early  
3 childhood development system upon children, families and  
4 communities;

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6 (v) Public awareness activities;

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8 (vi) System expenditures of public and private  
9 funds; and

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11 (vii) Recommendations for changes in the system  
12 or legislative changes.

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14 **Section 3.** Fourteen million three hundred thousand  
15 eight hundred twenty-three dollars (\$14,300,823.00) is  
16 appropriated from the general fund to the department of  
17 family services to implement and administer the early  
18 childhood development system. In addition, five positions  
19 are authorized to the department to carry out the purposes  
20 of this act.

21

22 **Section 4.**

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1           (a) The legislature finds that extensive research  
2 demonstrates that quality early childhood development  
3 programs provide a foundation for a child's success in life  
4 and result in:

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6           (i) Fewer special education and other publicly  
7 funded educational and social services later in life;

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9           (ii) Decreased drug and alcohol abuse;

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11           (iii) Decreased child abuse and fewer contacts  
12 with the criminal justice system;

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14           (iv) Decreased likelihood of becoming a teenage  
15 parent;

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17           (v) Decreased need for welfare benefits;

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19           (vi) Higher levels of verbal, mathematical and  
20 intellectual achievement in kindergarten through twelfth  
21 grade and better academic performance in general throughout  
22 their lives;

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1           (vii) Higher employment rates and lifetime  
2 earnings; and

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4           (viii) Increased likelihood of becoming tax  
5 payers rather than tax users.

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7           (b) Economic studies indicate that the public  
8 realizes a return of three dollars (\$3.00) to eight dollars  
9 (\$8.00) in savings in public program expenditures during  
10 the lifetime of the recipient for every dollar expended on  
11 early childhood development programs. As a result, early  
12 childhood development programs and services provide a  
13 greater return in economic and social value to the public  
14 than the original expense.

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16           **Section 5.** This act is effective July 1, 2006.

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(END)