

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3257

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
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Sponsored by:

Senator TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Task Force for the Development of Universal Child Care.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee on June 10, 2021, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/30/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing a Task Force for the Development of
2 Universal Child Care.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. In the United States, approximately 60 percent of households
9 with children do not have a stay-at-home parent, and center-based
10 child care for an infant in three out of five states costs more than
11 tuition and fees at four-year public universities.

12 b. Researchers have established that early childhood, beginning
13 in infancy, is a period in which profound advances take place in a
14 child's reasoning, language acquisition, and problem solving, and
15 more importantly, that a child's environment can dramatically
16 influence the degree and pace of these advances.

17 c. By supporting early childhood development, high quality
18 child care programs can advance early foundational skills, improve
19 high school graduation rates and employment income, and reduce
20 health risks for the children who attend such programs.

21 d. More than half of all Americans live in child care "deserts,"
22 which are communities without an adequate number of licensed
23 child care options and where the costs of available child care
24 options are high. For example, the average family with one child
25 spends as much as 36 percent of its total annual income on child
26 care. This percentage increases for single parent households and
27 families with multiple children enrolled in child care.

28 e. A study published in the journal *Socius* found that in states
29 where child care is more affordable and school days are longer,
30 more mothers work than in states where child care costs are high
31 and school days are short.

32 f. Research has also shown that in industrialized countries,
33 subsidized child care has the single biggest effect on women's
34 employment. Lowering the cost of high-quality child care can
35 significantly increase mothers' employment rates and incomes.

36 g. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has
37 exacerbated the deficiencies of the child care market. Many child
38 care providers face economic hardship due to reduced student
39 enrollment and higher operating costs associated with enhanced
40 cleaning protocols and mandated personal protective equipment for
41 facility staff.

42 h. According to an analysis from the Center for American
43 Progress, the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to a permanent loss
44 of nearly 4.5 million child care slots nationwide, leaving millions of
45 families without the child care they need to return to work.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SHH committee amendments adopted June 10, 2021.

- 1 i. The educational and economic benefits of high quality,
2 affordable, and accessible child care can have lasting positive
3 impacts on children and their families, and can provide a seven to
4 10 percent return on a state's investment.
- 5 j. It is therefore in the best interests of the State to develop a
6 framework upon which a system of universal child care can be
7 established in order to address the major structural deficiencies in
8 the State's child care infrastructure that has been worsened by the
9 COVID-19 pandemic, improve the educational outcomes of those
10 children who would receive services from such a system, and
11 enhance the employment outcomes of their families.
12
- 13 2. a. There is established the Task Force for the Development
14 of Universal Child Care in the Department of Children and
15 Families.
- 16 b. The task force shall consist of 19 members as follows:
- 17 (1) the Commissioners of Children and Families, Community
18 Affairs, Education, Health, Human Services, ¹and¹ Labor and
19 Workforce Development, and the Director of the Division on
20 Women in the Department of Children and Families, or their
21 designees, who shall serve ex officio;
- 22 (2) eight public members appointed by the Governor ¹;¹ who
23 shall include ¹;¹ a representative of the Advocates for Children of
24 New Jersey ¹[,] ¹;¹ a representative of the Child Care Advisory
25 Council ¹[,] ¹;¹ a representative of the New Jersey Business and
26 Industry Association ¹[,] ¹;¹ a representative of the New Jersey
27 Association for the Education of Young Children ¹[, one member] ¹;
28 an individual¹ with experience, training, or other interests in child
29 care issues ¹[,] ¹;¹ an operator of a licensed child care center ¹[,] ¹;¹
30 a family day care provider ¹[,] ¹;¹ and an approved home provider;
31 ¹[and]¹
- 32 (3) two public members appointed by the Senate President, one
33 whom shall be a parent of a child receiving child care services at a
34 licensed child care center, and one whom shall be a director of a
35 licensed child care center ¹[,] ¹;¹ and
- 36 ¹(4)¹ two public members appointed by the Speaker of the
37 General Assembly, one of whom shall be a parent of a child
38 receiving child care services from an in-home provider, and one
39 whom shall be teacher at a licensed child care center.
- 40 c. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled
41 in the same manner provided for the original appointments. The
42 ¹[public]¹ members of the task force shall serve without
43 compensation but may be reimbursed for travel and other
44 miscellaneous expenses necessary to perform their duties, within
45 the limits of funds made available to the task force for its purposes.

1 d. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable ^{1,1} but
2 no later than 60 days following the appointment of its members ^{1,1}
3 and shall select a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the
4 members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not
5 be a member of the task force.

6 e. The task force may meet at the call of ¹~~its chair~~ the
7 chairperson¹ and hold hearings at the times and in the places ¹~~it~~
8 the task force¹ deems appropriate and necessary to fulfill its charge.
9 The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail
10 itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
11 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
12 may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

13 f. The Department of Children and Families shall provide staff
14 services to the task force, as may be necessary for the task force to
15 carry out its duties.

16 ¹~~g.~~ As used in this act, “universal child care” means a cohesive
17 system of state-run, licensed child care centers, family day care
18 homes, and approved home providers delivering child care services
19 to children from birth to entry into kindergarten, regardless of
20 family income, for up to six days a week, including summers and
21 holidays.¹
22

23 3. ¹a.¹ The task force shall develop a framework upon which a
24 universal child care system can be established in the State. The task
25 force shall:

26 (1) conduct a comprehensive study identifying policies,
27 procedures, practices, and financial priorities relating to child care
28 services in the State and the gaps in those policies, procedures,
29 practices, and financial priorities;

30 (2) study and evaluate aspects of the provision of child care that
31 may contribute to the lack of access to, and the high cost of, quality
32 child care services;

33 (3) review existing research, studies, and data concerning
34 universal child care and how the establishment of a universal child
35 care system can increase the accessibility and availability of
36 affordable, high quality child care in the State;

37 (4) evaluate a variety of potential financial incentives to
38 encourage private investment in a Statewide universal child care
39 system;

40 (5) analyze the relationship between the lack of investment in
41 child care infrastructure ^{1,1} including, but not limited to, facility
42 upgrades, and the lack of access to affordable, high quality child
43 care; ¹and¹

44 (6) develop a process to evaluate the services, initiatives, and
45 programs provided through, and funded by, a universal child care
46 system ^{1,1} based on the following core principles:

1 ¹[(i)] (a)¹ the recruitment, hiring, and training of qualified child
2 care providers who are compensated appropriately;

3 ¹[(ii)] (b)¹ the expansion of supports to help all families access
4 affordable, high-quality child care through significant public
5 investment to ensure the financial viability of licensed child care
6 centers, family day care homes, ¹and¹ approved home providers;
7 and

8 ¹[(iii)] (c)¹ the remediation of structural inequalities within the
9 State's child care infrastructure that hinder access to affordable,
10 high quality child care.

11 ¹b. The task force shall issue a report to the Governor and,
12 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
13 Legislature, no later than six months after the task force organizes.
14 The report shall contain the task force's findings and
15 recommendations. The task force shall expire 30 days after the
16 issuance of its report pursuant to this subsection.

17 c. As used in this act, "universal child care" means a cohesive
18 system of state-run, licensed child care centers, family day care
19 homes, and approved home providers delivering child care services
20 to children from birth to entry into kindergarten, regardless of
21 family income, for up to six days a week, including summers and
22 holidays.¹

23
24 ¹[4. a. The task force shall issue a report to the Governor, and
25 to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
26 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than six months after the task force
27 organizes. The report shall contain the task force's findings and
28 recommendations.

29 b. The task force shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its
30 report.]¹

31
32 ¹[5.] 4.¹ This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire
33 ¹[upon] 30 days after¹ the issuance of the task force report
34 ¹pursuant to subsection b. of section 3 of this act¹ .