

MAR 12 2003
HUMAN RESOURCES

HOUSE FILE 531
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OLDSON

Passed House, Date _____ Passed Senate, Date _____
Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____ Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____
Approved _____

A BILL FOR

1 An Act requiring the departments of human services and education
2 to provide information to parents and other consumers
3 regarding child care and preschool programs.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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HF 531

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 237A.31 CONSUMER INFORMATION ON
2 CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOLS.

3 1. The department shall develop consumer information
4 material to assist parents in selecting a child care provider
5 or a preschool, as defined in section 256A.6. In developing
6 the material, the department shall consult with department of
7 human services staff, department of education staff, the state
8 child care advisory council, the Iowa empowerment board, and
9 child care resource and referral services. In addition, the
10 department may consult with other entities at the local,
11 state, and national level.

12 2. The consumer information material developed by the
13 department for parents and other consumers of preschool and
14 child care programs shall include but is not limited to all of
15 the following:

16 a. A pamphlet or other printed material containing
17 consumer-oriented information on locating a quality preschool
18 or child care provider.

19 b. Information explaining important considerations a
20 consumer should look for in a licensed, registered, regulated,
21 or unregulated preschool or child care program.

22 c. Information explaining how a consumer can identify
23 quality programs, including what questions to ask of providers
24 and what a consumer might expect or demand to know before
25 selecting a provider.

26 d. An explanation of the applicable laws and regulations
27 written in layperson's terms.

28 e. An explanation of what it means for a provider to be
29 licensed, registered, or regulated.

30 f. An explanation of the information considered in
31 registry and record background checks.

32 g. Other information deemed relevant to consumers.

33 3. The department of human services shall implement and
34 publicize an internet page or site that provides all of the
35 following:

1 a. The written information developed pursuant to
2 subsections 1 and 2.

3 b. The preschool ratings developed by the department of
4 education pursuant to section 256.6.

5 c. Regular informational updates, including when a
6 preschool or child care provider facility was last subject to
7 a state quality review or inspection and the results of the
8 review or inspection.

9 d. Other information deemed appropriate by the department.

10 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. 256A.6 PRESCHOOL RATING SYSTEM.

11 1. For the purposes of this section, "preschool" means a
12 facility which provides to children ages three through five,
13 for periods of time not exceeding three hours per day,
14 programs designed to help the children to develop intellectual
15 skills, social skills, and motor skills, and to extend the
16 children's interest and understanding of the children's
17 surroundings. A "preschool" includes but is not limited to a
18 child care facility licensed under chapter 237A, a facility
19 operated or contracted for by a board of directors of a school
20 corporation under section 279.49, a facility operated or
21 contracted for by the authorities in charge of an accredited
22 nonpublic school under section 280.3A, or another preschool
23 program which is not defined as child care under section
24 237A.1.

25 2. The department of education shall develop and implement
26 a system for rating preschool programs operating in the state.
27 The purpose of the rating system is to provide comparative
28 information to consumers regarding the relative quality of
29 preschool programs. Each program's rating shall be public
30 information and shall be made available to consumers.

31 3. a. In developing the rating system, the department of
32 education shall consult with the department of human services,
33 the state child care advisory council, the child development
34 coordinating council, and the Iowa empowerment board. The
35 department may also consult with other entities at the local,

1 state, and national level.

2 b. The rating system shall incorporate qualitative
3 factors, including health and safety standards, use of best
4 practices, history of regulatory compliance, staff
5 qualifications, and documented outcomes for children.

6 4. The rating system and the ratings of preschools shall
7 be included in the information regarding child care and
8 preschools posted on the internet by the department of human
9 services pursuant to section 237A.31.

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EXPLANATION

11 This bill requires the departments of human services and
12 education to provide information to parents and other
13 consumers regarding child care and preschool programs.

14 New Code section 237A.31 requires the department of human
15 services to develop brochures and other written materials to
16 assist consumers in identifying and selecting child care and
17 preschool providers. Although "preschool" is a defined term
18 in Code chapter 237A for a child care facility that is
19 licensed or registered by the department and provides
20 preschool services, the bill uses a broader definition that is
21 also applicable to programs that are not regulated by the
22 department. The bill requires the department of human
23 services to implement and publicize an internet page or site
24 that provides the written information, regulatory review
25 information, and preschool ratings developed by the department
26 of education pursuant to the bill.

27 New Code section 256A.6 amends the Code chapter pertaining
28 to child development programs to require the department of
29 education to develop and implement a rating system for
30 preschools. The department is directed to consult with
31 various agencies in developing the system. The purpose of the
32 rating system is to provide comparative information to
33 consumers regarding the relative quality of preschool programs
34 and the ratings are to be included on the internet site to be
35 implemented by the department of human services pursuant to

1 the bill. The term "preschool" is defined to mean a facility
2 providing programs to children ages three through five, not
3 more than three hours per day, and includes facilities
4 regulated by the department of human services, school boards,
5 and private schools, and unregulated facilities.

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