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## DIGEST

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Price

HB No. 249

**Abstract:** Provides for access to child care assistance by homeless families through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program.

Present law requires the secretary of the Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to prepare and submit a state plan for participation in the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Program. Proposed law retains present law and adds requirement for the secretary to ensure that the state plan conforms with the requirements of proposed law relative to access to child care assistance by homeless families.

Proposed law establishes that its purposes include, without limitation, the following:

- (1) To mitigate barriers that La. families experiencing homelessness face in accessing child care.
- (2) To reduce the incidence of developmental delays and physical and mental health problems among young children who experience homelessness by providing access to quality child care.

Proposed law defines "department", for purposes of proposed law, as the DCFS or its successor as administrator of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program in this state.

Proposed law requires the secretary of the department to take such actions as are necessary to accomplish all of the following:

- (1) Ensure that services to families experiencing homelessness are included within the CCDF state plan if allowable as a use of Child Care and Development Block Grant funding pursuant to federal regulations.
- (2) Establish a grace period of a defined duration in which a homeless family can be authorized to receive subsidized child care pending submission of birth certificates and immunization records, as long as all other eligibility factors are met.
- (3) Waive requirements relative to hours of work and school engagement for homeless parents who apply for child care assistance and demonstrate that they are seeking employment or participating in a transitional living program for a period of not less than 90 days and not more than 180 days from the effective date of the certification for child

care assistance.

- (4) Collaborate and coordinate efforts with all of the following persons and entities to improve access by homeless families to information concerning child care and transportation to child care placements:
  - (a) Local child care programs.
  - (b) Local educational agency liaisons designated pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act.
  - (c) Any other persons and entities that provide services to homeless families.
- (5) Collect data that indicates whether parents who receive child care subsidies are homeless.

Proposed law requires the department to promulgate rules in accordance with the APA, institute policies, secure requisite federal approvals, and undertake any other actions as may be necessary to implement the provisions of proposed law.

Proposed law provides that proposed law shall be known and may be cited as the "Improving Access to Child Care for Homeless Louisiana Families Act".

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 36:474(A)(11); Adds R.S. 46:1443-1443.3)

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill.

1. Revised legislative finding relative to the Child Care and Development Fund plan to recognize that the plan authorizes the same services for homeless families as for other low-income families, but does not address other eligibility factors that may be a barrier for homeless families in seeking child care assistance.
2. Deleted a requirement that DCFS allow for a homeless child to enroll immediately in subsidized care pending submission of necessary entry documentation. Added in lieu thereof a requirement that DCFS establish a grace period of a defined duration in which a homeless family can be authorized to receive subsidized child care pending submission of birth certificates and immunization records, provided that all other eligibility factors are met.
3. In proposed law requiring a homeless family to demonstrate that they are seeking employment or participating in a transitional living program in order to qualify for

child care assistance, added stipulation that the employment search or transitional living program participation be for a period of at least 90 days and not more than 180 days from the effective date of the certification for child care assistance.