

HOUSE BILL NO. 456

INTRODUCED BY J. KARLEN, J. REAVIS, L. MUSZKIEWICZ, B. EDWARDS, J. ISALY, M. LEE, P. STRAND,  
J. SECKINGER, B. CLOSE, P. ELVERUM, S. FYANT, J. WEBER, A. GRIFFITH, M. CUNNINGHAM, D. BAUM,  
B. CARTER, J. COHENOUR, C. KEOGH, E. STAFMAN, D. JOY

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT EXPANDING THE BEST BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE  
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS TO CHILD-CARE WORKERS EMPLOYED BY A  
LICENSED DAY-CARE CENTER OR REGISTERED FAMILY OR GROUP DAY-CARE HOME; PROVIDING  
AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 52-2-714 AND 52-2-715, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN  
EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 52-2-714, MCA, is amended to read:

**"52-2-714. Best beginnings child care scholarship program.** There is a best beginnings child care  
scholarship program administered by the department. The program is established to provide scholarships to  
qualified low-income families and eligible child-care workers employed at a licensed day-care center or  
registered family or group day-care home whose child received care provided by a licensed or registered child  
care-child-care provider or day-care facility."

**Section 2.** Section 52-2-715, MCA, is amended to read:

**"52-2-715. Family income eligibility -- child-care worker eligibility -- requirements.** ~~(1) In-Except~~  
~~as provided in subsection (2), in determining income eligibility for qualified low-income families for the best~~  
beginnings child care scholarship program, the department shall:

~~(4)(a)~~ set a qualifying income threshold at no less than 185% of the federal poverty level for each  
family size; and

~~(2)(b)~~ set a maximum qualifying income level that is no higher than that allowed by the federal child  
care and development block grant.

# Amendment - 1st Reading-white - Requested by: Jonathan Karlen - (H) Appropriations

- 2025

69th Legislature 2025

Drafter: Laura Sankey Keip,

HB0456.001.002

(2) ~~(a)~~ A child-care worker is eligible for the best beginnings child care scholarship program if the worker:

~~(a) is employed at a licensed day-care center or registered family or group day-care home and is engaged in any of the eligible activities, for at least the minimum number of hours required as established by the department pursuant to 45 CFR 98.16(g), for at least the required minimum number of hours; and~~

~~(b) has a household income that is less than two times the state median income.~~

~~(b) The income eligibility requirements provided in subsection (1) do not apply to a child-care worker who is otherwise eligible under this subsection (2)."~~

**NEW SECTION. Section 3. Appropriation.** There is appropriated \$5.5 million from the general fund to the department of public health and human services for each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, for the purposes of providing best beginnings child care scholarships to eligible child-care workers as provided in [section 1].

**NEW SECTION. Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

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