

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 351

BY SENATOR JACKSON-ANDREWS

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT. Provides relative to children and family assistance programs. (8/1/26)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:407.30(D)(1) and 407.51(H)(1) and to enact R.S. 17:407.29.1,
3 relative to the Child Care Assistance Program; to provide for a provisional eligibility
4 process; to provide for approval by the Senate and House committees on education;
5 to authorize the Department of Education to promulgate rules and regulations; to
6 provide relative to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; and to
7 provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:407.30(D)(1) and 407.51(H)(1) are hereby amended and reenacted
10 and R.S. 17:407.29.1 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 **§407.29.1. Provisional eligibility; child care assistance program application**

12 **A. An expectant mother may apply for assistance from the Child Care**
13 **Assistance Program, through the Department of Education, prior to birth of the**
14 **child in order to preliminarily determine whether the applicant will be eligible.**

15 **B. The department shall develop a process to determine provisional**
16 **eligibility of an applicant and to later confirm eligibility after the birth of the**
17 **child. The process shall be subject to approval by the Senate and House**

1 committees on education, jointly.

2 C. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations in accordance
3 with the Administrative Procedure Act as necessary for the implementation of
4 this Section.

5 §407.30. Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund

6 * * *

7 D.(1)(a) The fund shall be administered by the State Board of Elementary and
8 Secondary Education. Subject to legislative appropriation, monies in the fund shall
9 be awarded annually to local entities approved by the ~~board~~ State Board of
10 Elementary and Secondary Education for the purpose of funding projects that will
11 expand the number of early childhood care and education quality slots for families
12 who are eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program in Type III early learning
13 centers that have at least one classroom with children age fifteen months or younger
14 if a local entity provides funds from nonstate and nonfederal sources. No such award
15 shall be made unless the local entity's financial commitment to the project proposed
16 for funding provides matching funds from nonstate and nonfederal sources at a rate
17 of at least one-to-one.

18 (b) Each local entity shall establish eligibility criteria for the early childhood
19 care and education quality slots financed by local funds that serve as the match for
20 the award. At a minimum, only children whose family income makes them
21 economically disadvantaged as defined by the ~~board~~ State Board of Elementary
22 and Secondary Education shall be eligible for the slots.

23 * * *

24 §407.51. Advisory Council

25 * * *

26 H.(1) The council shall provide input and guidance to the ~~board~~ State Board
27 of Elementary and Secondary Education and the department on matters pertaining
28 to the development and implementation of rules, regulations, bulletins, policies, or
29 standards related to all early care and education programs, including early learning

1 centers, enrollment in early learning centers, the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early
 2 Childhood Program, the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant, the Child
 3 Care Assistance Program, Early Head Start, and Head Start.

4 * * *

5 Section 2. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Working Mothers'
 6 Support Act".

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

DIGEST

SB 351 Reengrossed

2026 Regular Session

Jackson-Andrews

Proposed law (R.S. 17:407.29.1) provides that an expectant mother can apply for the Child Care Assistance Program prior to birth of the child to preliminarily determine whether the applicant will be eligible.

Proposed law requires the Department of Education to develop a process to determine provisional eligibility and later confirm eligibility after the birth of the child. This process must be approved by the Senate and House committees on education, jointly.

Proposed law authorizes the department to promulgate rules and regulations to implement proposed law.

Present law (R.S. 17:407.30) provides that the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund must be administered by BESE and the monies awarded annually to local entities approved by the board for the purpose of funding projects that will expand the number of early childhood care and education quality slots for families eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program under certain conditions.

Present law provides that each local entity must establish eligibility criteria for the early childhood care and education quality slots financed by local funds that serve as the match for the award and, at a minimum, only children whose family income makes them economically disadvantaged as defined by the board will be eligible for the slots.

Present law (R.S. 17:407.51) provides that the Advisory Council must provide input and guidance to the board and the department on matters pertaining to the development and implementation of rules, regulations, bulletins, policies, or standards related to all early care and education programs, including the Child Care Assistance Program.

Proposed law retains all present law and clarifies that "board" means the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Amends R.S. 17:407.30(D)(1) and 407.51(H)(1); adds R.S. 17:407.29.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill

1. Makes technical changes.
2. Provides a process for expectant mothers to apply to the Child Care Assistance Program prior to birth of a child to determine provisional eligibility.
3. Authorizes Department of Education to develop the process to determine provisional eligibility and to later confirm eligibility, which must be approved by the Senate and House committees on education.
4. Authorizes the department to promulgate rules and regulations.
5. Designates this Act as the "Working Mothers' Support Act".