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GOVERNOR PATRICK SIGNS LEGISLATION GIVING FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS RESOURCES TO DELIVER HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUNGEST CITIZENS



Governor Patrick signs H. 3986, "An Act Relative to Early Education and Care by Family Child Care Providers." (Photo Credit: Eric Haynes / Governor's Office) View additional [photos](#).

BOSTON – Friday, September 14, 2012 – Governor Deval Patrick today hosted a ceremonial bill signing for H. 3986, "An Act Relative to Early Education and Care by Family Child Care Providers." The law gives nearly 4,000 qualified family child care providers who offer subsidized early education and child care services to low-income and other at risk children through the state the ability to unionize and collectively bargain with the state over subsidy rates, reimbursement and payment procedures, recruitment/retention of providers and professional development opportunities.

"Family child care providers play a critical role in preparing our youngest residents for success in the classroom and lifelong learning," said Governor Patrick. "This bill will ensure they have a strong voice in our continued efforts to deliver high quality educational opportunities for all children in Massachusetts."

The law also allows eligible family child care providers to collectively bargain with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) on matters of educational and training opportunities and recruitment and retention of qualified providers, helping to ensure that programs are providing high quality care and education opportunities for children at an early age.

"This legislation will give family child care workers the voice they deserve, ensuring they have the benefits and tools to provide the highest quality of care for our youngest residents," said Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Joanne Goldstein.

"This bill recognizes the important role that family child care providers play in the development of our children at their earliest

age," said Education Secretary Paul Reville. "The new tools this legislation provides will help ensure all of our children have access to high quality early education and care programs across the state."

"This legislation reflects the Patrick-Murray Administration's long standing goal of giving family child care providers a collective voice and acknowledges the dignity of their work," said Department of Early Education and Care Commissioner Sherri Killins. "The EEC supports this legislation, respects the right to organize, and looks forward to building upon our strong relationship with family child care providers as we work together to advance the system of early education and care in the Commonwealth."

"Today is a great day for the more than 4500 family child care providers across the state who have fought together to gain a voice in the critical work they do," said Susan Tousignant, President of SEIU Local 509. "They are on the front lines every day caring for the most vulnerable children in our Commonwealth. We proudly welcome them into SEIU Local 509 and look forward to working with them, the Administration, the Legislature, and other stakeholders to improve and to expand early childhood education in Massachusetts."

"The passage of this legislation marks significant progress towards the Patrick Administration's goal of providing the Commonwealth's children with the highest quality early education and child care. Home childcare providers across the Commonwealth called for the passage of this law and the Legislature and the Governor listened. This law grants family child care providers the right to a seat at the bargaining table for state childcare vouchers, ensuring that they will have a voice when deciding their future," said Senator Gale Candaras, co-sponsor of the bill. "By creating opportunities and incentives for training, this law makes possible the development of a highly trained and stable workforce in an industry that historically sees high turnover. This law is a vital step forward in ensuring that our children receive the best childcare possible and that these valuable educators are treated fairly."

"In terms of childhood development and learning, we know that the early years of a child's life are critical," said Chairman Tom Sannicandro, co-sponsor of the bill. "This bill is going to improve the quality of early childhood care by professionalizing the home-based childcare provider workforce through providing incentives and support for training and education, and by increasing the ability of the state to recruit and retain a stable workforce of providers."

The Patrick-Murray Administration has already implemented a number of quality assurance initiatives for early childhood education providers. In January 2010, EEC updated its standards for program licensure, increasing the professional development requirements and mandatory qualifications of providers. Last year, Massachusetts also implemented a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to guide programs in achieving higher levels of quality, including strengthening educator competencies through professional development. EEC has aligned its initiatives to support the QRIS, including the state-funded Educator and Provider Support grant which supports training of the early education and care workforce.

For more information on QRIS and the Administration's efforts to build a high quality system of early education and care in Massachusetts, visit www.mass.gov/eec.

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