

By Mrs. Cleven of Chelmsford, petition of Carol C. Cleven and other members of the General Court for legislation to develop a plan for improved access to day care services for teen parents. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Nine.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO DEVELOPING A STATE PLAN FOR IMPROVED ACCESS TO DAY CARE SERVICES FOR TEEN PARENTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter one hundred and eighteen of the Mass. General Laws,
2 as most recently amended by chapter five of the acts of 1995, is
3 hereby amended by adding, at the end of subsection (i)(2) of
4 section one hundred and ten, the following words:— In order to
5 promote and facilitate the return to school of parenting teenagers
6 who have dropped out of school, to promote the needs of pregnant
7 and parenting teenagers in obtaining child care to complete their
8 education, and participate in education and job training programs,
9 and to promote the maintaining of pregnant and parenting
10 teenagers in school through completion and to promote the nurtu-
11 rance and well-being of the children of teen parents, the executive
12 office of health and human services, and the department of transi-
13 tional assistance, in collaboration with the department of educa-
14 tion and the department of social services and the office for
15 children, shall conduct an assessment of the day care needs and
16 availability of resources for teen parents and student parents,
17 statewide and by state agency-supervised or school district areas
18 of the state.

19 A state and area plan shall be developed to determine and meet
20 identified needs, both for those receiving day care and for those
21 for whom day care is unavailable or inaccessible, or has not been
22 accessed or sought by teen parents requiring day care.

23 Those involved with the assessment of need and development
24 of the state and area plans may include, but not be limited to,
25 public and private day care agencies, persons appointed by the
26 executive office or various state departments and agencies, school
27 administrators and officials, the school committee, parents, stu-
28 dent parents, community leaders, and other relevant persons who
29 would participate in the identification of need, and the develop-
30 ment of the plan.

31 Subsequent to the identification of need and the development of
32 the state, area and local plans, teen parents and their children who
33 are in need and remain unserved, shall be provided with resource
34 and referral services, and every effort shall be made to access
35 appropriate and relevant child care services for young parents.
36 Such plans shall be utilized by appropriate agencies and officials
37 to facilitate the return of teen parents to school, to support teen
38 parents who have completed their education and need child care
39 during transitional periods or for job training and additional edu-
40 cational programs, or for other appropriate reasons.

41 Such plans shall be utilized in order to facilitate child care in a
42 timely manner for teen parents and their children, and shall be
43 maintained on an ongoing basis in order to identify unserved teen
44 parents and their children, and to identify child care slots as they
45 become available, or additional child care slots, if such increases
46 occur due to additional funding or availability. Coordination and
47 accessibility of child care slots shall be a key component of all
48 plans developed for these purposes.