



128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

Legislative Document

No. 1321

S.P. 450

In Senate, April 4, 2017

**An Act To Promote Social and Emotional Learning and
Development in Early Childhood**

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather J.R. Priest".

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BREEN of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative PIERCE of Falmouth and
Senators: LANGLEY of Hancock, MAKER of Washington, MILLETT of Cumberland,
Representatives: FARNSWORTH of Portland, GATTINE of Westbrook, KORNFIELD of
Bangor, MALABY of Hancock, PARKER of South Berwick.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §254, sub-§20** is enacted to read:

3 **20. Statewide voluntary early childhood consultation program.** Beginning
4 September 1, 2019, the commissioner shall implement a statewide voluntary early
5 childhood consultation program to provide support and guidance to early care and
6 education teachers and to providers working in public preschools, child care centers as
7 defined in Title 22, section 8301-A, subsection 1-A, family child care settings and Head
8 Start programs serving infants and young children who are experiencing challenging
9 behaviors that put them at risk of learning difficulties and removal from early learning
10 settings.

11 **Sec. 2. Pilot project; early childhood consultation program.** The
12 Department of Education shall develop and implement a pilot project to establish an early
13 childhood consultation program to enable consultants with expertise in the areas of early
14 childhood development and mental health to work on-site with early care and education
15 teachers and providers of child care to aid them in the use of evidence-based strategies
16 that reduce challenging behaviors in children and promote social-emotional growth, as
17 well as provide guidance to parents about their children's behavioral difficulties. The
18 department shall designate an entity to design the pilot project in consultation with the
19 National Center for Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
20 Consultation and key stakeholders in the State. The entity designated by the department
21 may be a public entity, a private entity or a public-private partnership. In developing the
22 pilot project, the designated entity shall:

23 1. Study national and in-state models of early childhood mental health consultations,
24 including but not limited to the Early Childhood Consultation and Outreach Program in
25 Washington County; Maine Roads to Quality at the University of Southern Maine Muskie
26 School of Public Service; and the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership in
27 Connecticut;

28 2. Explore enhancing cross-sector professional development capacity in the State
29 through partnerships with entities such as the Technical Assistance Center on Social
30 Emotional Intervention for Young Children, a project funded by the United States
31 Department of Education;

32 3. Establishing connections between individualized on-site coaching for teachers and
33 caregivers and other forms of professional development, including group training and
34 communities of practice;

35 4. Develop a system for collecting and analyzing data on implementation and
36 selected outcomes to promote accountability and continuous quality improvement; and

37 5. Develop a plan for establishing a roster of qualified consultants with the
38 specialized knowledge, skills and experience to effectively coach teachers, caregivers and
39 program directors to promote a child's social and emotional health and decrease
40 challenging behaviors.

1 The department shall provide a report by January 15, 2019 to the joint standing
2 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters regarding the
3 status of the pilot project and its ability to provide support and guidance to early care and
4 education teachers and to providers working in public preschools, child care centers,
5 family child care settings and Head Start programs serving infants and young children
6 who are experiencing challenging behaviors that put them at risk of learning difficulties
7 and removal from early learning settings. As part of its report, the department shall
8 include its recommendations regarding the amendment of the statewide voluntary early
9 childhood consultation program established under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title
10 20-A, section 254, subsection 20. After receipt and review of the report and
11 recommendations, the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction
12 over education matters may report out a bill to the First Regular Session of the 129th
13 Legislature.

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SUMMARY

15 This bill requires the Commissioner of Education to implement, beginning September
16 1, 2019, a statewide voluntary early childhood consultation program to provide support
17 and guidance to early care and education teachers and to providers working in public
18 preschools, child care centers, family child care settings and Head Start programs serving
19 infants and young children who are experiencing challenging behaviors that put them at
20 risk of learning difficulties and removal from early learning settings. The bill authorizes
21 the Department of Education to designate an entity to design and implement an early
22 childhood consultation program as a pilot project, and to report back to the joint standing
23 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters with its
24 recommendations concerning the amendment of the statewide voluntary early childhood
25 consultation program.