

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 922

**FISCAL
NOTE**

By Senator Maynard

[Introduced March 24, 2025; referred
to the Committee on Health and Human Resources;
and then to the Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
2 designated §18-3A-1, §18-3A-2, §18-3A-3, §18-3A-4, §18-3A-5, §18-3A-6, §18-3A-7, and
3 §18-3A-8, relating to streamlining and enhancing early childhood education and child care
4 services in West Virginia; integrating the existing Head Start, West Virginia Department of
5 Education's Pre-K, and Birth-to-Three programs; improving access, affordability, and
6 quality of child care for working families; and ensuring continuity of care and education
7 from birth to school entry.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 3A. WEST VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE CHILDCARE PROGRAM ACT.

§18-3A-1. Short title.

1 This act shall be known as the West Virginia Comprehensive Childcare Program Act.

§18-3A-2. Purpose.

1 The purpose of this act is to streamline and enhance early childhood education and
2 childcare services in West Virginia by integrating the existing Head Start, the West Virginia
3 Department of Education's Pre-K, and Birth to Three programs into a unified, state-administered
4 system. This initiative aims to improve access, affordability, and quality of childcare for working
5 families while ensuring continuity of care and education from birth to school entry.

§18-3A-3. Establishment of the West Virginia Comprehensive Childcare Program.

1 (a) Program Creation – The West Virginia Comprehensive Childcare Program (WVCCP) is
2 hereby established under the administration of the West Virginia Department of Education, in
3 coordination with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of
4 Early Learning.

5 (b) Integration of Services – The program shall consolidate and manage the existing Head
6 Start, Pre-K, and Birth to Three programs under a single framework, ensuring seamless service
7 delivery from infancy through age five.

8 (c) Funding Mechanism – The program shall be funded through a combination of state

9 appropriations, federal grants, and private sector partnerships, with provisions to maximize
10 available federal matching funds.

§18-3A-4. Program Administration and Structure.

1 (a) Statewide Coordination – The WVCCP shall establish a Statewide Early Childhood
2 Education and Care Council, composed of representatives from the Department of Health
3 Services, local school districts, Head Start programs, licensed childcare providers, and parent
4 advocacy groups.

5 (b) Local Implementation – Each county shall form a Childcare Coordination Board to
6 oversee program implementation, ensure compliance with state standards, and coordinate
7 resources with existing public and private childcare providers.

8 (c) Public-Private Partnerships – The program shall encourage partnerships with private
9 childcare providers, faith-based organizations, and community groups to expand service
10 availability.

§18-3A-5. Eligibility and Access.

1 (a) Universal Access for Low- and Middle-Income Families – All children from birth to age
2 five shall be eligible for services, with priority given to low-income families, children with
3 disabilities, and those facing other barriers to early education.

4 (b) Sliding Fee Scale – Families above income thresholds for free access shall pay fees on
5 a sliding scale based on household income, ensuring affordability for working families.

§18-3A-6. Workforce Development and Training.

1 (a) Educator Credentialing and Salaries – All early childhood educators within the program
2 shall meet standardized credentialing requirements and receive salaries comparable to K-12
3 public school teachers.

4 (b) Professional Development – The program shall provide continuous professional
5 development and training for childcare providers and educators to maintain high-quality
6 standards.

§18-3A-7. Accountability and Oversight.

1 (a) Annual Reporting – The Department of Education shall submit an annual report to the
 2 Legislature detailing program enrollment, fiscal expenditures, child development outcomes, and
 3 areas for improvement.

4 (b) Independent Audits – The program shall be subject to regular financial and
 5 performance audits to ensure accountability and efficiency.

§18-3A-8. Effective Date.

1 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026, with phased implementation over a three-year
 2 period to ensure a smooth transition.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to streamline and enhance early childhood education and childcare services in West Virginia by integrating the existing Head Start, West Virginia Department of Education's Pre-K, and Birth to Three programs into a unified, state-administered system.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.