

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 648  
2 INTRODUCED BY A. BUCKLEY, T. WELCH, G. NIKOLAKAKOS, G. FRAZER, E. BUTTREY, G. OBLANDER,  
3 M. YAKAWICH, S. FITZPATRICK, D. SALOMON, B. BARKER, K. ABBOTT, J. KASSMIER, J. KARLEN, S.  
4 HOWELL  
5

6 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE BEST BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE  
7 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; SETTING THE INCOME ELIGIBILITY LEVEL AT ~~200%~~ 185% OF THE  
8 FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL; REQUIRING A MONTHLY COPAYMENT FROM AN ELIGIBLE FAMILY;  
9 PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTION 52-2-713, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN  
10 EFFECTIVE DATE."  
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12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:  
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14 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Best beginnings child care scholarship program.** There is a best  
15 beginnings child care scholarship program administered by the department. The program is established to  
16 provide scholarships to qualified low-income families whose child received care provided by a licensed child  
17 care provider or day-care facility.  
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19 NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Family income eligibility requirements.** In determining income  
20 eligibility for the best beginnings child care scholarship program, the department shall:

21 ~~(1)~~ (1) set a qualifying income threshold at no less than ~~200%~~ 185% of the federal poverty level for  
22 each family size; and

23 ~~(2)~~ (2) set a maximum qualifying income level that is no higher than that allowed by the federal child  
24 care and development block grant.  
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26 NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Copayment requirements.** Each eligible family shall participate in the  
27 cost of child care by making a copayment. ~~The department shall establish the following copayment amounts:~~

28 ~~(1) for an eligible family with a qualifying income less than 100% of the federal poverty level, a~~

1 ~~copayment of \$10 for each eligible family for each month; and~~  
 2 ~~(2) — for an eligible family with a qualifying income of 100% of the federal poverty level or more, a~~  
 3 ~~copayment based based~~ on a sliding fee scale not to exceed ~~7%~~ 9% of an eligible family's monthly income.

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5 **Section 4.** Section 52-2-713, MCA, is amended to read:

6 **"52-2-713. Payments for eligible children.** The department shall pay a rate ~~established by the~~  
 7 ~~department and appropriated by the legislature~~ based on a child's enrollment and set at the child's monthly  
 8 authorized amount to a day-care facility licensed or registered by the department for each child receiving day-  
 9 care service and certified eligible by the department to receive day-care services."

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11 NEW SECTION. Section 5. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$10 million from the general fund  
 12 to the department of public health and human services in each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, for  
 13 the purposes of [sections 1 through 4].

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15 NEW SECTION. Section 6. Codification instruction. [Sections 1 through 3] are intended to be  
 16 codified as an integral part of Title 52, chapter 2, part 7, and the provisions of Title 52, chapter 2, part 7, apply  
 17 to [sections 1 through 3].

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19 NEW SECTION. Section 7. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2023.

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