

# One Hundred Second Legislature - First Session - 2011

## Introducer's Statement of Intent

### LB601

---

**Chairperson: Senator Kathy Campbell**

**Committee: Health and Human Services Date of Hearing: March 02, 2011**

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 601 is intended to infuse a child development standard of accountability into publicly-funded child care. A standard is desirable for many reasons.

First, the child care subsidy program serves a great number of Nebraska children. There are about 47,689 children ages 0-5 in the state who are at risk of failure in school, and 27% of these receive the subsidy.

Second, high-quality child care is proven to help young children develop and retain the cognitive skills they will need in kindergarten and throughout life. Without high-quality environments, at-risk children enter kindergarten one to two years behind their peers in academics and behavior, and never catch up.

Third, the subsidy pays only a portion of what the private market charges, so providers who accept the subsidy have to make sacrifices, making it difficult to maintain high levels of quality.

Fourth, as the budget-setting branch of government, the Legislature has a duty to maximize public funds. Publicly-funded child care should be more than a work support for parents. LB 601 proposes using public funds for child care that is likely to remove or reduce the potential for failure for children who are most at risk for failure.

The bill would do this by changing the subsidy and by creating an additional level of care. The child care subsidy is set by the Department of Health and Human Services by conducting a market rate survey of providers in Nebraska. Currently the rate for all providers who accept the subsidy is not less than the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market rate survey. LB 601 would designate this rate for care from a qualified licensed child care provider. For all other providers, the rate would be at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

The bill defines a qualified licensed child care provider as someone licensed by the department who has a minimum 24 hours of in-service training, at least twelve hours of which are in person. The provider would have to acquire the training within the first twelve months of being licensed, or on or before December 31, 2012, whichever is later.

**Principal Introducer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Senator Kathy Campbell**

