



## **S.301 (Sens. Lewis & Moran)**

*An Act providing affordable and accessible high-quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth*

In order to provide children with an equal start in life, strengthen our economy in a way that also reduces racial, gender, and income inequality in our state, and meet the needs of working parents and the 21st century workforce; **Massachusetts families need affordable, accessible, high-quality early education and child care.** This year, the Common Start Coalition is working to pass comprehensive early education and childcare legislation that would put Massachusetts on the path to solving the childcare crisis.

S.301 would advance the Common Start agenda by providing the specific structure that is needed to deliver **affordable care options for families; significantly better pay and benefits for early educators; a new, stable source of funding for providers; high-quality programs and services for children; and substantial relief for businesses and our economy.** Beyond this specific legislation, fulfilling the full Common Start vision will require a sustained effort to fund this framework and build on it over the course of several years.

Under S.301, programs would be available in early education and child care centers, private homes, and schools – the same settings where early education and child care is provided now. The bill affects early education and care for children from birth through age 5, as well as after- and out-of-school time for children ages 5-12, and for children with special needs through age 15 – in line with the ages covered by the current child care subsidy system.

### **What Does S.301 Mean For...**

#### **Families:**

- Financial assistance to the majority of families to significantly lower the cost of care
- Enhanced earning opportunities, financial security, and long-term wellbeing

#### **Children:**

- Participation in high-quality early education and care programs
- Greater access to wraparound services
- Increased education attainment and life-time earnings and long-term health benefits, including improvements to children's brain development

#### **Providers:**

- Increased public investments in providers to meet true cost of providing high-quality care
- Direct-to-provider operational funding provides stable source of funding and promotes delivery of higher quality care

#### **Educators:**

- Higher salaries and expanded professional development opportunities
- Support for higher credential/degree attainment

#### **Businesses:**

- Critical support to labor pool
- Aids recruitment, retention, and productivity

Learn more and get involved at [commonstartma.org](http://commonstartma.org), and contact [info@commonstartma.org](mailto:info@commonstartma.org) with any questions

## How S.301 Works

S.301 uses a combination of direct-to-provider operational funding and family financial assistance to reduce costs to families while compensating providers for the true cost of providing quality care.

- **Operational Funding:** The bill would permanently establish a direct-to-provider funding allocation based on provider capacity (not attendance) that **directly offsets provider operating costs**, including higher educator pay – similar to the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) program.
- **Family Financial Assistance:** The bill would provide financial assistance to enable more families to afford and access high-quality early education. **It prioritizes families earning at or below 85% of state median income and, over a 5-year phase-in period, would extend eligibility for financial assistance to middle-income families making up to 200% of SMI.**

## Affordability

S.301 would limit the fees paid by families who are eligible for subsidized care to ensure they are affordable. Care would be free to families making up to 100% of the federal poverty level. For families making more than that, up to 200% of state median income, fees would be limited to no more than 7% of their total income.

Income Level	Family of 2	Family of 3	Family of 4	Family of 5
100% of Federal Poverty Level	\$19,720/year	\$24,860/year	\$30,000/year	\$35,140/year
85% of State Median Income (SMI)	\$78,571/year	\$97,058/year	\$115,546/year	\$134,033/year
200% of SMI	\$184,872/year	\$228,372/year	\$271,872/year	\$315,372/year

## About the Common Start Coalition

The **Common Start Coalition** is a statewide partnership of organizations, providers, parents, early educators and advocates working together to make high-quality early education and child care affordable and accessible to all Massachusetts families. Our goal is to ensure that all families have the care solutions they need and that all children in our Commonwealth have the same, strong start and enter school on a level playing field. We are a diverse coalition including community, faith-based, labor, business, and early education and child care organizations, as well as early educators, parents, individuals, and direct service organizations.