

HOUSE BILL 304

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026

INTRODUCED BY

Mark Duncan

AN ACT

RELATING TO CHILD CARE; PROVIDING MONTHLY PAYMENTS TO A PARENT OF A CHILD THAT IS NOT ENROLLED IN A STATE-FUNDED CHILD CARE OR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. [NEW MATERIAL] PAYMENTS TO THE PARENTS OF A CHILD NOT ENROLLED IN A STATE-FUNDED CHILD CARE OR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM.--

A. The department shall provide the following monthly payments to the parents of a child that is not enrolled in a state-funded child care or pre-kindergarten program:

(1) two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500)
for each infant of the parents;

(2) one thousand nine hundred seventy-five dollars (\$1,975) for each toddler of the parents; and

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(3) one thousand three hundred seventy-five dollars (\$1,375) for each preschool-age child of the parents.

B. An application for a payment shall include documentation:

- (1) of the date of the child's birth or guardianship, as applicable;
- (2) of the parents' relationship to the child;
- (3) of the parents' in-state residency;
- (4) that the child is not enrolled in a state-funded child care or pre-kindergarten program; and
- (5) indicating where the payment to the parents of the child should be deposited or mailed.

C. The department shall make a determination within sixty calendar days of receipt of a completed application. If the application is approved, the department shall promptly make a payment as provided in Subsection A of this section.

D. If an application for payment is denied, the department shall promptly notify the parents of the grounds for denial.

E. Parents applying for the payment shall not be eligible to receive the payment if the parents have willfully or knowingly provided the department with fraudulent documentation in support of an application.

F. If more than one parent of a child applies and is eligible to receive the payment provided by Subsection A of

this section, the payment may be divided evenly between the parents; provided that if a parent has sole custody of the child for whom the payment is being made, that parent shall receive the full payment.

G. As used in this section:

(1) "child" means:

(a) an infant that is age zero up to twenty-four months;

9 (b) a toddler that is age twenty-four
10 months up to thirty-six months; or

11 (c) a preschool-age child that is age
12 three to five years;

13 (2) "department" means the early childhood
14 education and care department; and

(3) "parent" includes a legal guardian.

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