

§24001. Maine Children's Growth Council

1. Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

- A. "Council" means the Maine Children's Growth Council established in subsection 2.
- B. "Young children" means children from birth through 5 years of age.

2. Establishment. The Maine Children's Growth Council, as established in section 12004-J, subsection 16, is created to develop, maintain and evaluate a plan for sustainable social and financial investment in healthy development of the State's young children and their families.

3. Membership. The council consists of the members listed in this subsection who must have a strong interest in early childhood and early care and education and must be influential in their communities:

A. Two members of the Senate, one from each of the 2 political parties having the greatest number of members in the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;

B. Two members of the House of Representatives, one from each of the 2 political parties having the greatest number of members in the House, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

C. The Governor or the Governor's designee and the Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee;

D. Three parents, at least one of whom has a young child, one each appointed by the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House;

E. Two persons with experience in public funding and philanthropy, appointed by the President of the Senate;

F. One person representing child abuse and neglect prevention, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

G. One person representing postsecondary education, appointed by the Governor;

H. Eight persons representing statewide, membership or constituent organizations that advance the well-being of young children and their families, nominated by their organizations and appointed by the Governor, of whom:

(1) Three must represent statewide organizations or associations involved in early care and education programs, child care centers, Head Start programs, family child care providers, resource development centers, programs for school-age children, child development services, physicians and child advocacy;

(2) One must represent a law enforcement organization involved with children;

(3) One must represent an organization that works on community organization and mobilization;

(4) One must represent public health;

(5) One must represent the Maine Economic Growth Council; and

(6) One must represent a labor organization;

I. One person representing a statewide association of business and industry and one person representing a business roundtable on early childhood investment, appointed by the Governor;

J. Up to 8 members of the public, appointed by the Governor;

K. Three ex-officio nonvoting members: the Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee, a Department of Health and Human Services employee who works with early childhood programs including Head Start and a person representing the office within the

Department of Health and Human Services that is the fiscal agent for the federal grant program for comprehensive early childhood initiatives; and

L. The director of the Head Start collaboration project within the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care and Head Start.

4. Terms of appointment. Except for ex-officio members, members of the council are appointed for terms of 3 years. Members who are Legislators are appointed for the duration of the legislative terms in which they were appointed. Members who are not Legislators may serve beyond their designated terms until their successors are appointed.

5. Cochairs. The Governor shall appoint cochairs for the council.

6. Quorum; meetings. A majority of the voting members of the council constitute a quorum. The council may meet as often as necessary but shall meet at least 6 times a year. A meeting may be called by a cochair or by any 5 members.

7. Compensation. Members of the council serve without compensation for their services, except that parents appointed under subsection 3, paragraph D who are not reimbursed by another organization may receive mileage reimbursement and a per diem to cover related costs such as child care, and Legislators are entitled to receive the legislative per diem, as defined in Title 3, section 2, and reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses for attendance at authorized meetings of the council.

8. Staffing; funding. The council may hire staff as necessary for its work and as resources permit. The council may accept grant funding and other funding as may be available for the work of the council.

9. Logo. The council may develop, adopt and publicize a logo or slogan to identify its work.

§24002. Duties

1. Duties. The duties of the council include, but are not limited to:

A. Reviewing and addressing recommendations of legislative studies and advisory committees regarding young children and the Children's Cabinet; [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

B. Adopting and updating a long-term plan for investment in the healthy development of young children that will achieve sustainable social and financial investment in the healthy development of young children and their families.

(1) In adopting and updating the plan the council shall consult and coordinate with members of the public, the Children's Cabinet, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services and advocates, community agencies and providers of early care and education and services to children and their families; monitor and evaluate progress in accomplishing the plan's vision, goals and performance indicators and best practice research; and consider the changing economic and demographic conditions and the effect of investments on economic growth and productivity.

(2) The plan must include strategies:

(a) To create and sustain a unified, statewide early childhood services system that provides essential resources for children, shares common standards for quality, respects the diversity and

uniqueness of young children and their families, reflects a commitment to sustainable growth, includes family representation, recognizes the importance of child care in sustaining employment for parents and recognizes the value of new forms of cooperation among government, business and society in achieving the goals of the plan; and

(b) For overall investment and prioritization of early childhood and education programs, services and initiatives and to address workforce education and training issues, utilization of community partners across the state and investments in technology and infrastructure; and [2007, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW).]

C. Reporting by **January 15, 2019** and every 2 years thereafter at the start of the first regular session of the Legislature to the Governor and the one or more joint standing committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health, human services, taxation and education matters on the activities and accomplishments of the council and its long-term plan for investment in the healthy development of young children, and issuing such other reports as the **Maine Children's Growth Council** determines to be appropriate. **The biennial report must include, but is not limited to:**

(1) A description of the involvement of each state agency listed in section 24001, subsection 3, paragraphs K and L in providing early childhood and education services to young children;

(2) A description of the plans and goals of each state agency listed in section 24001, subsection 3, paragraphs K and L as those plans and goals affect the provision of services to young children;

(3) Recommendations for changes to laws and rules to reduce barriers to collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded programs and services for young children and their families and to improve the quality of programs and services for young children statewide. The recommendations must include, but are not limited to, methods to:

(a) Promote statewide the availability of services and programs for young children and their families;

(b) Promote statewide the financial resources available to young children and their families for early childhood and education programs and services; and

(c) Enhance early childhood and education programs and services for young children, including child development services, education services, supervision services, health services and social services;

(4) A proposed budget for the implementation of the council's recommendations; and

(5) Suggested legislation needed to implement the council's recommendations;

D. Developing and periodically updating a process for evaluating the council's effectiveness

in performing its duties and for evaluating progress in accomplishing the long-term plan's visions, goals and performance indicators pursuant to paragraph B, subparagraph (1); and

E. In accordance with the process developed under paragraph D, periodically performing an evaluation of the council's effectiveness in performing its duties and of the progress in accomplishing the long-term plan's visions, goals and performance indicators pursuant to paragraph B, subparagraph (1).

Sec. 3. Evaluation; design and performance. By January 1, 2018, the Maine Children's Growth Council, created in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 24001, shall develop an evaluation process pursuant to Title 5, section 24002, subsection 1, paragraph D. By August 1, 2018, the Maine Children's Growth Council shall perform an evaluation pursuant to Title 5, section 24002, subsection 1, paragraph E.

§24003. Records and meetings

1. Public records and meetings. The records of the council are public records and meetings of the council are public meetings for the purposes of the State's freedom of access laws.