

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023**

**SENATE BILL 291
RATIFIED BILL**

AN ACT TO EXTEND THE EXPIRATION DATE TO HOLD HARMLESS CERTAIN FACILITIES WHEN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES RESUMES ENVIRONMENTAL RATING SCALE (ERS) ASSESSMENTS FOR LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES AND TO REQUIRE THE NORTH CAROLINA CHILD CARE COMMISSION TO COMPLETE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAR-RATING SYSTEM REFORM AND REPORT THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) Section 2 of S.L. 2021-127 reads as rewritten:

"**SECTION 2.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, when ERS assessments resume and the Division of Child Development and Early Education (Division) is awarding quality rating improvement system (QRIS) "education points" to a licensed child care facility toward its star rating, if the percentage of lead teachers in the program required to meet the "rated licensed education requirements" criteria is set at seventy-five percent (75%) for the program to earn those "education points" toward the facility's star rating, the Division shall lower the seventy-five percent (75%) threshold to fifty percent (50%) of lead teachers through June 30, ~~2023-2026.~~"

SECTION 1.(b) Section 3 of S.L. 2021-127 reads as rewritten:

"**SECTION 3.** Section 1 of this act is effective when it becomes law and expires ~~six months after the date the Governor signs an executive order rescinding Executive Order No. 116, Declaration of a State of Emergency to Coordinate Response and Protective Actions to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19- June 30, 2024.~~ Section 2 of this act is effective when it becomes law and expires June 30, ~~2023-2026.~~ The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law."

SECTION 2. The North Carolina Child Care Commission (Commission) shall complete recommendations for quality rating improvement system (QRIS/Star-Rating System) reform by March 31, 2024, and submit its QRIS reform recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services before the 2024 Legislative Session begins. The Commission's QRIS reform recommendations shall include accreditations from national early childhood education (ECE) accreditation organizations as an alternative pathway for licensed child care programs to earn a star rating equivalent to each accreditation's standards, including accreditations from any of the following organizations:

- (1) National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation.
- (2) National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC).
- (3) National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA).
- (4) National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).
- (5) American Montessori Society (AMS).
- (6) International Montessori Council (IMC).



(7) Cognia (formerly AdvanceED).

SECTION 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 1st day of June, 2023.

s/ Phil Berger
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Roy Cooper
Governor

Approved _____m. this _____ day of _____, 2023