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135th General Assembly
Regular Session
2023-2024

Sub. H. B. No. 7

A BILL

To amend sections 5101.342, 5180.21, and 5180.22 1
and to enact sections 5104.291 and 5180.40 of 2
the Revised Code to support strong foundations 3
for Ohio mothers and babies in their first one 4
thousand days to address maternal and infant 5
mortality, to improve health, developmental, and 6
learning outcomes for babies and mothers through 7
expanded prenatal, postnatal, infant, and 8
toddler health care and early intervention and 9
wraparound services and supports; and to name 10
this act the Strong Foundations Act. 11

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 5101.342, 5180.21, and 5180.22 be 12
amended and sections 5104.291 and 5180.40 of the Revised Code be 13
enacted to read as follows: 14

Sec. 5101.342. The Ohio commission on fatherhood shall do 15
both of the following: 16

(A) Organize a state summit on fatherhood every four 17



years;	18
(B) Prepare a report each year that does the following:	19
(1) Identifies resources available to fund fatherhood-	20
related programs and explores the creation of initiatives to do	21
the following:	22
(a) Build the parenting skills of fathers;	23
(b) Provide employment-related services for low-income,	24
noncustodial fathers;	25
(c) Prevent premature fatherhood;	26
(d) Provide services to fathers who are inmates in or have	27
just been released from imprisonment in a state correctional	28
institution, as defined in section 2967.01 of the Revised Code,	29
or in any other detention facility, as defined in section	30
2921.01 of the Revised Code, so that they are able to maintain	31
or reestablish their relationships with their families;	32
(e) Reconcile fathers with their families;	33
(f) Increase public awareness of the critical role fathers	34
play.	35
(2) Describes the commission's expectations for the	36
outcomes of fatherhood-related programs and initiatives and the	37
methods the commission uses for conducting annual measures of	38
those outcomes;	39
<u>(3) Evaluates the number of fathers and children served</u>	40
<u>and the number and types of additional services provided as a</u>	41
<u>result of the recommendations made to the director of job and</u>	42
<u>family services pursuant to section 5101.805 of the Revised</u>	43
<u>Code.</u>	44

The commission shall submit each report to the general assembly in accordance with section 101.68 of the Revised Code. 45
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(C) Pursuant to section 5101.805 of the Revised Code, the commission may make recommendations to the director of job and family services regarding funding, approval, and implementation of fatherhood programs in this state that meet at least one of the four purposes of the temporary assistance for needy families block grant, as specified in 42 U.S.C. 601. 47
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(D) The portion of the report prepared pursuant to division (B) (2) of this section shall be prepared by the commission in collaboration with the director of children and youth. 53
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(E) The commission shall submit each report prepared pursuant to division (B) of this section to the president and minority leader of the senate, speaker and minority leader of the house of representatives, governor, and chief justice of the supreme court. The first report is due not later than one year after the last of the initial appointments to the commission is made under section 5101.341 of the Revised Code. 57
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Sec. 5104.291. (A) This section establishes standards and conditions for rating the following early learning and development programs in the step up to quality program: 64
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(1) A licensed child care center operating a head start or early head start program; 67
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(2) A licensed child care center accredited by the national association for the education of young children, or its successor organization; 69
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(3) A licensed type A or type B family child care home under contract to provide head start or early head start 72
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services; 74

(4) A licensed type A or type B family child care home 75
accredited by the national association for the education of 76
young children, or its successor organization. 77

(B) (1) On a periodic basis, the department of children and 78
youth shall do both of the following: 79

(a) Review head start program performance standards 80
described in 45 C.F.R. Part 1302 and determine which step up to 81
quality program ratings tier corresponds with minimum head start 82
program performance standards; 83

(b) Review accreditation standards for the national 84
association for the education of young children, or its 85
successor organization, and determine which step up to quality 86
program ratings tier corresponds with minimum accreditation 87
standards. 88

(2) The department shall rate each program described in 89
divisions (A) (1) to (4) of this section in the step up to 90
quality program ratings tier that the department has determined 91
corresponds with the minimum standards. 92

(C) The department shall prescribe the manner in which a 93
program shall demonstrate to the department that the program is 94
meeting the requirements of this section. 95

Sec. 5180.21. (A) The department of children and youth 96
shall establish the help me grow program as the state's 97
evidence-based parent support program that encourages early 98
prenatal and well-baby care, as well as provides parenting 99
education to promote the comprehensive health and development of 100
children. The program shall provide home visiting services to 101
families with a pregnant woman or child under five years of age 102

that meet the eligibility requirements established in rules 103
adopted under this section. Home visiting services shall be 104
provided through evidence-based home visiting models or 105
innovative, promising home visiting models recommended by the 106
Ohio home visiting consortium created under section 5180.23 of 107
the Revised Code. 108

(B) Families shall be referred to the appropriate home 109
visiting services through the central intake and referral system 110
created under section 5180.22 of the Revised Code. 111

(C) To the extent possible, the goals of the help me grow 112
program shall be consistent with the goals of the federal home 113
visiting program, as specified by the maternal and child health 114
bureau of the health resources and services administration in 115
the United States department of health and human services or its 116
successor. 117

(D) The director of children and youth ~~may~~shall enter 118
into an interagency agreement with one or more state agencies, 119
including the department of developmental disabilities, 120
department of job and family services, department of medicaid, 121
commission on minority health, Ohio fatherhood commission, and 122
children's trust fund board, to implement the help me grow 123
program ~~and~~, to ensure coordination of early childhood 124
programs, and to maximize reimbursement for the help me grow 125
program from any federal source. 126

In addition to creating the central intake and referral 127
system as described in section 5180.22 of the Revised Code, the 128
department of children and youth shall establish a comprehensive 129
screening and connection program to support the coordination of 130
home visiting services across the state, including through the 131
department of health, department of developmental disabilities, 132

department of job and family services, department of medicaid, 133
commission on minority health, Ohio fatherhood commission, and 134
children's trust fund board. Following the program's 135
establishment, the department of children and youth shall 136
evaluate the program's effectiveness in coordinating home 137
visiting services at least once annually. 138

(E) The director may distribute help me grow program funds 139
through contracts, grants, or subsidies to entities providing 140
services under the program. 141

(F) As a condition of receiving payments for home visiting 142
services, providers shall report to the director data on the 143
program performance indicators, specified in rules adopted under 144
division (G) of this section, that are used to assess progress 145
toward achieving all of the following: 146

(1) The benchmark domains established for the federal home 147
visiting program, including improvement in maternal and newborn 148
health; reduction in child injuries, abuse, and neglect; 149
improved school readiness and achievement; reduction in crime 150
and domestic violence; and improved family economic self- 151
sufficiency; 152

(2) Improvement in birth outcomes and reduction in 153
stillbirths, as that term is defined in section 5180.12 of the 154
Revised Code; 155

(3) Reduction in tobacco use by pregnant women, new 156
parents, and others living in households with children. 157

The providers shall report the data in the format and 158
within the time frames specified in the rules. 159

The director shall prepare an annual report on the data 160
received from the providers. Each report shall include an 161

evaluation addressing the number of families and children 162
served, the number and type of services provided, health and 163
developmental outcomes for participating families and children, 164
and variation in outcomes between the types of home visiting 165
programs specified in division (B) (3) of section 5180.22 of the 166
Revised Code. The director shall submit the report to the 167
general assembly in accordance with section 101.68 of the 168
Revised Code and make the report available on the internet web 169
site maintained by the department of children and youth. 170

(G) Pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, the 171
director shall adopt rules that are necessary and proper to 172
implement this section. The rules shall specify all of the 173
following: 174

(1) Subject to division (H) of this section, eligibility 175
requirements for home visiting services; 176

(2) ~~Eligibility~~ Subject to division (H) of this section, 177
eligibility requirements for providers of home visiting 178
services; 179

(3) ~~Standards~~ Subject to division (H) of this section, 180
standards and procedures for the provision of program services, 181
including data collection, program monitoring, and program 182
evaluation; 183

(4) Procedures for appealing the denial of an application 184
for program services or the termination of services; 185

(5) Procedures for appealing the denial of an application 186
to become a provider of program services or the termination of 187
the department's approval of a provider; 188

(6) Procedures for addressing complaints; 189

(7) The program performance indicators on which data must be reported by providers of home visiting services under division (F) of this section, which, to the extent possible, shall be consistent with federal reporting requirements for federally funded home visiting services;

(8) The format in which reports must be submitted under division (F) of this section and the time frames within which the reports must be submitted;

(9) Criteria for payment of approved providers of program services;

(10) Any other rules necessary to implement the program.

~~(H)~~(H) (1) When adopting rules required by division (G) (1) of this section, the ~~department~~ director shall specify that families residing in the urban and rural communities specified in rules adopted under section 3701.142 of the Revised Code and families at risk of being in, or engaged with, the child welfare system are to receive priority over other families for home visiting services.

(2) When adopting rules required by division (G) (2) of this section, the director shall specify as eligible providers of home visiting services entities that demonstrate the use of evidence-based or evidence-informed home visiting models.

(3) When adopting rules required by division (G) (3) of this section, the director may allow the provision of home visiting services to be supplemented by services available online or through other electronic means.

(I) (1) For the providers described in division (H) (2) of this section and if approved, the online services described in division (H) (3) of this section, the department shall evaluate

at least once annually their effectiveness in serving pregnant 219
women, infants, and toddlers, especially those at risk of being 220
in, or engaged with, the child welfare system. As part of each 221
evaluation, the department shall identify the challenges to 222
participation in the help me grow program that families 223
experience, particularly families in rural and Appalachian 224
communities, and recommend strategies to improve their 225
participation. 226

(2) The department shall include in the annual report 227
required by division (F) of this section an analysis of the 228
impact of the providers and online services described in 229
divisions (H) (2) and (3) of this section. 230

(J) The department, in collaboration with the departments 231
of job and family services and medicaid, shall develop 232
strategies to increase the workforce capacity of home visiting 233
service providers and parenting support professionals, including 234
efforts to incentivize and retain such providers and 235
professionals in this state. 236

Sec. 5180.22. (A) The department of children and youth 237
shall create a central intake and referral system for all home 238
visiting programs operating in this state. Through a competitive 239
bidding process, the department of children and youth may select 240
one or more persons or government entities to operate the 241
system. In its oversight of the one or more system operators, 242
the department shall streamline the system to ensure families 243
and children receive services from home visiting programs as 244
described in division (B) (3) of this section. 245

(B) If the department of children and youth chooses to 246
select one or more system operators as described in division (A) 247
of this section, a contract with any system operator shall 248

require that the system do ~~both~~ all of the following: 249

(1) Serve as a single point of entry for access, 250
assessment, and referral of families and children to appropriate 251
home visiting services based on each family's location of 252
residence; 253

(2) Use a standardized form or other mechanism to assess 254
~~for each family member's risk factors and social determinants of~~ 255
~~health, as well as ensure~~; 256

(3) Ensure that the family is families and children are 257
referred to the appropriate and receive services from home 258
visiting program, which may include a program that uses programs 259
using evidence-based or evidence-informed models and that are 260
appropriate to their level of needs, including the following: 261

(a) Programs using home visiting contractors ~~who~~ that 262
provide services within a pathways community HUB ~~that fully or~~ 263
~~substantially complies with the pathways community HUB~~ 264
~~certification standards developed~~ certified by the pathways 265
community HUB institute; 266

(b) Programs that provide services using the early head 267
start home-based option; 268

(c) Programs that provide services using other available 269
evidence-based or evidence-informed home visiting models or 270
strategies, including those supported by the state and specified 271
by the department. 272

(C) The standardized form or other mechanism described in 273
division (B) (2) of this section shall be agreed to by the home 274
visiting consortium created under section 5180.23 of the Revised 275
Code. 276

(D) A contract entered into under division (B) of this 277
section shall require a system operator to issue an annual 278
report to the department of children and youth that includes 279
data regarding referrals made by the central intake and referral 280
system, costs associated with the referrals, and the quality of 281
services received by families and children who were referred to 282
services through the system. The report shall be distributed to 283
the home visiting consortium created under section 5180.23 of 284
the Revised Code. 285

(E) Nothing in this section is intended to do any of the 286
following: 287

(1) Prohibit the department of children and youth from 288
using alternative promotional materials or names for the central 289
intake and referral system; 290

(2) Require the use of help me grow program promotional 291
materials or names; 292

(3) Prohibit providers, central coordinators, the 293
department of children and youth, or stakeholders from using the 294
help me grow name for promotional materials for home visiting. 295

Sec. 5180.40. To increase participation in evidence-based 296
parenting education programs, the department of children and 297
youth shall develop strategies for state departments, agencies, 298
and boards to use in informing parents, caregivers, and child 299
care providers about such programs and in promoting their 300
benefits, including their parenting, caregiving, and educational 301
resources. In developing the foregoing strategies, the 302
department of children and youth shall collaborate with other 303
state departments. 304

Section 2. That existing sections 5101.342, 5180.21, and 305

5180.22 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed. 306

Section 3. (A) As used in this section, "WIC" means the 307
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and 308
Children established under the "Child Nutrition Act of 1966," 42 309
U.S.C. 1786. 310

(B) The Department of Health shall investigate and 311
determine the services and tools available at the federal level 312
and the services and tools implemented in other states that 313
could be implemented in Ohio to increase access to and use of 314
WIC. 315

(C) Within sixty days of the effective date of this 316
section, the Department of Health shall submit a report to the 317
General Assembly in accordance with section 101.68 of the 318
Revised Code summarizing the results of the investigation 319
described in division (B) of this section and establishing a 320
plan to increase access to and use of WIC. 321

(D) Beginning three months after the effective date of 322
this section and continuing until two years after the effective 323
date of this section, the Department of Health shall submit 324
quarterly reports to the General Assembly in accordance with 325
section 101.68 of the Revised Code detailing progress on 326
implementing the plan described in division (C), including: 327

(1) Expenditures; 328

(2) Changes made to the WIC program; 329

(3) The total number of women and children served; 330

(4) Any other relevant outcomes; 331

(5) Opportunities to further increase the number of women 332
and children served. 333

Section 4. The Department of Medicaid shall study how 334
evidence-based peer-to-peer programming that supports infant 335
vitality can be reimbursed through the Medicaid program. The 336
Department shall submit a report summarizing the results of the 337
study to the General Assembly in accordance with section 101.68 338
of the Revised Code one year after the effective date of this 339
section. 340

Section 5. (A) Not later than June 30, 2026, the Medicaid 341
Director shall evaluate, clarify, and update the Medicaid 342
program's coverage of evidence-based and evidence-informed 343
mental health and dyadic family therapy services for children 344
and their caregivers, which are intended to improve outcomes for 345
children from birth through five years of age. The Director's 346
evaluation, clarification, and update to coverage shall address 347
mental health and related screening for infants, toddlers, young 348
children, pregnant women, women postpartum, and mothers and 349
other caregivers, and shall include follow-up for those with 350
identified risk, for parent-child dyadic therapies, and other 351
infant and early child mental health services. 352

The Director shall develop policy and billing guidance for 353
Medicaid providers to do both of the following: 354

(1) Improve the use of mental health and dyadic family 355
therapy services for children from birth through age five and 356
their families and other caregivers; 357

(2) Encourage use of the Diagnostic Classification of 358
Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early 359
Childhood published by ZERO TO THREE and known as the "DC:0-5" 360
for assessing and diagnosing infants, toddlers, and young 361
children, and permit use of ICD-10 diagnosis codes, published by 362
the United States Department of Health and Human Services, for 363

Medicaid billing.	364
(B) Not later than June 30, 2027, the Medicaid Director shall submit a report to the Governor and, in accordance with section 101.68 of the Revised Code, the General Assembly that includes both of the following:	365 366 367 368
(1) Information about how the Department of Medicaid has engaged stakeholders to develop the necessary guidance, manuals, training, and billing code use procedures associated with the Medicaid coverage described under division (A) of this section;	369 370 371 372
(2) An evaluation of the Medicaid coverage described in division (A) of this section, including:	373 374
(a) The number of families and children served;	375
(b) The number and types of services provided;	376
(c) Outcome metrics for families and children served.	377
Section 6. This act shall be known as the Strong Foundations Act.	378 379