HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 770 FILED ON: 1/28/2021

HOUSE . . . . . No. 544

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Ruth B. Balser

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to support healthy development among preschoolers.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Ruth B. Balser	*12th Middlesex*	*1/28/2021*
Elizabeth A. Malia	*11th Suffolk*	*2/24/2021*
Tami L. Gouveia	*14th Middlesex*	*2/26/2021*
Sal N. DiDomenico	*Middlesex and Suffolk*	*2/26/2021*
Susannah M. Whipps	*2nd Franklin*	*3/26/2021*
Christina A. Minicucci	*14th Essex*	*4/16/2021*
Natalie M. Higgins	*4th Worcester*	*9/8/2021*
Erika Uyterhoeven	*27th Middlesex*	*12/17/2021*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 544

By Ms. Balser of Newton, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 544) of Ruth B. Balser and others for legislation to require the development of standards for prohibiting or limiting the use of suspension and expulsion in preschools. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

An Act to support healthy development among preschoolers.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Chapter 15D of the General Laws shall be amended by inserting, after section 12, the following section: Section 12A. Pursuant to clause (t) of section 2, the department shall develop performance standards for prohibiting or significantly limiting the use of suspension and expulsion in all licensed early education and care programs. The standards shall ensure that expulsion or suspension is only used in extraordinary circumstances where there is a documented assessment that the child's behavior poses of a serious ongoing threat to the safety of others that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable program modifications.

The standards shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) benchmarks and goals for supporting children's social, emotional and behavioral development to include reducing the use of exclusion as a disciplinary tool and for eliminating disparities in the use of suspension and expulsion, and facilitating referrals for children with intensive needs;

(2) engagement steps to be taken with the child and parent or guardian prior to suspension or expulsion;

(3) requirements for communicating disciplinary policies, including suspension and expulsion policies, to staff, families and community partners;

(4) pathways for programs to access technical assistance to support ongoing development of staff and teacher skills for supporting children's social, emotional and behavioral development, reducing disparities and limiting the use of suspension and expulsion; and

(5) requirements for assessing and documenting a serious ongoing threat to the safety of others

(6) infant and toddler program reporting requirements.