

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6593

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Children's Services

Title: An act relating to the transfer of the administration of the infant and toddler early intervention program from the department of social and health services to the department of early learning.

Brief Description: Transferring the administration of the infant and toddler early intervention program from the department of social and health services to the department of early learning.

Sponsors: Senators Gordon, Kauffman, Prentice, Oemig, Tom, Kline and Parlette.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Children's Services: 2/19/10, 2/23/10 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House)**

- Transfers responsibility for the administration of the Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP) from the Department of Social and Health Services to the Department of Early Learning (DEL), effective July 1, 2010.
- Renames the ITEIP the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) Program.
- Establishes the DEL as the lead state agency for administering the ESIT Program under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Angel, Goodman and Seaquist.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

Federal funding for services to children with disabilities is provided, in part, under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Funding directed to states under the IDEA for serving children birth to 3 years of age is commonly called Part C funding. This Part C funding is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). The Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP) within the DDD serves children with developmental disabilities from birth to age 3.

Federal law requires that school districts provide necessary special education services for eligible children ages 3 to 21. In 2006 the Legislature enacted Substitute House Bill 1107 (SHB 1107) requiring school districts, beginning in September 2009, to also provide or contract for early intervention services for eligible children from birth to age 3. Most school districts currently are contracting, rather than directly providing, these services. During deliberations on SHB 1107, stakeholders reported that nearly a third of children who received ITEIP services did not require placement in special education programs when they exited the program at age 3.

According to the current federally-approved state plan for receipt of federal funds, services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families are coordinated with funding from school districts, the DDD, the Medicaid program, the Department of Health, and private insurance companies. The DDD provides block grants to counties to pay for services to people of all ages with disabilities, including children ages birth to 3. Individual counties have discretion regarding what portion of their block grant will be used to support local ITEIP programs.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is designated as the lead agency for receipt of federal Part C funding to serve eligible children ages birth to 3. All duties, powers, functions, reports, documents, surveys, books, records, files, tangible property, and personnel pertaining to and the administration of the ITEIP are transferred from the DSHS to the DEL, effective July 1, 2010. Classified employees who are members of a collective bargaining unit with the DSHS shall become part of the comparable bargaining unit with the DEL.

The ITEIP is renamed the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program and the DEL replaces the DSHS for purposes of participating on the statewide council for the statewide coordination of services to children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing and their parents.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill renames the ITEIP the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program, instead of the Birth-to-Three Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect July 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is intended to focus on early education opportunities and give it the appropriate attention it deserves by moving it from the DSHS to the DEL. The program name may be more appropriately focused on infants and toddlers, perhaps the Support for Infants and Toddlers Program. This bill also is important because it names the DEL as the state lead agency for administration of federal Part C special education funds.

Moving the ITEIP to the DEL will be an opportunity to plan and implement high quality early learning for all children. The bill also is consistent with the intent of the DEL and is supported by a broad-based coalition of service providers, parents, and other advocates. We are interested in assuring that the new program name reflects its focus on infants and toddlers.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding is ready and available for implementing the transfer of this program to the DEL.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Gordon, prime sponsor; and Cecile Lindquist, Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council and WEECARE Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.