

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SHB 1723

PARTIAL VETO C 323 L 13 Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning early learning opportunities.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi, Walsh, Farrell, Maxwell, Roberts, Freeman, Goodman, Sawyer, Sullivan, Jinkins, Seaquist, Lytton, Haigh, Hunter, Morrell, Sells, Ryu, Morris, McCoy, Reykdal, Tarleton, Tharinger, Pollet, Fey, Moscoso, Bergquist, Ormsby and Santos).

House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

In Washington, there are several early learning, child care, and parent education programs. Each program has unique objectives, eligibility requirements, processes for enrollment, hours of operation, and funding streams.

Home visiting programs provide support and education to expectant parents and new families. Home visiting programs are voluntary and offer an array of in-person services to families based on the particular objectives of the program and needs of the family. There are several home visiting programs utilized in Washington. Nurse-Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers are two examples of home visiting programs.

The Working Connections Child Care Program (WCCC) provides subsidies to child care providers serving families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The WCCC is often associated with Washington's WorkFirst program and is intended to support parents who are working, attending training, or enrolling in educational programs outside the home. Not all families receiving the WCCC benefits, however, participate in approved WorkFirst activities. For example, a parent under 22 years of age may be eligible for the WCCC benefits for high school development. Children of families receiving the WCCC benefits are required to be less than 13 years of age or less than 19 years of age and have a verified special need or be under court supervision.

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.

The Washington State Preschool Program, or the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is an early learning program for children ages 3 to 5 years who have not entered kindergarten. The ECEAP provides preschool education, family support, and health and nutritional services to families at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level.

In 2007 the Legislature supported the development of the Early Achievers program, which is Washington's quality rating and improvement system. The Early Achievers program establishes a common set of expectations and standards that define, measure, and improve the quality of early learning settings. Participation in the Early Achievers program is voluntary.

Summary:

Schools administering the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) may utilize up to three school days at the start of the school year to meet with parents and families. Additionally, the terms "Early Achievers, Early Start, and the Washington State Preschool Program" are defined. A provision is removed that exempts an agency in operation for 10 years prior to June 6, 1987, from licensing requirements.

A technical working group is established to examine federal and state early education funding streams and early education eligibility processes. The technical working group is charged with developing technical options for system designs that blend and braid federal and state funding streams for early learning programs.

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is required to apply data already collected and make biennial recommendations to the Legislature regarding WCCC subsidy and state-funded preschool rates and compensation models that would attract and retain high quality early learning professionals. When additional funding is appropriated for the specific purpose of home visiting and parent and caregiver support, the DEL must reserve at least 80 percent of funding to be deposited into the home visiting services account and up to 20 percent may be used for other parent or caregiver support services. Home visiting services must include programs that serve families involved in the child welfare system.

The Legislature is required to fund the expansion of the Washington State Preschool Program in fiscal year 2014, if funds are appropriated for this specific purpose. By fiscal year 2015, all Washington State Preschool Programs receiving state funding must enroll in the Early Achievers program. Before final implementation of the Early Achievers program, the DEL must report to the Legislature on progress of the program as defined in the Race to the Top federal grant and expenditures. When reviewing applicants for state funding for the Washington State Preschool Program, the DEL must consider local community needs, demonstrated capacity, and the need to support a mixed delivery system of early learning that includes alternative models for delivery including licensed centers and licensed family child care providers.

Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose, beginning in September 1, 2013, the DEL is required to increase the base rate for all child care providers by 10 percent and provide Working Connections Child Care providers a 5 percent subsidy rate increase for enrolling in Early Achievers level 2. Any provider receiving tiered subsidy

rate enhancements must complete level 2 within 30 months or the subsidy rate will return to the level 1 rate of Early Achievers. In order to maintain the subsidy rate increase, providers must also actively participate in the Early Achievers program and continue to advance towards level 5 of the program. Finally, exempt providers are required to participate in continuing education, if adequate funding is available.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	59	38	
Senate	46	2	(Senate amended)
House			(House refused to concur)
Senate	44	3	(Senate amended)
House	63	35	(House concurred)

Effective: July 28, 2013

Partial Veto Summary: The section that created a technical working group to examine federal and state early learning funding sources is vetoed.