S-2125.3

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**SENATE BILL 5901**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senator Braun

AN ACT Relating to eligibility for the working connections child care and early childhood education and assistance programs; amending RCW 43.215.135 and 43.215.405; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 43.215.135 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department shall establish and implement policies in the working connections child care program to promote stability and quality of care for children from low-income households. These policies shall focus on supporting school readiness for young learners. Policies for the expenditure of funds constituting the working connections child care program must be consistent with the outcome measures defined in RCW 74.08A.410 and the standards established in this section intended to promote stability, quality, and continuity of early care and education programming.

(2) As recommended by Public Law 113-186, authorizations for the working connections child care subsidy shall be effective for twelve months beginning July 1, 2016, ((~~unless an earlier date is provided in the omnibus appropriations act~~)) except that for a change in the ongoing status of the child's parent as working or attending a job training or education program that is not temporary, assistance shall be discontinued after a minimum of three months.

(3) As a condition of receiving a child care subsidy or a working connections child care subsidy, the applicant or recipient must seek child support enforcement services from the department of social and health services, division of child support, unless the department finds that the applicant or recipient has good cause not to cooperate.

(4) Existing child care providers serving nonschool-age children and receiving state subsidy payments must complete the following requirements to be eligible for a state subsidy under this section:

(a) Enroll in the early achievers program by August 1, 2016;

(b) Complete level 2 activities in the early achievers program by August 1, 2017; and

(c) Rate at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program by December 31, 2019. If a child care provider rates below a level 3 by December 31, 2019, the provider must complete remedial activities with the department, and rate at a level 3 or higher no later than June 30, 2020.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) Effective July 1, 2016, a new child care provider serving nonschool-age children and receiving state subsidy payments must complete the following activities to be eligible to receive a state subsidy under this section:

(a) Enroll in the early achievers program within thirty days of receiving the initial state subsidy payment;

(b) Complete level 2 activities in the early achievers program within twelve months of enrollment; and

(c) Rate at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program within thirty months of enrollment. If a child care provider rates below a level 3 within thirty months from enrollment into the early achievers program, the provider must complete remedial activities with the department, and rate at a level 3 or higher within six months of beginning remedial activities.

((~~(5)~~)) (6) If a child care provider does not rate at a level 3 or higher following the remedial period, the provider is no longer eligible to receive state subsidy under this section.

((~~(6)~~)) (7) If a child care provider serving nonschool-age children and receiving state subsidy payments has successfully completed all level 2 activities and is waiting to be rated by the deadline provided in this section, the provider may continue to receive a state subsidy pending the successful completion of the level 3 rating activity.

((~~(7)~~)) (8) The department shall implement tiered reimbursement for early achievers program participants in the working connections child care program rating at level 3, 4, or 5.

((~~(8)~~)) (9) The department shall account for a child care copayment collected by the provider from the family for each contracted slot and establish the copayment fee by rule.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.215.405 and 2014 c 160 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.457 and 43.215.900 through 43.215.903.

(1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW 43.215.420.

(2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to qualify under RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.450 and 43.215.900 through 43.215.903 and are designated as eligible for funding by the department under RCW 43.215.430 and 43.215.440.

(3) "Comprehensive" means an assistance program that focuses on the needs of the child and includes education, health, and family support services.

(4) "Department" means the department of early learning.

(5) "Eligible child" means a child not eligible for kindergarten whose family income is at or below one hundred ten percent of the federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal department of health and human services, and includes a child whose family is eligible for public assistance, and who is not a participant in a federal or state program providing comprehensive services; a child eligible for special education due to disability under RCW 28A.155.020; and may include children who are eligible under rules adopted by the department if the number of such children equals not more than ten percent of the total enrollment in the early childhood program. However, effective July 1, 2019, three year olds are eligible subject to funding in the omnibus appropriations act for this specific purpose. Priority for enrollment shall be given to children from families with the lowest income, children in foster care, or to eligible children from families with multiple needs.

(6) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for parents to:

(a) Actively participate in their child's early childhood program;

(b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting skills;

(c) Further their education and training;

(d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the community;

(e) Increase their self-reliance.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 2 of this act takes effect June 30, 2018.

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