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**HOUSE BILL 1451**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Sullivan, Lekanoff, and Thai; by request of Office of Financial Management

AN ACT Relating to the entitlement date and definition for the early childhood education and assistance program; amending RCW 43.216.505, 43.216.525, and 43.216.556; reenacting and amending RCW 43.216.010; creating a new section; providing an effective date; and providing an expiration date.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.010 and 2020 c 270 s 11 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Agency" means any person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, or facility that provides child care and early learning services outside a child's own home and includes the following irrespective of whether there is compensation to the agency:

(a) "Child day care center" means an agency that regularly provides early childhood education and early learning services for a group of children for periods of less than ((~~twenty-four~~)) 24 hours;

(b) "Early learning" includes but is not limited to programs and services for child care; state, federal, private, and nonprofit preschool; child care subsidies; child care resource and referral; parental education and support; and training and professional development for early learning professionals;

(c) "Family day care provider" means a child care provider who regularly provides early childhood education and early learning services for not more than ((~~twelve~~)) 12 children in the provider's home in the family living quarters;

(d) "Nongovernmental private-public partnership" means an entity registered as a nonprofit corporation in Washington state with a primary focus on early learning, school readiness, and parental support, and an ability to raise a minimum of ((~~five million dollars~~)) $5,000,000 in contributions;

(e) "Service provider" means the entity that operates a community facility.

(2) "Agency" does not include the following:

(a) Persons related to the child in the following ways:

(i) Any blood relative, including those of half-blood, and including first cousins, nephews or nieces, and persons of preceding generations as denoted by prefixes of grand, great, or great-great;

(ii) Stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, and stepsister;

(iii) A person who legally adopts a child or the child's parent as well as the natural and other legally adopted children of such persons, and other relatives of the adoptive parents in accordance with state law; or

(iv) Spouses of any persons named in (a)(i), (ii), or (iii) of this subsection, even after the marriage is terminated;

(b) Persons who are legal guardians of the child;

(c) Persons who care for a neighbor's or friend's child or children, with or without compensation, where the person providing care for periods of less than ((~~twenty-four~~)) 24 hours does not conduct such activity on an ongoing, regularly scheduled basis for the purpose of engaging in business, which includes, but is not limited to, advertising such care;

(d) Parents on a mutually cooperative basis exchange care of one another's children;

(e) Nursery schools that are engaged primarily in early childhood education with preschool children and in which no child is enrolled on a regular basis for more than four hours per day;

(f) Schools, including boarding schools, that are engaged primarily in education, operate on a definite school year schedule, follow a stated academic curriculum, and accept only school age children;

(g) Seasonal camps of three months' or less duration engaged primarily in recreational or educational activities;

(h) Facilities providing child care for periods of less than ((~~twenty-four~~)) 24 hours when a parent or legal guardian of the child remains on the premises of the facility for the purpose of participating in:

(i) Activities other than employment; or

(ii) Employment of up to two hours per day when the facility is operated by a nonprofit entity that also operates a licensed child care program at the same facility in another location or at another facility;

(i) Any entity that provides recreational or educational programming for school age children only and the entity meets all of the following requirements:

(i) The entity utilizes a drop-in model for programming, where children are able to attend during any or all program hours without a formal reservation;

(ii) The entity does not assume responsibility in lieu of the parent, unless for coordinated transportation;

(iii) The entity is a local affiliate of a national nonprofit; and

(iv) The entity is in compliance with all safety and quality standards set by the associated national agency;

(j) A program operated by any unit of local, state, or federal government;

(k) A program located within the boundaries of a federally recognized Indian reservation, licensed by the Indian tribe;

(l) A program located on a federal military reservation, except where the military authorities request that such agency be subject to the licensing requirements of this chapter;

(m) A program that offers early learning and support services, such as parent education, and does not provide child care services on a regular basis.

(3) "Applicant" means a person who requests or seeks employment in an agency.

(4) "Certificate of parental improvement" means a certificate issued under RCW 74.13.720 to an individual who has a founded finding of physical abuse or negligent treatment or maltreatment, or a court finding that the individual's child was dependent as a result of a finding that the individual abused or neglected their child pursuant to RCW 13.34.030(6)(b).

(5) "Conviction information" means criminal history record information relating to an incident which has led to a conviction or other disposition adverse to the applicant.

(6) "Department" means the department of children, youth, and families.

(7) "Early achievers" means a program that improves the quality of early learning programs and supports and rewards providers for their participation.

(8) "Early childhood education and assistance program contractor" means an organization that provides early childhood education and assistance program services under a signed contract with the department.

(9) "Early childhood education and assistance program provider" means an organization that provides site level, direct, and high quality early childhood education and assistance program services under the direction of an early childhood education and assistance program contractor.

(10) "Early start" means an integrated high quality continuum of early learning programs for children birth-to-five years of age. Components of early start include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Home visiting and parent education and support programs;

(b) The early achievers program described in RCW 43.216.085;

(c) Integrated full-day and part-day high quality early learning programs; and

(d) High quality preschool for children whose family income is at or below ((~~one hundred ten~~)) 110 percent of the federal poverty level.

(11) "Education data center" means the education data center established in RCW 43.41.400, commonly referred to as the education research and data center.

(12) "Employer" means a person or business that engages the services of one or more people, especially for wages or salary to work in an agency.

(13) "Enforcement action" means denial, suspension, revocation, modification, or nonrenewal of a license pursuant to RCW 43.216.325(1) or assessment of civil monetary penalties pursuant to RCW 43.216.325(3).

(14) "Extended day program" means an early childhood education and assistance program that offers early learning education for at least ((~~ten~~)) 10 hours per day, a minimum of ((~~two thousand~~)) 2,000 hours per year, at least four days per week, and operates year-round.

(15) "Full day program" means an early childhood education and assistance program that offers early learning education for a minimum of ((~~one thousand~~)) 1,000 instructional hours per year.

(16) "Low-income child care provider" means a person who administers a child care program that consists of at least ((~~eighty~~)) 80 percent of children receiving working connections child care subsidy.

(17) "Low-income neighborhood" means a district or community where more than twenty percent of households are below the federal poverty level.

(18) "Negative action" means a court order, court judgment, or an adverse action taken by an agency, in any state, federal, tribal, or foreign jurisdiction, which results in a finding against the applicant reasonably related to the individual's character, suitability, and competence to care for or have unsupervised access to children in child care. This may include, but is not limited to:

(a) A decision issued by an administrative law judge;

(b) A final determination, decision, or finding made by an agency following an investigation;

(c) An adverse agency action, including termination, revocation, or denial of a license or certification, or if pending adverse agency action, the voluntary surrender of a license, certification, or contract in lieu of the adverse action;

(d) A revocation, denial, or restriction placed on any professional license; or

(e) A final decision of a disciplinary board.

(19) "Nonconviction information" means arrest, founded allegations of child abuse, or neglect pursuant to chapter 26.44 RCW, or other negative action adverse to the applicant.

(20) "Nonschool age child" means a child who is age six years or younger and who is not enrolled in a public or private school.

(21) "Part day program" means an early childhood education and assistance program that offers early learning education for at least two and one-half hours per class session, at least ((~~three hundred twenty~~)) 320 hours per year, for a minimum of ((~~thirty~~)) 30 weeks per year.

(22) "Private school" means a private school approved by the state under chapter 28A.195 RCW.

(23) "Probationary license" means a license issued as a disciplinary measure to an agency that has previously been issued a full license but is out of compliance with licensing standards.

(24) "Requirement" means any rule, regulation, or standard of care to be maintained by an agency.

(25) "School age child" means a child who is five years of age through ((~~twelve~~)) 12 years of age and is attending a public or private school or is receiving home-based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW.

(26) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department.

(27) "Washington state preschool program" means an education program for children three-to-five years of age who have not yet entered kindergarten, such as the early childhood education and assistance program.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.505 and 2019 c 408 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 43.216.500 through 43.216.559, 43.216.900, and 43.216.901.

(1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW 43.216.520.

(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 43.216.500 through 43.216.550, 43.216.900, and 43.216.901 and are designated as eligible for funding by the department under RCW 43.216.530 and 43.216.540.

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

(4) "Eligible child" means a three to five-year old child who is not age-eligible for kindergarten, is not a participant in a federal or state program providing comprehensive services, and who:

(a) Has a family income at or below ((~~one hundred ten~~)) 110 percent of the federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal department of health and human services;

(b) Is eligible for special education due to disability under RCW 28A.155.020; or

(c) Meets criteria under rules adopted by the department if the number of such children equals not more than ((~~ten~~)) 10 percent of the total enrollment in the early childhood program. Preference for enrollment in this group shall be given to children from families with the lowest income, children in foster care, or to eligible children from families with multiple needs.

(5) "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.

(6) "Instructional hours" means those hours children are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activities planned by and under the direction of staff in approved programs, as defined in subsection (2) of this section, inclusive of intermissions for class changes, recess, and teacher/parent-guardian conferences that are planned and scheduled by the approved program for the purpose of discussing students' educational needs or progress, and time spent for meals or rest.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.525 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department shall adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW for the administration of the early childhood education and assistance program. Approved early childhood education and assistance programs shall conduct needs assessments of their service area and identify any targeted groups of children, to include but not be limited to children of seasonal and migrant farmworkers and native American populations living either on or off reservation. Approved early childhood education and assistance programs shall provide to the department a service delivery plan, to the extent practicable, that addresses these targeted populations.

(2) The department, in developing rules for the early childhood education and assistance program, shall consult with the early learning advisory council, and shall consider such factors as coordination with existing head start and other early childhood programs, the preparation necessary for instructors, qualifications of instructors, adequate space and equipment, and special transportation needs. The rules shall specifically require the early childhood programs to provide for parental involvement in participation with their child's program, in local program policy decisions, in development and revision of service delivery systems, and in parent education and training.

(3) By January 1, 2016, the department shall adopt rules requiring early childhood education and assistance program employees who have access to children to submit to a fingerprint background check. Fingerprint background check procedures for the early childhood education and assistance program shall be the same as the background check procedures in RCW ((~~43.215.215~~)) 43.216.270.

(4) By January 1, 2023, the department shall adopt rules outlining the requirements related to educational activities and comprehensive services required to meet the entitlement defined in RCW 43.216.556.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.556 and 2019 c 408 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Funding for the program of early learning established under this chapter must be appropriated to the department. The department shall distribute funding to approved early childhood education and assistance program contractors on the basis of eligible children enrolled.

(2) The program shall be implemented in phases, so that full implementation is achieved in the ((~~2022-23~~)) 2026-27 school year.

(3) Funding shall continue to be phased in ((~~each year~~)) until full statewide implementation of the early learning program is achieved in the ((~~2022-23~~)) 2026-27 school year, at which time any eligible child is entitled to be enrolled in the program. Entitlement under this section is voluntary enrollment in a full day program.

(4) School districts and approved community‑based early learning providers may contract with the department to provide services under the program. The department shall collaborate with school districts, community‑based providers, and educational service districts to promote an adequate supply of approved providers.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) By September 1, 2022, the department of children, youth, and families must submit a report to the governor and appropriate committees of the legislature, pursuant to RCW 43.01.036. The report must include an implementation plan to meet the early childhood education and assistance program entitlement under RCW 43.216.556. The implementation plan shall include the following:

(a) Details for how all eligible children as defined in RCW 43.216.505 and entitled to the program under RCW 43.216.510 and 43.216.556 will access a full day program by the 2026-27 school year;

(b) In collaboration with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, a description of how the early childhood education and assistance program, and transitional kindergarten funding streams, may be braided to create high-quality integrated preschool classrooms;

(i) The plan should also include braiding or other funding combinations of other existing program funding streams that serve three and four-year old children, funded by federal or state dollars including, but not limited to:

(A) The working connections child care subsidy;

(B) Head start;

(C) Developmental preschool programs;

(D) Early childhood intervention and prevention services;

(E) Local government funded preschool programs; and

(F) Title I.

(ii) The plan must describe how, when braided or otherwise combined program funding streams can build high-quality, inclusive preschool programs that can be delivered in a variety of public or private settings including, but not limited to:

(A) School districts;

(B) Educational service districts;

(C) Community and technical colleges;

(D) Local governments;

(E) Nonprofit organizations;

(F) Agencies as defined in RCW 43.216.010; and

(G) Other community-based and school-based settings;

(c) An outline of how the department of children, youth, and families will maintain or increase the diversity of program workforce and maintain an emphasis on eliminating racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in early childhood education;

(d) By geographic location across the state, a description of future program resource needs, costs, and phase-in timelines including workforce development and salary and benefit needs to successfully recruit and retain providers, capital and facilities expansion, native language and dual language access, rural access, the impact on infant and toddler child care, and availability of combined or braided programs in (b) of this subsection. Multiple recommendations on how these future needs may be met must be included, as well as a description of how comprehensive services may be delivered in a combined or braided preschool model, recognizing that not all children or families will need the same suite of comprehensive services;

(e) Estimates of unmet need by geographic location, by age and by type of program, including part day, full day, and extended day;

(f) Cost and recommended timelines to convert part day programs to full day programs, including recommendations for optional, part-day participation in the program in order to support parental choice;

(g) Identification of the need for and a phase-in approach to providing voluntary summer school options;

(h) Recommendation for income eligibility including but not limited to income eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch granted under 7 C.F.R. Sec. 245.6; and

(i) A tool kit for potential preschool program operators to implement a high-quality, inclusive preschool program serving three and four-year old children, as outlined in this section. This tool kit must be made available on the department of children, youth, and families' public website, in a consumer-friendly format and translated to support dual-language communities.

(2) This section expires September 1, 2022.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 1 of this act takes effect September 1, 2026.

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