

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2900

As Reported by House Committee On:
Human Services

Title: An act relating to early intervention services for children with disabilities.

Brief Description: Requiring the department of social and health services to contract with counties to provide early intervention services for children with developmental disabilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Walsh, Kagi, Roberts, Haler, Pettigrew, Quall, Santos, Priest, Hinkle, McCoy, Darneille, Cody, Linville, Morrell, Simpson, Goodman, Conway, Kenney and Wood.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services: 1/30/08, 2/5/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to contract with each county through the Employment and Day Program to provide funding for early intervention services to all eligible children with disabilities from birth to 3 years of age who have been identified as needing services.
- Requires each county to provide or contract to provide early intervention services to all eligible children within the county who have been identified as needing services.
- Adds to the caseload forecast persons expected to meet entitlement requirements for services of the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Dickerson, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Ahern, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Darneille, McCoy and O'Brien.

Staff: Linda Merelle (786-7092).

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:

In 1986 Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law developed guidelines for states to follow in providing services to families with infants and toddlers with disabilities. The Department of Social and Health Services' Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP), within the Division of Developmental Disabilities, directs the coordination of the statewide system of early intervention services. Early intervention services are designed to meet the developmental needs of each eligible child from birth to 3 years old and the needs of the family related to enhancing the child's development. The federal statute, IDEA, does not set a funding level for the ITEIP. Currently, only some counties in Washington provide funding for the ITEIP, and the funding provided by these counties is not uniform.

Summary of Bill:

This legislation requires the Department of Social and Health Services (Department) to contract with all Washington counties to provide funding for early intervention services to eligible children with disabilities from birth to 3 years of age who have been identified as needing services. Each county must, in partnership with local lead agencies, school districts, and birth-to-three providers, provide or contract for early intervention services to all eligible children within the county who have been identified as needing services.

The Department is required to contract with each county through the existing Employment and Day Program to provide funding for early intervention services. The rate of funding for Fiscal Year 2009 would be \$2,400 multiplied by the number of active ITEIP plans as determined in May of the previous fiscal year. The \$2,400 would increase each fiscal year according to the inflation rate as set by the federal Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Included in the amounts of funding provided at this rate would be the amounts provided to the county through the Employment and Day Program already designated for the ITEIP services.

The ITEIP services provided shall be determined according to Part C of the IDEA and the child's individualized family service plan. The state-designated birth-to-three agency shall be the payor of last resort for such ITEIP services provided under this section.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) One third of counties give no money toward the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP). Some counties, in order to provide money for the ITEIP, shift money that could have been used for adults. This is an existing program and corrective action is requested. The bill makes the funding rate equal statewide and provides forecasting. By 2010, Washington is expected to reach the national incidence rate of 2.4 percent of all children in the state ages birth to 3 who need early intervention services. Two years ago there was an extension of the definition of those eligible for services and, as a result, more persons became eligible. Funding across counties is inequitable, and this limits the type of services that families can access. The ITEIP does a nice job of tracking how services are administered. They designate base funding and forecast for future funding. This saves 26 percent of kids from going into special education programs when they transition out of the ITEIP. Thurston County does not participate in the ITEIP services. The Parent-to-Parent Support Program is the payer of last resort for early intervention services in Thurston County, and it needs to have the participation of the county. Parent-to-Parent has spent its entire budget providing early intervention services. Its primary partner is the school district, but the school district is only in session for nine months out of the year. Children who have received the ITEIP services need less intensive support because the experience gives them a lot of confidence. The program has the support of all parent coalitions statewide. As a result of the ITEIP services, a parent's 3-year-old does not need additional speech therapy. All children should have an equal opportunity.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Dickerson, prime sponsor; Cassie Johnston and Cecile Lindquist, Wee Care Coalition; Ray Jensen, King County; Denise Rothleutner, Association of County Human Services; Chris Morris, Parent-to-Parent of Thurston County; Betsy McAlister; Margaret Lee Thompson, Arc of Washington and King County Parent Coalition; Robert Clayton, King County Parent Coalition; and John Weisenfeld.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.