

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5828

C 394 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding early child development and learning.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Kauffman, McAuliffe, Tom, Rasmussen, Eide, Oemig, Clements, Hobbs, Weinstein, Rockefeller, Kline and Kohl-Welles).

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: In 2005, the Washington Legislature created the Washington Early Learning Council (ELC) in the Office of the Governor to pull together previously disparate early learning programs and services and to help create a coherent, high quality early learning system for children from birth to five years. The Legislature also created a steering committee (Washington Learns) to conduct a comprehensive study and develop recommendations on early learning, K-12, and higher education. ELC served as the early learning advisory body for Washington Learns. The act authorizing ELC expires July 1, 2007.

In 2006, the Legislature created the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and directed the Director of DEL to participate in the creation and governance of a non-governmental private-public partnership (Thrive by Five) focused on supporting the government's investments in early learning and promoting school readiness and success.

Summary: An early learning advisory council (ELAC) is established to advise DEL on statewide early learning needs and to develop a statewide early learning plan. ELAC may include up to 25 members:

- one representative each from DEL, the Office of Financial Management, the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Health, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, appointed by the Governor;
- one representative from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- at least seven leaders in early childhood education appointed by the Governor, with one representative having expertise on children with disabilities, one on the K-12 system, one on family day care providers, and one on child care centers;
- two members of the House of Representatives, one from each caucus, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and two members of the Senate, one from each caucus, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- two parents, one of whom must serve on DEL's Parent Advisory Council, appointed by the Governor;

- one representative designated by sovereign tribal governments; and
- one representative from the Washington federation of independent schools.

After the initial year, each member must serve two-year terms and the terms will be staggered. ELAC must elect cochairs; one chair must represent a state agency and the other must be a nongovernmental member. DEL must provide staff to support ELAC.

Subject to the availability of funding, DEL must implement a Voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System applicable to licensed or certified child care centers and homes and early education programs. The purpose of the rating system is to provide parents with clear and easily accessible information about the quality of child care and early education programs, support improvement of such programs, increase the readiness of children for school, and close the disparity in access to quality care. DEL must report to the Legislature prior to implementation of the rating system. When an early learning information system is developed, DEL must provide parents with timely inspection and licensing action information about child care and early learning programs.

DEL must work collaboratively with a private-public partner and actively seek public and private money for the partnership. The private-public partner must enhance parent education and support; accept and spend funds for quality improvement initiatives; help early learning private-public partnerships form statewide; and assist the statewide movement to high quality early learning and the support of parents as a child's first and best teacher.

DEL must review and revise child care provider rules, to encourage mutual respect and to focus on keeping children safe and improving early learning outcomes for children. By July 2007, DEL must have a process and timeline for completing the rules review. A "nongovernmental private-public partnership" is defined.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0	
House	96	1	(House amended)
Senate	49	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2007