

---

**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5286**

---

**State of Washington                      61st Legislature                      2009 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Regala, Hargrove, and Kohl-Welles)

READ FIRST TIME 02/12/09.

1            AN ACT Relating to exemptions from the WorkFirst program; amending  
2            RCW 74.08A.270; and creating a new section.

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

4            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**    The legislature recognizes the unique  
5            challenges faced by children born into poverty and the extreme  
6            importance of early brain development on the child's future and the  
7            role that bonding with an individual caregiver plays in early childhood  
8            learning. The legislature also recognizes the importance of chemical  
9            dependency treatment for people who need it and that parents faced with  
10           barriers to employment based on alcohol and drug abuse must be  
11           encouraged to address those issues as early in their child's life as  
12           possible.

13           **Sec. 2.**    RCW 74.08A.270 and 2007 c 289 s 1 are each amended to read  
14           as follows:

15           (1) Good cause reasons for failure to participate in WorkFirst  
16           program components include: (a) Situations where the recipient is a  
17           parent or other relative personally providing care for a child under  
18           the age of six years, and formal or informal child care, or day care

1 for an incapacitated individual living in the same home as a dependent  
2 child, is necessary for an individual to participate or continue  
3 participation in the program or accept employment, and such care is not  
4 available, and the department fails to provide such care; or (b) the  
5 recipient is a parent with a child under the age of one year.

6 (2) A parent claiming a good cause exemption from WorkFirst  
7 participation under subsection (1)(b) of this section (~~(may)~~) shall not  
8 be required to participate in any activities during the first ninety  
9 days following the birth of the child. Thereafter, a parent whose  
10 preexisting comprehensive evaluation or other assessment indicates a  
11 need for mental health, alcohol, or drug treatment; domestic violence  
12 services; or parenting education or skills training must be notified of  
13 the availability of these services and encouraged to participate in one  
14 or more of the (~~following~~) services, up to a maximum total of twenty  
15 hours per week(~~, if such treatment, services, or training is indicated~~  
16 by the comprehensive evaluation or other assessment:

17 ~~(a) Mental health treatment;~~

18 ~~(b) Alcohol or drug treatment;~~

19 ~~(c) Domestic violence services; or~~

20 ~~(d) Parenting education or parenting skills training, if~~  
21 available)). Parents in need of alcohol or drug treatment may be  
22 required to obtain such treatment. The department shall identify  
23 treatment providers who are available, and assure that safe child care  
24 and transportation is available to the parent.

25 (3) No family with an infant twelve months of age or younger may  
26 have their grant reduced due to sanction.

27 (4) The department shall: (a) Work with a parent claiming a good  
28 cause exemption under subsection (1)(b) of this section to identify and  
29 access programs and services designed to improve parenting skills and  
30 promote child well-being, including but not limited to home visitation  
31 programs and services; and (b) provide information on the availability  
32 of home visitation services to temporary assistance for needy families  
33 caseworkers, who shall inform clients of the availability of the  
34 services. If desired by the client, the caseworker shall facilitate  
35 appropriate referrals to providers of home visitation services.

36 (~~(4)~~) (5) Nothing in this section shall prevent a recipient from  
37 participating in the WorkFirst program on a voluntary basis.

1           (~~(5)~~) (6) A parent is eligible for a good cause exemption under  
2 subsection (1)(b) of this section for a maximum total of twelve months  
3 over the parent's lifetime.

--- END ---