
HOUSE BILL 1624

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Representatives Senn, Dent, Kagi, Lytton, Farrell, Pettigrew, Hudgins, Goodman, Frame, and Slatter

Read first time 01/25/17. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to working connections child care eligibility for
2 vulnerable children; amending RCW 43.215.135; creating a new section;
3 and providing an effective date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that children with
6 the greatest needs benefit significantly from child care programs
7 that promote stability, quality, and continuity of care. The
8 legislature recognizes that empirical evidence supports the
9 conclusion that high quality child care programs consistently yield
10 more positive outcomes for children, with the strongest positive
11 impacts on the most vulnerable children.

12 Children in the child welfare system are some of the most
13 vulnerable children. The legislature finds that a child who
14 experiences child abuse or neglect is over four times more likely to
15 abuse substances as an adult and forty-three percent of youth in the
16 juvenile justice system were involved in the child welfare system.

17 The legislature finds that the child care and development block
18 grant act of 2014 allows the department of early learning to provide
19 working connections child care to children in need of, or receiving,
20 protective services. The legislature further understands that as of

1 July 1, 2016, authorizations for the working connections child care
2 subsidy are effective for twelve months.

3 The legislature finds that the children's mental health work
4 group, in its December 2016 final report, recommended that state
5 agencies provide at least twelve months of stable child care through
6 the working connections child care program for certain children
7 involved in the child welfare system, regardless of the employment
8 status of their parents or guardians. Many of these child welfare-
9 involved families are addressing chemical dependency issues, which
10 require a significant amount of time to overcome. For these reasons,
11 the legislature intends to allow certain populations of vulnerable
12 children to be eligible for the working connections child care
13 subsidy for a minimum of twelve months.

14 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.215.135 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 s 6 are each
15 amended to read as follows:

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

25 (2) As recommended by Public Law 113-186, authorizations for the
26 working connections child care subsidy shall be effective for twelve
27 months beginning July 1, 2016, unless an earlier date is provided in
28 the omnibus appropriations act.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 (6) If a child care provider serving nonschool-age children and
19 receiving state subsidy payments has successfully completed all level
20 2 activities and is waiting to be rated by the deadline provided in
21 this section, the provider may continue to receive a state subsidy
22 pending the successful completion of the level 3 rating activity.

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

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

29 (9) The department shall establish and implement policies in the
30 working connections child care program to allow eligibility for
31 families with children who:

32 (a) In the last six months have:

33 (i) Received child protective services as defined and used by
34 chapters 26.44 and 74.13 RCW;

35 (ii) Received child welfare services as defined and used by
36 chapter 74.13 RCW; or

37 (iii) Received services through a family assessment response as
38 defined and used by chapter 26.44 RCW;

39 (b) Have been referred for child care as part of the family's
40 case management as defined by RCW 74.13.020; and

1 (c) Are residing with a biological parent or guardian.

2 (10) Children who are eligible for working connections child care
3 pursuant to subsection (9) of this section do not have to keep
4 receiving services through the department of social and health
5 services to maintain twelve-month authorization. The department of
6 social and health services' involvement with the family referred for
7 working connections child care ends when the family's child
8 protective services, child welfare services, or family assessment
9 response case is closed.

10 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. This act takes effect December 1, 2018.

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