

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 6540

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As Passed Senate, February 17, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to working connections child care payment authorizations.

**Brief Description:** Concerning working connections child care payment authorizations.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, C., Wellman, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Kuderer and Saldaña).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/31/20, 2/07/20 [DP-WM, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 2/10/20, 2/11/20 [DPS, DNP, w/oRec].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed Senate: 2/17/20, 47-0.

**Brief Summary of Engrossed First Substitute Bill**

- Begins a household's 12-month authorization for the Working Connections Child Care program on the first day that child care is expected to begin.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hunt, McCoy, Mullet, Pedersen and Salomon.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; Holy, Padden and Wagoner.

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6540 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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*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.*

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair, Operating, Capital Lead; Mullet, Capital Budget Cabinet; Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Liias, Muzzall, Pedersen and Van De Wege.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.  
Signed by Senator Schoesler.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Braun, Ranking Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Becker, Wagoner, Warnick and Wilson, L..

**Staff:** Sarah Emmans (786-7478)

**Background:** Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) is a federally and state-funded program providing child care subsidies to families with an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level—\$43,440 for a family of three. The state pays part of the cost of child care when a parent is employed, self-employed, or in approved activities, except in certain circumstances. The family is responsible for making a copayment to the child care provider based on the family's countable income.

Authorizations for WCCC subsidy are effective for 12 months. Under rule, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) begins the 12-month period when the parent has completed the required WCCC application and verification process and is working or participating in an approved activity.

**Summary of Engrossed First Substitute Bill:** A household's 12-month authorization period begins on the date that childcare is expected to begin. "Authorization" is defined as a transaction created by DCYF to allow a child care provider to claim payment for care.

Existing statutory language is moved into a new section.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** This bill takes effect on January 1, 2021.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: This bill provides a 12-month window of opportunity for child care. Currently, the 12-month clock starts before a family may actually be able to find care.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):**  
No one.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Ways & Means):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Child care is very difficult to find. Under the current Working Connections system, families are essentially penalized for having to wait for childcare. This bill will make the system more fair and more efficient, and provide greater support for working families.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Sarah Brady, Child Care Resources.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means):** No one.