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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1648**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Dent, Eslick, Burnett, Penner, Jacobsen, and Graham)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to child care provider qualifications; amending  
2 RCW 43.216.755; creating new sections; and providing an expiration  
3 date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the  
6 COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic impact on all people, but had a  
7 particularly dramatic impact on child care and the child care  
8 industry. Many child care facilities closed during the COVID-19  
9 pandemic and providers left the child care field. It became clear  
10 during the COVID-19 pandemic how critical child care is to the  
11 success of every industry as parents need child care to work.

12 (2) The legislature further finds that because of the  
13 unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child care  
14 industry, the plans of many child care providers to receive education  
15 were put on hold as efforts were focused on addressing the immediate  
16 needs of child care providers and families. Additionally, the current  
17 market-based funding model results in wages so low that affording  
18 college tuition is often impossible for child care providers. The  
19 limited availability of college courses in multiple languages and the  
20 scarcity of early childhood education college programs further  
21 hinders access to required training and certification.

1 (3) For those reasons, the legislature intends to delay the  
2 requirement for child care providers to meet certification and  
3 training qualification conditions. Additionally, to recognize the  
4 professionalism and experience of individuals currently in the child  
5 care field, the legislature intends to add a work equivalency option  
6 as an alternative to certification requirements. This work  
7 equivalency alternative should take into account the years of service  
8 child care providers have committed to educating children, while  
9 allowing for upward mobility within the field. Without this  
10 alternative, there is an education cliff that discourages child care  
11 professionals to remain in the field.

12 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.216.755 and 2020 c 342 s 2 are each amended to  
13 read as follows:

14 (1) By July 1, 2021, the department shall implement a noncredit-  
15 bearing, community-based training pathway for licensed child care  
16 providers to meet professional education requirements associated with  
17 child care licensure. The community-based training pathway must be  
18 offered as an alternative to existing credit-bearing pathways  
19 available to providers.

20 (2) ~~((The department shall consult with the following~~  
21 ~~stakeholders in the development and implementation of the community-~~  
22 ~~based training pathway: The statewide child care resource and~~  
23 ~~referral network, a community-based training organization that~~  
24 ~~provides training to licensed family day care providers, a statewide~~  
25 ~~organization that represents the interests of family day care~~  
26 ~~providers, a statewide organization that represents the interests of~~  
27 ~~licensed child day care centers, an organization that represents the~~  
28 ~~interests of refugee and immigrant communities, a bilingual child~~  
29 ~~care provider whose first language is not English, an organization~~  
30 ~~that advocates for early learning, an organization representing~~  
31 ~~private and independent schools, and the state board for community~~  
32 ~~and technical colleges.~~

33 ~~(3))~~) The community-based training pathway must:

34 (a) Align with adopted core competencies for early learning  
35 professionals;

36 (b) Be made available to providers in multiple languages;

37 (c) Include culturally relevant practices; ~~((and))~~

1 (d) Be made available at low cost to providers and at prices  
2 comparable to the cost of similar community-based trainings, not to  
3 exceed (~~two hundred and fifty dollars~~) \$250 per person; and

4 (e) Be accessible to providers in rural and urban settings.

5 (~~(4)~~) (3) The department shall allow licensed child care  
6 providers until at least August 1, (~~2026~~) 2032, or five years from  
7 the date of hire if hired on or after the effective date of this  
8 section, whichever is later, to:

9 (a) Comply with child care licensing rules that require a  
10 provider to hold an early childhood education initial certificate  
11 (~~(e)~~), an early childhood education short certificate, or an early  
12 childhood education state certificate; (~~e~~)

13 (b) Complete community-based pathway trainings; or

14 (c) Demonstrate to the department experience-based competency  
15 after having worked in a licensed child care setting without a break  
16 in service for at least five years. The department must adopt  
17 policies to allow temporary breaks related to parental leave,  
18 personal illness, attending to family illness or emergency, or  
19 similar circumstances, to not be considered a break in service.

20 (4) The department may not require licensed child care providers  
21 to complete annual in-service training requirements in order to  
22 demonstrate experience-based competency described under subsection  
23 (3)(c) of this section.

24 (~~(5) For the purposes of this section, "demonstrated competence"~~  
25 ~~means an individual has shown that he or she has the skills to~~  
26 ~~complete the required work independently.))~~

27 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. (1) The department of children, youth, and  
28 families shall convene a stakeholder group to assist the department  
29 in identifying strategies to improve early learning and school-age  
30 staff qualification requirements and verification processes  
31 including, but not limited to:

32 (a) Identifying measures to streamline and clarify relevant  
33 administrative rules and department policies;

34 (b) Defining criteria and methods by which to honor equivalent  
35 out-of-state education and training; and

36 (c) Identifying options for offering the community-based training  
37 pathway in an online format.

38 (2) At a minimum, the stakeholder group must include:

1 (a) Family home and child care center providers, including at  
2 least one provider from a child care center that is part of a  
3 national chain or has 10 or more sites; and  
4 (b) Representation from the following organizations:  
5 (i) The statewide child care resource and referral network;  
6 (ii) A community-based training organization that provides  
7 training to licensed family day care providers;  
8 (iii) A statewide organization that represents the interests of  
9 family day care providers;  
10 (iv) A statewide organization that represents the interests of  
11 licensed child day care centers;  
12 (v) The statewide out-of-school time intermediary organization;  
13 (vi) An organization that represents the interests of refugee and  
14 immigrant communities;  
15 (vii) A bilingual child care provider whose first language is not  
16 English;  
17 (viii) An organization that advocates for early learning;  
18 (ix) An organization representing private and independent  
19 schools; and  
20 (x) The state board for community and technical colleges.  
21 (3) The department of children, youth, and families shall report  
22 to the legislature by December 1, 2026, in compliance with RCW  
23 43.01.036, on strategies identified by the stakeholder group and the  
24 department's plans and timelines under which to carry out those  
25 strategies.  
26 (4) The department of children, youth, and families must convene  
27 the stakeholder group and produce the report as required in this  
28 section within existing resources.  
29 (5) This section expires July 1, 2028.

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