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**HOUSE BILL 1648**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Dent, Eslick, Burnett, Penner, Jacobsen, and Graham

Read first time 01/28/25. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to child care provider qualifications; amending  
2 RCW 43.216.755; and creating a new section.

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

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

11 (2) The legislature further finds that because of the  
12 unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child care  
13 industry, the plans of many child care providers to receive education  
14 were put on hold as efforts were focused on addressing the immediate  
15 needs of child care providers and families. Additionally, the current  
16 market-based funding model results in wages so low that affording  
17 college tuition is often impossible for child care providers. The  
18 limited availability of college courses in multiple languages and the  
19 scarcity of early childhood education college programs further  
20 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 for all child care  
7 positions. This work equivalency alternative should take into account  
8 the years of service child care providers have committed to educating  
9 children, while allowing for upward mobility within the field.  
10 Without this alternative, there is an education cliff that  
11 discourages child care 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))~~ August 1, ~~((2021))~~ 2025, the department shall  
15 implement a noncredit-bearing, community-based training pathway for  
16 licensed child care providers to meet professional education  
17 requirements associated with child care licensure. The community-  
18 based training pathway must be offered as an alternative to existing  
19 credit-bearing pathways available to providers.

20 ~~((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; and

5 (f) Be made available in an online format.

6 (~~(4)~~) (3) The department shall allow licensed child care  
7 providers until at least August 1, (~~2026~~) 2035, or until at least  
8 10 years following the full implementation by the department of all  
9 components of the community-based training pathway, whichever is  
10 later, to:

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

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

16 (c) Demonstrate to the department work experience-based  
17 competency after having worked in a licensed child care setting for  
18 at least three years, which is not required to be a continuous three-  
19 year period, but could include multiple periods of work in a licensed  
20 child care setting at different times.

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

25 (5) After August 1, 2033, the department must allow all child  
26 care providers who are hired for the first time into a role requiring  
27 an early childhood education initial, short, or state certification a  
28 minimum of 10 years from the person's date of hire into the role  
29 requiring such certification to meet the requirements of subsection  
30 (3) of this section.

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

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