
SENATE BILL 5279

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators C. Wilson, Frame, Hasegawa, Krishnadasan, Nobles, Saldaña, Shewmake, and Trudeau

Read first time 01/15/25. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to qualifications for child care providers;
2 adding a new section to chapter 43.216 RCW; creating a new section;
3 and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.216
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) Except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, the
8 department shall allow licensed child care providers until at least
9 August 1, 2028, to demonstrate experience-based competency as an
10 alternative means to comply with child care licensing rules that
11 require a provider to hold an early childhood education initial,
12 short, or state certificate, when the provider has all of the
13 following documented in the department's electronic workforce
14 registry:

15 (a) Active employment in a position that requires an early
16 childhood education initial, short, or state certificate;

17 (b) Employment in a licensed or certified child care center or
18 licensed family home provider without a break in service since August
19 1, 2021, or a cumulative seven years of employment in a licensed or
20 certified child care center or licensed family home provider; and

1 (c) Completion of and maintained compliance with all health and
2 safety and child care or school-age care basics training required by
3 the department.

4 (2) The department shall establish a process to proactively
5 recognize the fulfillment of staff qualification requirements for any
6 provider who has, as of the effective date of this section,
7 demonstrated all of the criteria required for experience-based
8 competency as identified in subsection (1) of this section. The
9 process established by the department may not require providers
10 meeting these criteria to submit an application demonstrating
11 fulfillment of their staff qualification requirements, and the
12 department must provide notice to providers whose staff qualification
13 requirements have been fulfilled through this process.

14 (3) Nothing in this section prohibits the department from
15 establishing more restrictive requirements for providers serving the
16 early childhood education and assistance program including, but not
17 limited to, excluding experience-based competency as an alternative
18 means to fulfill staff qualification requirements, nor does it
19 prohibit the department from excluding experience-based competency
20 from the calculation of early achievers professional development
21 points.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of children, youth, and
23 families shall convene a stakeholder group to assist the department
24 in identifying strategies to improve early learning and school-age
25 staff qualification requirements and verification processes
26 including, but not limited to, identifying measures to streamline and
27 clarify relevant administrative rules and department policies and
28 defining criteria and methods by which to honor equivalent out-of-
29 state education and training.

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

31 (a) Family home and child care center providers, including at
32 least one provider from a child care center that is part of a
33 national chain or has 10 or more sites; and

34 (b) Representation from the following organizations:

35 (i) The statewide child care resource and referral network;

36 (ii) A community-based training organization that provides
37 training to licensed family day care providers;

38 (iii) A statewide organization that represents the interests of
39 family day care providers;

- 1 (iv) A statewide organization that represents the interests of
2 licensed child day care centers;
- 3 (v) The statewide out-of-school time intermediary organization;
- 4 (vi) An organization that represents the interests of refugee and
5 immigrant communities;
- 6 (vii) A bilingual child care provider whose first language is not
7 English;
- 8 (viii) An organization that advocates for early learning;
- 9 (ix) An organization representing private and independent
10 schools; and
- 11 (x) The state board for community and technical colleges.
- 12 (3) The department shall report to the legislature by December 1,
13 2026, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, on strategies identified by
14 the stakeholder group and the department's plans and timelines under
15 which to carry out those strategies.
- 16 (4) This section expires July 1, 2028.

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