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## Human Services & Early Learning Committee

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### HB 1344

**Brief Description:** Concerning child care access.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Reeves, Ryu, Sells, Valdez, Goodman, Robinson, Shewmake, Stonier, Macri, Kilduff, Leavitt and Pollet.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Child Care Access Work Group (Work Group).
- Requires the Work Group to submit findings and an implementation plan to the Governor and the Legislature by July 1, 2020.

**Hearing Date:** 1/30/19

**Staff:** Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

#### **Background:**

##### Child Care Workforce Development Technical Work Group.

The 2017-19 operating budget required the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to convene a Child Care Workforce Development Technical Work Group (CCWDTWG) to develop recommendations to support increased child care workforce wages, reduce turnover, enable child care providers to recruit more qualified educators, and maintain the diversity of the current workforce. The CCWDTWG's report with recommendations and an implementation plan was due to the Governor and the Legislature December 1, 2018.

##### Working Connections Child Care.

To be eligible for subsidized child care through the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program, an applicant must have a household income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline and be engaged in approved work activities unless the family has received child welfare, child protective, or family assessment response services in the previous six

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months. Historically, the average monthly caseload of the WCCC has been capped in the state operating budget at 33,000 households, and certain populations have been identified for priority in the event of a waitlist.

### **Summary of Bill:**

The Child Care Access Work Group is established. Membership consists of two members of the House of Representatives, two Senators, and 12 Governor appointees.

Governor appointees must represent family home child care providers, child care center providers, a union representing child care workers and family home providers, an association representing the interests of child care centers, a parent, an early learning advocacy organization, an early learning policy expert, the DCYF, tribal interests, and the business community. Staff support is provided by the DCYF.

The Work Group must:

- develop a regional mechanism to measure the cost of quality that can be used to determine child care subsidy rates;
- consider how the measure of area median income (AMI) could be used in place of federal poverty level when determining eligibility for child care subsidy;
- evaluate recommendations from the CCWDTWG, including consideration of pay scale changes to achieve pay parity with kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers by January 1, 2025, and further develop policy recommendations for the DCYF. Policy recommendations must:
  - endeavor to preserve and increase racial and ethnic equity and diversity in the child care workforce and recognize cultural competency and multilingualism;
  - include a salary floor that supports recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce in every early learning setting;
  - index salaries for providers against salaries of specified early learning professional job categories;
  - incentivize advancements in higher education credentials and equivalencies, training, and years of experience;
  - credential equivalencies;
  - consider a provider's years of experience in the field and at his or her current site;
  - differentiate subsidy rates by region; and
  - provide additional compensation to providers serving certain populations or demonstrating additional linguistic or cultural competency.
- develop a phased implementation plan for policy changes to the WCCC. Implementation plan components must include:
  - increasing program eligibility to 600 percent of the FPL or 200 percent of the AMI.
  - establishing a graduated system of copayments that eliminates the cliff effect and limits the amount a family pays for child care to a maximum of seven percent of the family's income.
  - developing a contracted slots model for WCCC payments.
  - eliminating work requirements for WCCC families.
  - eliminating the fiscal cap on WCCC enrollment.
  - prioritizing certain populations in the event of a WCCC waitlist.

The Work Group must submit its findings and required implementation plan to the Governor and the Legislature by July 1, 2020.

The Work Group expires December 1, 2020.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 23, 2019.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.