

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1378

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Human Services & Early Learning

**Title:** An act relating to education equivalencies for licensed child care providers.

**Brief Description:** Concerning education equivalencies for licensed child care providers.

**Sponsors:** Representatives McCaslin, Dolan, Walsh, Ryu, Senn, Volz, Dent, Graham, Shea, Orwall, Lovick, Corry, Eslick, Slatter and Leavitt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/23/19, 1/30/19 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Directs the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to adopt activities, skills, and experience levels that may be considered equivalent to education requirements in child care licensing rules.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

**Staff:** Alyssa Patrick (786-7296). Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

**Background:**

Child Care Licensing.

Any individual or entity providing child care or early learning services for a group of children, for more than four hours per day, must be licensed by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). License requirements include meeting health and safety standards, staff qualification levels, and other standards related to quality.

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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.*

### Stackable Certificates.

Community and technical colleges offer common courses in early childhood education (ECE) which build on one another in a sequential manner, referred to as stackable certificates.

Providers can progress through three certificate levels, which include:

- ECE Initial Certificate (12 credits);
- ECE Short Certificate (8 credits); and
- ECE State Certificate (27-32 credits).

### Child Care Education Requirements.

Rule changes by the DCYF regarding quality standards for early learning programs go into effect August 2019. The changes include adding education requirements that vary based on provider type and staff position. In all cases the requirement can be substituted by an equivalent activity, which the rule defines as "a department-recognized alternative credential, or demonstration of competency."

Examples of the education and equivalency requirements include:

- Child care center directors and assistant directors must complete an ECE State Certificate or equivalent within five years of the rule going into effect.
- Family home program licensees and center lead teachers must have an ECE Initial Certificate or equivalent within five years, and an ECE Short Certificate within two years of receiving the initial certificate.
- Assistant teachers at both family homes and child care centers must have a high school diploma or equivalent when the rule becomes effective, and a minimum of an ECE Initial Certificate or equivalent within five years.

### Equivalencies Workgroup.

The DCYF convened a workgroup in 2018 to identify credentials to serve as equivalents to education requirements. The stated guiding principles of the workgroup are to:

- recognize an individual's existing knowledge and skills;
- honor the various ways people learn and show their skills;
- recognize the needs of existing workforce and new workforce;
- use innovative options to implement guidelines for culturally responsive professional development; and
- qualify someone to meet rule requirements for their role.

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### **Summary of Bill:**

The DCYF must adopt education equivalencies for licensed child care providers. The equivalencies are professional experiences and skills that may be considered equivalent to education levels required by child care licensing rules. When adopting qualifying equivalencies, the DCYF must take the following into account:

- years of child care or related experience; and
- time spent engaged in professional development activities such as training opportunities, researching peer-reviewed best practices, and engaging in peer-to-peer mentoring.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested January 18, 2019.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill acknowledges that there are many ways to develop professional experience and skills. It is great that experience, training, and mentorship can be used toward meeting educational requirements. Thank you for honoring the experience being brought daily to the field. Increasing access to professional development and incentivizing teachers to participate would help more people meet the education equivalencies. It would also be helpful to have some kind of an apprenticeship to continue providing peer support through a different platform. The bill recognizes the need to retain and attract a diverse early learning workforce. Recognizing experience and professional development as equivalents to education will help attract more employees. The professional development requirements going into effect in August 2019 will have a negative impact on the ability to recruit and retain lead and assistant teachers. Providers participating as members of the equivalency workgroup have been vocal advocates for an equivalency process that includes community-based training options. However, some members of the workgroup respectfully request a delay in implementation of the professional development requirements. These members say the equivalency process has not been completed, and the funding and other supports remain uncertain.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative McCaslin, prime sponsor; Pauli Owen, Service Employees International Union 925; Nicole Rose, Department of Children, Youth, & Families; Jennifer Thompson, Washington Childcare Centers Association; and Nicole Sohn, Journey Discovery Center.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.