
Human Services & Early Learning Committee

HB 2284

Brief Description: Supporting the cost-effective professional development of early learning providers.

Sponsors: Representatives McCaslin, Dent, Pollet and Tharinger.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows early learning providers to earn clock hours that satisfy professional education requirements.

Hearing Date: 1/17/20

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) regulates child care licensing and is responsible for maintaining a set of core competencies for child care and early learning providers.

The DCYF administers a quality rating and improvement system for early learning programs called Early Achievers (EA). Providers accepting state subsidy and caring for non-school age children are required to participate in EA and meet certain rating levels by statutory deadlines.

The 2015 Legislature required the DCYF to adopt a single set of licensing standards for child care and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. The licensing standards must provide minimum health and safety standards for child care and preschool programs, rely on the standards established EA to address quality issues, take into account the separate needs of family care providers and child care centers, and promote the continued safety of child care settings.

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.

The DCYF completed the standards alignment and adopted new rules in 2018, including rules related to staff qualifications. Providers must meet new education requirements or the equivalent by 2024 or within five years of the provider's date of hire or promotion if after August 2019. New requirements include earning an initial, short, or full state Early Childhood Education Certificate (ECE) for most positions. To earn an initial ECE requires 12 college credits; the short ECE requires 20 credits; and the full state ECE requires 47 credits.

In early 2019, the DCYF received recommendations from an equivalencies workgroup related to developing equivalencies to meet education requirements. The recommendations for education equivalents included establishing a process for providers to demonstrate competency and identifying alternate credentials.

Clock Hours for School Personnel.

Personnel employed in the state's kindergarten through twelfth grade public education system are required to meet continuing education requirements according to rules established and enforced by the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). One method of meeting these requirements is by earning clock hours that may count toward continuing education credit. Some clock hours may be earned through completing a self-directed professional growth plan (PGP) that can be job-embedded and completed at no cost to the professional. The completed PGP must be reviewed and signed by a certificated educator before being submitted to the PESB in order to qualify for clock hours. Other methods include earned continuing education credits from a college or university and completing non-credit bearing professional development units.

Summary of Bill:

The DCYF must award clock hours to early learning providers that satisfy education requirements for professional licensure. Clock hours must be awarded to a provider who self-certifies that the experience provides beneficial skills and knowledge in an area directly related to providing care that supports the safety and developmental needs of children.

Activities that may qualify for clock hours must include participation in community-based trainings, earned credit from an institution of higher education, time related to providing care for children in a licensed setting, and certification by a national organization with a mission related to providing early learning or child care.

The DCYF may not apply the early learning core competencies or EA quality standards to the standards for child care licensing. Licensing standards must provide minimum health and safety standards that are primarily based on structural and environmental factors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 7, 2020.

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