

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2471

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

Title: An act relating to working connections child care payment authorizations.

Brief Description: Concerning working connections child care payment authorizations.

Sponsors: Representatives Callan, Eslick, Senn, Corry and Kilduff.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/17/20, 1/28/20 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires a household's 12-month authorization period for the Working Connections Child Care program to begin on the date that child care is expected to begin.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill 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: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program is a subsidized child care program for low-income families. The state pays part of the cost of child care when a parent is employed or participating in approved work activities, with some exceptions. Depending on income and household size, the family may be required to pay a copayment directly to their child care provider.

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.

To be eligible for 12 months of child care subsidy, a family must have a household income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline at the time of application and meet work requirements.

The WCCC is funded largely by the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Federal rules require a minimum 12-month eligibility period for families receiving child care funded by the CCDF, regardless of temporary changes in parents' work, approved activities, or income as long as the income does not exceed 85 percent of the state median income. The stated federal intent of this 12-month provision is to promote continuity of care and extend the time period that eligible children and families have access to child care.

State statute requires 12-month authorizations for recipients of the WCC program subsidy. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) administers the WCCC program. The DCYF begins the 12-month period when the participant has completed the required WCCC application and verification process and is working or participating in an approved activity. There may be a delay between a participant's eligibility determination and when the family receives an authorization for care.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A household's 12-month WCCC authorization period must begin on the date that child care is expected to begin. If a newly eligible household does not begin care within 12 months of being determined eligible by the DCYF, the household must reapply in order to qualify for benefits.

The term "authorization" is defined as a transaction created by the DCYF that allows a child care provider to claim payment for care.

Statutory content is reorganized.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill specifies that a household's 12-month WCCC authorization period begins on the date that child care is expected to begin and defines "authorization" for the purposes of the WCCC program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 2020.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: 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 implements what the Legislature intended, which is that 12 months of child care authorization truly means a family receives 12 months of care. Families might use several months of their 12-month period trying to find care and are losing time they are qualified for. The goal of this policy is to have the clock start when families actually begin care. The terms "authorization" and "eligibility" are being used interchangeably and are not defined. The DCYF is committed to working on the language to get it right and supports the policy of the bill. A key component of the Early Start Act of 2015 was the intent of supporting children with a full 12 months of child care. There are parts of the state where families have to travel significant distances to find adequate child care and are often placing themselves on wait lists that eat up time on their authorization period.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Callan, prime sponsor; Allison Krutsinger, Department of Children, Youth, and Families; Joel Ryan, Washington State Association of Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program; and Sarah Brady and Norma Lobo, Child Care Resources.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.