
Children, Youth & Families Committee

HB 2082

Brief Description: Assessing child care access.

Sponsors: Representatives Klippert, Sutherland and Graham.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to select a private entity to conduct a statewide assessment of child care deserts (Statewide Assessment), with a focus on families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Requires the Office of the Developmental Disabilities Ombuds, in coordination with the DCYF, to review the Statewide Assessment and make recommendations to increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility of child care for families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Hearing Date: 1/31/22

Staff: Lena Langer (786-7192).

Background:

Department of Commerce and Child Care.

The Child Care Collaborative Task Force (Task Force) was created by the Legislature in 2018 to develop policy recommendations to incentivize employer-supported child care and improve child care access and affordability for employees. The Department of Commerce (Commerce) administers the Task Force. The Task Force was directed to develop a child care estimate model to determine the full costs providers would incur when providing high-quality child care. The Task Force began developing the model but was unable to collect financial information from

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providers as originally planned due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Child Care Desert.

According to the Task Force's Child Care Industry Assessment and Facilities Needs Assessment (Assessment) published July 1, 2020, across the state, the capacity of providers located within a 20-minute drive time can only meet 37 percent of the potential demand of nearby families. In total, the Assessment estimates that 118,000 families with 161,000 children from birth to age 5 live in areas considered child care deserts.

In 2021 the Legislature directed the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to establish a grant program to expand child care in child care deserts. Grants must be used for one-time costs associated with the opening of a child care site, including program costs, for providers who are newly licensed or are in the process of becoming licensed. The DCYF must use the child care industry insights dashboard from the Assessment as a tool to identify areas in which additional investments are needed in order to expand existing child care capacity to meet family demand and reduce child care deserts.

Office of the Developmental Disabilities Ombuds.

In 2016 the Legislature created the Office of the Developmental Disabilities Ombuds (DD Ombuds) as a private independent office with the duty to monitor the services provided to people with developmental disabilities, investigate complaints, and issue reports and recommendations to the Legislature.

Summary of Bill:

Statewide Assessment of Child Care Deserts.

The DCYF must conduct competitive procurements as necessary to select a private entity to conduct a statewide assessment of child care deserts (Statewide Assessment), with a focus on families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, in order to better understand the availability, affordability, and accessibility of child care that meets the needs of all families, including those with children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Statewide Assessment must be conducted in partnership with a statewide organization representing the interests of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and submitted to the Legislature and the Governor by October 1, 2022.

The Statewide Assessment of child care deserts, at a minimum, must:

- identify cities, counties, areas within cities or counties, and other regions of the state with:
 - the highest need related to child care availability, accessibility, and affordability;
 - and
 - the highest need related to child care availability, accessibility, and affordability for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- identify the statewide need related to child care availability, accessibility, and affordability;

- identify the statewide need related to child care availability, accessibility, and affordability for families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- describe the capacity of the current child care providers in meeting the demand of families;
- describe the capacity of the current child care providers in meeting the demand of families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- include survey results from families with children across the state with intellectual and developmental disabilities describing their child care needs and the availability, affordability, and accessibility of those child care needs; and
- provide recommendations for assisting families with children across the state with intellectual and developmental disabilities in accessing child care.

The recommendations required in the Statewide Assessment must include discussion of creating a child care liaison housed within an organization outside state government, such as a statewide organization representing the interests of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities or the statewide child care resource and referral network. The recommendations may include a discussion of methods used by other states to assist families in accessing child care for children with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

The section requiring the DCYF to select a private entity to conduct the Statewide Assessment expires June 30, 2023.

Office of Development Disabilities Ombuds.

The DD Ombuds must, in coordination with the DCYF, review the Statewide Assessment and make recommendations to increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility of child care for families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. By December 1, 2022, the DD Ombuds must submit a report based on the review to the Legislature and the Governor.

The section requiring the DD Ombuds, in coordination with the DCYF, to review the Statewide Assessment expires June 30, 2023.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2022.

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