
**Human Services, Youth, & Early
Learning Committee**

HB 1739

Brief Description: Concerning instruction for child care providers.

Sponsors: Representatives Dent, Eslick and Schmidt.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to create a free instructional handbook for all child care providers that includes material on specified topics related to the care of children.
- Provides that a child care provider is exempt from any requirement to obtain an Early Childhood Education certificate if the provider and their employer have attested to the DCYF that the provider has read the handbook and has implemented the instructional material.

Hearing Date: 2/14/23

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) regulates child care licensing. The DCYF has adopted core competencies for child care providers that describe the standards of knowledge and skills required to provide quality care and education to children and their families.

Early learning providers must meet certain education requirements or the equivalent by August 1, 2026, or within five years of the provider's date of hire if hired after August 1, 2019.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Providers serving the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program must meet education requirements at the time of hire. Education requirements include earning an initial, short, or full state Early Childhood Education (ECE) certificate for most positions, which requires completion of college credits in core competency areas. To earn an initial ECE certificate requires 12 college credits; the short ECE certificate requires 20 credits (the initial certificate plus eight additional credits); and the full state ECE certificate requires 47 credits (the short certificate plus 27 additional credits). There are additional in-service professional development requirements for continuing education delivered or approved by the DCYF to maintain staff standards and qualifications while employed as an early learning provider.

Legislation enacted in 2021 required the DCYF to create a noncredit-bearing, community-based training pathway for licensed child care providers to meet professional education requirements. The community-based training pathway must align with early learning core competencies, include culturally relevant practices, and be made available: at low cost to providers, not to exceed \$250 per person; in multiple languages; and in an accessible manner for providers in rural and urban settings. The DCYF fully implemented the program in 2022 as the Provider Access to a Community Equivalent program, or "PACE," as an alternative option for meeting licensing education requirements for provider roles that require an initial or short ECE certificate, including assistant teachers, lead teachers, and family home licensees. The PACE alternative requires the following instruction: 30 hours in child care basics, 20 hours in enhancing the quality of early learning; 40 hours of additional in-service training; and 30 hours of on-the-job learning.

Summary of Bill:

By December 1, 2023, the DCYF must create an instructional handbook for all child care providers. Child care providers include employees of child day care centers, outdoor nature-based daycare providers, and family day care providers, who provide direct care to children. The handbook must be made available free of charge in both physical and online formats, and must provide educational material on: the health, safety, and nutritional needs of children; how to establish a nurturing relationship; and the fundamentals of instruction.

A child care provider is exempt from any requirement to obtain an early childhood education certificate if, by July 1, 2024, for persons employed as a child care provider prior to January 1, 2024, or within the first six months of hire, for persons employed on or after January 1, 2024:

- the provider has read the handbook and has submitted to the DCYF a signed attestation indicating that they have read the handbook; and
- the child care center director or center assistant director has submitted to the DCYF a signed attestation that the provider has read the handbook and has implemented the instructional material.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 2023.

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