

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1545

As Passed House:

March 15, 2003

Title: An act relating to consolidation of early learning and child care programs and services in the state.

Brief Description: Providing for coordination of early learning and child care programs.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Fromhold, Hinkle, Kagi, Kenney, Schual-Berke, Upthegrove, Chase, Cox, McDermott, Delvin, Cooper, Dickerson, Pettigrew, Hankins, Lantz, Quall, Conway, Rockefeller and Clements).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/6/03, 2/12/03 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/24/03, 3/8/03 [DP2S(w/o sub CFS)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/15/03, 55-39.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Requires the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to coordinate the administration of early learning and child care programs and services in the state.
- Establishes an Early Learning and Child Care Task Force.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Dickerson, Miloscia and Pettigrew.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Boldt, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey and Shabro.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Children & Family Services. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cody, Conway, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McIntire, Miloscia, Ruderman, Schual-Berke and Talcott.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Boldt, Buck, Clements, Cox, DeBolt, McDonald, Pflug and Sump.

Staff: Heather Flodstrom (786-7391).

Background:

In 2000 the Legislature directed the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to conduct a study of the best method for coordinating and consolidating child care and early education programs funded by the state. The Child Care and Early Learning Organizational Study, which the OFM produced in response, provided the following recommendations:

- Adopt an umbrella mission statement that captures all child care and early learning programs;
- Combine programs with similar or duplicate functions and missions;
- Streamline the current configuration by reducing the number of state agencies involved in the child care licensing process;
- Assign an interagency task force to examine and reduce the differences in program service standards; and
- Coordinate training for providers regarding state agency rules by all programs.

In response to this report, the Governor's Office undertook administrative action to consolidate child care and early learning programs in the state, the primary component of which was the creation of the Division of Child Care and Early Learning within the Economic Services Administration in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Currently, child care and early learning programs in the state are administered through three state agencies: the DSHS, the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:

The Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) are required to coordinate the administration of early learning and child care programs and services in the state.

"Early learning and child care programs and services" are limited to the following functions and entities:

State Training and Registry System investments; State Head Start Collaboration Project; Title 1B - Even Start Family Literacy Program; Child and Adult Care Food Program; IDEA, Part B special education for children 3 to 5 years of age; IDEA, Part C early intervention for children birth through 2 years of age; Title 1, Part C migrant education preschool program; licensing of child care centers and homes; child care health inspections; all programs financed and contracted through the Child Care Development Fund; all child care and early learning activities authorized under chapter 74.13 RCW; all state child care subsidy programs; and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. In addition, in administering early learning and child care programs and services in the state, it is the intent of the Legislature that the Governor and the Superintendent coordinate and collaborate with all federally funded early learning and child care programs and services operating in the state, such as Head Start, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, early learning and child care programs funded under the No Child Left Behind Act, and before/after school programs for children under 13 years of age.

An Early Learning and Child Care Task Force (Task Force), under the joint authority of the Governor and the Superintendent, is established in the OSPI to oversee the coordination of early learning and child care programs and services in the state. The Task Force must consist of 17 members as follows: five members recommended by the Child Care Coordinating Committee, jointly appointed by the Governor and the Superintendent; four members appointed by the Governor; four members appointed by the Superintendent; and four members of the Legislature. It is intended that the membership of the Task Force include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Individuals with expertise in the design and delivery of early learning and child care services in a school setting;
- Individuals with expertise in the design and delivery of early learning and child care services in both nonprofit and for-profit licensed center and family home child care settings;
- Individuals who design and deliver early learning and child care programs and services, including representatives of higher education and state governmental agencies; and
- Individuals who are parents of children under 13 years of age.

The Governor and the Superintendent, in consultation with the Task Force, are required to carry out the following tasks:

Creation of consistent aligned early learning goals for children younger than school age that address the multiple developmental aspects of young children, including cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical domains, and that are aligned with K-12 standards; Creation of consistent alignment among different program standards for early learning programs and services; Design of an integrated system of staffing and professional development for early learning and child care programs and

services; Identification of comprehensive, family-focused services to be provided by early learning and child care programs for children and families who need more intensive support; Design of a plan to address barriers to the provision of early learning and child care services, such as issues relating to facilities and transportation; and Development of recommendations to improve collaboration and integration between the early learning and child care system and the K-12 and higher education system. By January 1, 2004, the Governor and the Superintendent, in consultation with the Task Force, are required to develop a plan for implementation of these duties and report that plan to the Legislature.

By September 1, 2004, the Governor and the Superintendent are required to report to the Legislature on the implementation of the consistent aligned early learning goals. By September 1, 2005, the Governor and the Superintendent are required to report to the Legislature on the implementation of the following: the consistent alignment among different program standards; the integrated system of staffing and professional development; the comprehensive, family-focused services to be provided for children and families who need more intensive support; and the plan to address barriers to the provision of early learning and child care services.

The Task Force is required to develop a plan for coordination of the early learning and child care programs and services in the state, which must include planning for consolidation of those programs and services, as appropriate. The Task Force is required to present the plan to the Governor and the Superintendent by December 15, 2003. By January 1, 2004, the Governor and the Superintendent are required to report the plan for coordination of the early learning and child care programs and services in the state to the Legislature.

By January 2005, to the extent possible within available funds, the Governor and the Superintendent are required to implement the plan for the following: the consistent aligned early learning goals; the consistent alignment among different program standards; the integrated system of staffing and professional development; the comprehensive, family-focused services to be provided for children and families who need more intensive support; the plan to address barriers to the provision of early learning and child care services; and the recommendations to improve collaboration and integration between the early learning and child care system and the K-12 and higher education system. The Governor and the Superintendent are also required to report to the Legislature on the implementation of the plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available for substitute.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (Children & Family Services) (Substitute bill) This consolidation will marshal resources for early learning and child care programs in the state, and prevent this issue from being overlooked. It will create a more efficient administration of those programs. The partnership of the Governor and the OSPI is the logical choice. The date for full consolidation is a long way off, but is sensitive to the players involved. The programs to be consolidated are extraordinarily complex, involving separate sets of law and regulation, as well as distinct computer systems. The approach is unorthodox, but productive. Early learning and child care are essentially linked. This bill ratifies work already underway in the OSPI. This consolidation is the logical next step, following the Governor's previous consolidation efforts. The consolidation will strike a balance between supporting children's achievements and supporting families. The consolidation will be a major step in improving children's readiness to enter kindergarten. There is a silo effect not only in the provision of services, but also in educating providers of services. Staff development is an important element of this consolidation process. This consolidation models the federal "No Child Left Behind" approach.

(With comments) The consolidation process should involve community providers, and the resulting consolidation must be economically feasible for those providers. The consolidation process must not result in the OSPI fully controlling child care and early learning programs. The standards developed through this process must mesh with K-12 standards. Membership of the Task Force should include representatives of intermediary organizations that support direct service providers. This process must not overlook the diversity of clients. We must remember that no one can take the place of a parent for children from 0 to 4 years of age. The role of parents and parent preparation must be included in this process.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) Children, families, after school care providers, and community members can all benefit from this legislation. The proposed consolidation of governance can lead to a more cohesive, integrated, and efficient system of early learning and child care linked to schools, which can lead to school readiness. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) supports the bill for better coordination of services, but the bill does have costs. Some of those costs might change if the coordination was not at the OSPI. Education starts at birth, and it is good to prepare children for life-long learning by bringing early childhood education in with K-12 education. Consolidating these services will go a long way in assisting the state to improve student learning for all children in the school system. This bill is an opportunity to begin closing the achievement gap because it will allow us to reach children earlier.

Testimony Against: (Children & Family Services) None.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Children & Family Services) (In support) Representative Fromhold, prime sponsor; Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Robin

Zukoski, Governor's Office; Carol Taylor Cann, Washington State PTA; Laurie Cornelius, Clark College; and Robbin Dunn and Marty Varela, Washington State Head Start Program and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program.

(With comments) Deborah Duitch, YMCA of Greater Seattle; Agda Burchard and Elizabeth Bonbright Thompson, Washington State Association for the Education of Young Children; Regnis Singer, Tacoma Head Start; and Kristen Ockert, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Testified: (Appropriations) Agda Burchard, Washington Association for the Education of Young Children and Washington Early Childhood Collaborative; Carol Taylor Cann, Parent Teacher Association; Sandra Shellabarger, The Evergreen State College; Jennifer Priddy and Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.