

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1636

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Labor, Commerce, Research & Development, March 24, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to child care workers.

**Brief Description:** Adopting a wage ladder for child care workers.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Pettigrew, Roberts, Kagi, Clements, Darneille, Hunt, Green, Kenney, Appleton, Chase, Jarrett, Kessler, Moeller, Morrell, Williams, Ormsby, Murray, Dickerson, Conway, Lantz, Wood, Haigh, McDermott, Santos and Hudgins).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/11/05, 59-34.

**Committee Activity:** Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 3/24/05 [DP, w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Brown, Keiser and Prentice.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Deccio, Hewitt and Honeyford.

**Staff:** Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

**Background:** In July 2000, the state instituted a Child Care Career and Wage Ladder Pilot Project (Pilot Project), which was funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families reinvestment funds. The purpose of the Pilot Project was to enable child care centers to increase wages and offer benefits for child care workers and to encourage child care workers to obtain further education.

The Pilot Project emphasized worker education, responsibilities, and experience and consisted of increased wage increments based upon education and/or experience paid for by the state, the center, or both.

To participate in the Pilot Project, child care centers had to meet the three criteria: (1) have at least 10 percent of child capacity in state-subsidized child care programs; (2) provide employees with 12 days paid leave; and (3) provide employees with assistance with medical premiums of up to \$25 per month.

Before the Pilot Project ended in June 2003, it included 120 child care centers, 1,500 child care workers, and 8,700 children served.

**Summary of Bill:** Within available funds, the Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCEL) in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must establish a child care career and wage ladder in licensed child care centers that meet the following criteria:

- dedicate at least 10 percent of child care slots to children whose care is subsidized by the state or local government;
- agree to adopt the child care career and wage ladder which must be at least at the same pay schedule as existed in the Pilot Project; and
- meet further program standards as established by the DCCEL by rule.

The child care career and wage ladder must include wage increments for levels of education, years of relevant experience, levels of work responsibility, relevant early childhood education credits, and relevant requirements in the State Training and Registry System (STARS).

The DCCEL is required to establish procedures for the allocation of funds to implement the child care career and wage ladder among child care centers meeting the identified criteria for participation.

Notwithstanding the procedures that the DCCEL is required to establish, for the allocation of funds to implement the child care career and wage ladder, child care centers meeting the basic criteria for participation in the career and wage ladder located in urban areas, of DSHS 's Region 1, must receive a minimum of 15 percent of the funds allocated through the child care career and wage ladder. Of those centers, the centers participating in the Spokane tiered reimbursement pilot project must have first priority for child care career and wage ladder funding.

Child care centers adopting the child care career and wage ladder are required to increase wages for child care workers who have earned a high school diploma or GED certificate, gain additional years of experience, or accept increasing levels of responsibility in providing child care, in accordance with the child care career and wage ladder. The DSHS is required to pay wage increments for child care workers employed by child care centers adopting the child care career and wage ladder who earn early childhood education credits or meet relevant requirements in the STARS, in accordance with the child care career and wage ladder.

The DCCEL must study the impact of the child care career and wage ladder on the quality of child care and the child care work force, and report its findings to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2006.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** A child care career and wage ladder is a cost effective and efficient way to improve early childhood learning. Increased subsidies to pay for child care slots have not resulted in increased wages for child care workers. Most child care teachers still earn less than \$10 an hour. Implementing a child care career and wage ladder has been proved through research to improve child care to children. Morale is higher and better educated people are

employed in child care centers using such a ladder. Some centers have experienced a 300 percent turnover ratio since the pilot project was discontinued.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Representative Pettigrew, prime sponsor; John Burbank, Economic Opportunity Institute; Steve Olson, Olympia Child Care Center; Dorothy Gibson, Child Care Workforce Alliance of Washington.