
HOUSE BILL 2456

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2006 Regular Session

By Representatives Roberts, Kagi, Moeller, Pettigrew, Green,
Darneille, Morrell, Lantz, Dickerson, Upthegrove and Schual-Berke

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Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to mental health consultation services for child
2 care programs; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there is
5 compelling evidence demonstrating that young children who experience
6 high-quality early learning programs are more self-confident and have
7 better language skills, a greater ability to regulate their behavior,
8 and more advanced cognitive developments. These outcomes are
9 inextricably linked to school readiness and a child's overall success
10 in school and beyond. The legislature finds also that there has been
11 an increase in the manifestation of significant emotional and
12 behavioral problems of children in preschool and other early childhood
13 settings. Growing numbers of young children are being expelled from
14 child-care settings because their behaviors create additional
15 responsibilities for caregivers who may not have adequate support or
16 training to appropriately manage the challenges presented by such
17 behaviors. The legislature finds further that children's mental health
18 is critical to school readiness and left untreated, mental health
19 issues create the potential of significant damage and life-long

1 consequences. The legislature finds that mental health consultation in
2 child-care settings can provide information, education, and support for
3 caregivers and administrators to enable them to identify and work more
4 effectively with children presenting difficult behaviors or other
5 challenges to caregivers. The legislature intends to promote the
6 integration of mental health services into early care and education
7 settings as a means of early intervention to prevent more serious,
8 long-term consequences and to promote quality child care continuity and
9 school readiness for more children.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The child care mental health
11 consultation pilot program is established. The pilot program shall be
12 administered by the department of early learning within the office of
13 the governor or, if the cabinet-level department of early learning is
14 not established, by the division of child care and early learning
15 within the department of social and health services. The pilot program
16 shall promote the integration of evidence-based practice for young
17 children with challenging behaviors into the child-care setting through
18 a collaborative approach to supporting the child and family.

19 (2) The pilot program shall provide a structure for mental health
20 consultants to:

21 (a) Consult with caregivers on-site or with case management teams
22 around solving specific problems with an individual child or family;

23 (b) Observe children in the child-care setting to assess
24 functioning relationships with peers and caregivers, and the
25 appropriateness of the setting and program for the child's needs;

26 (c) Meet on-site or at home with families to complete assessments
27 and provide developmental guidance and referrals, including but not
28 limited to referrals to clinical services and other services for
29 families and children;

30 (d) Provide support and guidance to child-care staff through
31 structured opportunities for training, team building, communication,
32 and problem solving that is person-centered and strengths-based; and

33 (e) Coordinate with specialists in public health, infant and
34 toddler early intervention, infant mental health, and others involved
35 with the care and well-being of young children.

36 (3) The pilot program shall consist of at least two communities
37 selected on the basis of need as determined by:

- 1 (a) The relative availability or unavailability of comparable
2 services locally;
- 3 (b) The relative at-risk populations within the community; and
- 4 (c) The availability of information regarding numbers of children
5 expelled from child-care settings within the community.
- 6 (4) Funding shall be contracted to the local child-care resource
7 and referral network, or to another community-based organization with
8 knowledge or expertise in child development and child-care programs.
9 Contracted agencies shall be responsible for:
- 10 (a) Coordinating with the community to develop a program model
11 consistent with the legislative intent in section 1 of this act and the
12 description of program structure in subsection (2) of this section;
- 13 (b) Hiring mental health consultants knowledgeable in child
14 development;
- 15 (c) Supervising the work of mental health consultants;
- 16 (d) Responding to requests from providers for consultation
17 services;
- 18 (e) Maintaining information required for evaluation of program
19 outcomes;
- 20 (f) Managing funds;
- 21 (g) Ensuring equitable access to services for all child-care
22 providers in the community; and
- 23 (h) Reporting to the legislature and to the department of early
24 learning or the division of child care and early learning.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Sections 1 and 2 of this act expire July 1,
26 2010.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If specific funding for the purposes of this
28 act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by
29 June 30, 2006, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and
30 void.

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