

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5625

As of February 10, 2011

Title: An act relating to authorizing implementation of a nonexpiring license for early learning providers.

Brief Description: Authorizing implementation of a nonexpiring license for early learning providers.

Sponsors: Senators Harper, King, McAuliffe, Litzow and Nelson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/10/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

Background: The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is charged with licensing early learning providers in Washington. (Child care is included in the definition of early learning.) According to DEL, it licenses more than 7500 child care providers, who care for approximately 180,000 children. DEL also monitors licensed providers to ensure minimum licensing requirements are met.

In the 2010 legislative session, ESB 6444 directed DEL, by January 15, 2011, to develop a plan to improve child care licensing practices. On January 14, 2011, DEL released its report to the Legislature. The report outlines a ten-year plan to improve licensing. One of the items addressed in the plan is to allow non-expiring licenses for child care providers.

Currently, child care providers are issued an initial license for a six-month period until the licensee can demonstrate that they meet specific requirements. Four initial licenses can be issued within a two-year period. All licensed child care providers are required to reapply for licensure every three years. According to DEL, "relicensing is a time-consuming process that involves much paperwork for both the licensor and provider, and culminates in a relicensing visit that can last several hours."

According to a 2008 survey administered by the National Association for Regulatory Administration and National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center, the following 12 states use the non-expiring license model: Arkansas, California, Colorado,

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Georgia, Kansas, Maryland, North Carolina, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Summary of Bill: Fully licensed child care providers are no longer required to reapply for licensure every three years. Instead, full licenses will remain valid so long as licensees submit the following items to DEL on an annual basis:

- the annual licensing fee;
- a declaration indicating the intent to either continue or cease operating a licensed child care program;
- a declaration of compliance with all licensing rules; and
- a background check application, according to DEL's established schedule.

If a licensee fails to submit the items listed above, the license will expire, and the licensee must submit a new application for licensure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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