
Higher Education Committee

HB 2764

Brief Description: Concerning child care for student parents in public institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Pollet, Griffey, Senn, Reeves, Kloba, Stanford, Kagi, Stonier, Appleton, Goodman, Gregerson, Kilduff, Doglio, Peterson, Tharinger, Frame, Slatter and Stambaugh.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Early Learning (Department) to eliminate the work requirements in its rules for non-WorkFirst recipients of Working Connections Child Care benefits who are in an educational or training program.
- Requires the Department to revise its rules regarding the types of certificate and degree programs that recipients of Working Connections Child Care benefits may pursue, to include certificate and degrees in early childhood education, paraeducation, and teaching.

Hearing Date: 1/23/18

Staff: Trudes Tango (786-7384).

Background:

The Working Connections Child Care Program (WCCC).

The Working Connections Child Care Program (WCCC) is a subsidized childcare program funded through federal Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The Department of Early Learning (Department) is the designated lead agency for administration of the CCDF program and sets policy for WCCC. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) determines eligibility for WCCC and issues childcare subsidy payments to providers. On July 1, 2018, all powers, duties, and functions of the Department will be transferred to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

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

In general, in order to qualify for WCCC a family must have a household income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level and be working, or participating in WorkFirst approved activities, or enrolled in an educational program. Approved activities may include WorkFirst program activities such as on-the-job-training, job search, and vocational educational training. For consumers who are not participating in WorkFirst, the applicant or consumer must be working or enrolled in an educational program. Families participating in WCCC may pay a monthly co-payment, depending on the family's income level.

WCCC Eligibility Based on Educational Enrollment.

WCCC rules provide specific guidelines for WCCC eligibility based on enrollment in an educational program. An applicant or consumer who is 22 years or older is limited to up to 36 months of WCCC benefits during the consumer's lifetime for participation in vocational education. An applicant or consumer must also work an average of 20 or more hours per week or work an average of 16 or more hours per week of paid federal or state work study.

The vocational education program must lead to a degree or certificate in a specific occupation and be offered by the following accredited entities only: a public and private technical college or school; a community college; or a tribal college.

WCCC benefits will cover the student's hours of employment—including travel time, the hours of class time, and up to ten hours per week for study time for approved classes. Approved classes include classroom, labs, online class, and unpaid internships required by the vocational educational program.

The 2017-19 operating budget limited the WCCC caseload to a monthly average of 33,000 households. In the event of a wait list, certain groups will receive priority access to WCCC. These groups include families receiving TANF benefits, children with special needs, and children experiencing homelessness, among others.

Summary of Bill:

By January 1, 2019, the Department must revise its rules that require non-WorkFirst applicants or consumers to work at least an average of 20 or more hours per week or at least an average of 16 or more hours per week of work study, as a condition of receiving WCCC benefits. The rules must be revised to eliminate the work requirements as a condition of receiving WCCC benefits.

The Department must also revise its rules regarding the types of certificate and degree programs that applicants or consumers may pursue while receiving WCCC benefits, to include certificate and degrees in early childhood education, paraeducation, and teaching.

The Department must consult with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in revising its rules.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 15, 2018.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 3, relating to codification of the Working Connections Child Care program in the statutes for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, which takes effect July 1, 2018, and section 4, relating to codification of the Working Connections Child Care program in the statutes for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, which takes effect on December 1, 2018.