

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2455

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to supporting access to child care for parents who are attending high school or working toward completion of a high school equivalency certificate.

Brief Description: Supporting access to child care for parents who are attending high school or working toward completion of a high school equivalency certificate.

Sponsors: House Committee on Human Services & Early Learning (originally sponsored by Representatives Kilduff, Eslick, Senn, Ryu, Kloba, Valdez, Bergquist, Davis, Pollet, Goodman and Wylie; by request of Office of Financial Management).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/17/20, 1/28/20 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/8/20, 2/10/20 [DPS(HSEL)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/20, 66-32.

Passed Senate: 3/5/20, 34-15.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Allows Working Connections Child Care eligibility for a parent attending high school or pursuing a high school equivalency who has an income at or below 85 percent of the state median income.
- Requires school districts to provide transportation upon request for parenting students who are transporting an infant.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

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.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Dent, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry and Klippert.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Human Services & Early Learning be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 23 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, 1st Vice Chair; Bergquist, 2nd Vice Chair; Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Rude, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chopp, Cody, Dolan, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Hudgins, Kilduff, Macri, Pettigrew, Pollet, Ryu, Senn, Springer, Steele, Sullivan, Tarleton and Tharinger.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Chandler, Dye, Hoff, Kraft, Schmick, Sutherland and Ybarra.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Corry and Mosbrucker.

Staff: Jordan Clarke (786-7123).

Background:

Working Connections Child Care.

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program is a subsidized child care program administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). To receive authorizations for 12 months of child care subsidy, eligible families must have household incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG) at the time of application. Two-hundred percent of the 2019 FPG is \$42,660 for a household of three.

The WCCC program is partially funded by the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The CCDF rules allow states to set the maximum household income eligibility for child care subsidy at 85 percent of the state's median income (SMI). In Washington, 85 percent of the SMI is \$65,520 for a household of three.

Depending on income and household size, the participant may be required to pay a copayment to their child care provider. A participant pays the minimum copayment of \$15 per month when he or she is a minor parent and is either a recipient of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or part of his or her parent or relative's TANF assistance unit.

The DCYF determines household size based on criteria adopted in rule. For a single parent, including a minor parent living independently, the DCYF counts the parent and the children in the household. If both parents are living in the household, both parents are counted and must be working or participating in a DCYF-approved activity to qualify for the WCCC. Approved activities may include satisfactory attendance at a high school or a high school equivalency program.

School District Transportation.

School districts may provide for the transportation of school children and school employees using school buses and drivers hired by the district, commercially chartered bus services, or through a pupil transportation services contract with a private nongovernmental entity. School districts may, when approved by the superintendent of an educational service district, approve payment for individual transportation arrangements for an eligible student.

Federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS) adopted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regulate motor vehicle restraint systems for children as well as safety requirements for school buses. The FMVSS require small school buses and school-chartered buses with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or less to have lap/shoulder seat belt assemblies. For large school buses with a GVWR of more than 10,000 pounds, seat belts are not required under federal rules.

State law requires a child to be properly secured in a rear-facing child restraint system until the child is 2 years old or reaches the weight or height limit of the child restraint system set by the manufacturer. State child restraint system laws do not apply to school buses.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

Working Connections Child Care.

Beginning September 1, 2020, the DCYF must authorize full-day WCCC during the school year for a parent who is attending high school, or a parent who is age 21 or younger and working toward completing a high school equivalency certificate, when the parent has a household income of no more than 85 percent of the state median income. The parent must participate in at least 110 hours of an approved activity per month in order to receive full-day care.

When determining eligibility, the DCYF may not consider the availability of the other biological parent when authorizing care and may not require the parent to pay a copayment.

School District Transportation.

By July 1, 2021, at the request of an eligible student, a school district may allow the student to transport an infant on a school bus or other district transportation. The infant must be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system.

If the district denies a student request to transport the infant by bus, the district must authorize other arrangements for the student's transportation. An "eligible student" is defined as any student served by the transportation program of a school district or compensated for individual transportation arrangements whose route stop is outside the walk area for a student's school, except if the student to be transported is disabled.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except section 1, relating to working connections child care, which takes effect September 1, 2020.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Human Services & Early Learning):

(In support) It can be hard to be a teenager in high school and adding parenting to that equation makes it even more complex. This bill has a singular focus of helping parenting students to finish high school. There is an intergenerational component to this policy that helps break the cycle of poverty and promotes self-sufficiency. This policy removes major barriers to students trying to achieve educational goals after they become parents. Asking grandparents to take on child care costs for their grandchildren is not always feasible, nor is relying on the other biological parent. This is common-sense two-generation poverty reduction strategy. The state's youngest moms and dads are also some of the most vulnerable high school students. It is important to remember these young parents are still adolescents. A simplified approach to child care assistance will smooth the path for these parents. Schools do a good job supporting students whose needs are academic, but sometimes the biggest barriers students have are those that can be met through human services. The main barriers facing these students are having access to child care and reliable transportation.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):

(In support) Education is a critical component of getting families out of poverty and ensuring that families can be self-sufficient. The state budget devotes billions of dollars to achieving this outcome, but what some students need is access to child care. It is important for those students who have a family of their own and need to complete high school that they have accessible child care in order to complete their education. This is a two-generation approach. Kindergarten readiness is directly related to the mother's education level, so by educating the mother, the state makes sure the child will be ready for kindergarten. This bill is a good upstream investment for anti-poverty measures and also for early learning.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Human Services & Early Learning): Representative Kilduff, prime sponsor; Michelle Spenser, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Sydney Forrester, Office of the Governor; Melanie Smith, Washington Anti-Poverty Advocates Group; and Allison Krutsinger, Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Persons Testifying (Appropriations): Representative Kilduff, prime sponsor; and Melanie Smith, Wellspring Family Services.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Human Services & Early Learning): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations): None.