

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2456

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Human Services & Early Learning  
Appropriations

**Title:** An act relating to working connections child care eligibility.

**Brief Description:** Concerning working connections child care eligibility.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Callan, Eslick, Ramos, Ryu, Shewmake, Chapman, Senn, Frame, Thai, Bergquist, Kilduff, Stonier, Tharinger, Davis, Macri, Pollet, Goodman, Wylie and Doglio; by request of Governor Inslee.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/17/20, 1/24/20 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/5/20, 2/8/20 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Extends the grace period for homeless families to fulfill Working Connections Child Care program requirements from four to 12 months.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Goodman, Kilduff, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

**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).

**Background:**

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program provides child care subsidies for families with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline (FPG). Two hundred percent of the 2019 FPG is \$42,660 for a household of three. The parent must be

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engaged in work or in approved work activities unless the family has received child welfare, child protective, or family assessment response services in the previous six months. A household's eligibility period for the WCCC program lasts for 12 months.

Families experiencing homelessness are allowed a four-month grace period to meet program requirements, including providing verification of participation in approved work activities.

The WCCC program is funded in part by the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The CCDF rules define homelessness in accordance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act subchapter on Education for Homeless Children and Youths (McKinney-Vento Act). This definition describes homeless individuals as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes sharing the housing of other persons in the definition for homeless children and youth.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is the designated lead agency for administration of the CCDF program and administers the WCCC program.

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### **Summary of Bill:**

The DCYF must extend the grace period for homeless families to meet WCCC program requirements from four months to 12 months.

The term "homeless" is defined as without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as described in the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

Statutory content is reorganized.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 14, 2020.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

### **Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This policy is about providing safe, consistent, high quality care to the most vulnerable children and a safe place for children while parents stabilize and find housing. Families are rarely able to find the care they need in the four-month timeframe of the current homeless grace period. More than 300 homeless families lost access to care last year. Homelessness in early childhood is harmful to children's health, and early brain development and experiencing toxic stress is associated with poor educational outcomes and long-term health issues. Access to child care will help buffer children and families. Homeless families have a full-time job coping with their trauma and trying to shield their children from the

effects of homelessness. Parents who are homeless and trying to find a job face huge barriers in finding and keeping jobs. The current grace period is not enough time, and extending it will increase predictability for providers. In a 12-month program, a child has time to learn, thrive, and feel safe. With more time in the grace period, families facing uncertainty of affording child care will have fewer worries. Improving access to quality early learning is one of the best ways to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. After school care is a place for children to work on homework, as well as on social-emotional growth.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Callan, prime sponsor; Joel Ryan, Washington State Association of Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program; Norma Lobo and Sarah Brady, Child Care Resources; Kelly Blutcher; Bevette Irvis, Wellspring Family Services; Nick Federici, United Way of King County; Ryan Murphy, Save the Children Action Network; David Beard, School's Out Washington; and Sydney Forrester, Office of the Governor.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 20 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, 1st Vice Chair; Bergquist, 2nd Vice Chair; Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Chopp, Cody, Dolan, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Hudgins, Kilduff, Macri, Pettigrew, Pollet, Ryu, Senn, Sullivan, Tarleton and Tharinger.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Rude, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Dye, Hoff, Kraft, Mosbrucker, Schmick, Steele, Sutherland and Ybarra.

**Staff:** Jordan Clarke (786-7123).

### **Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Human Services & Early Learning:**

The committee recommended the addition of a July 1, 2020 effective date.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2020.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Birth to five years old is the most crucial time in a child's life, and unstable housing and high mobility can negatively impact these years. Children that lack early learning experiences have a difficult time keeping up with their peers in school, and students that do not graduate are three times more likely to experience homelessness in life compared to their peers. If a parent has no child care it is difficult to find housing, maintain a job, further education, and follow other opportunities that would improve their quality of life.

Homelessness is hard, and resources to help individuals experiencing homelessness get education and employment are nearly impossible to navigate. Having to bring children into these experiences can be traumatic for both children and parents. People experiencing homelessness need child care and cannot currently afford quality, safe child care without this bill. The current homeless grace period is too short to help households that are experiencing homelessness, particularly for those who have experienced homelessness for a long time. It can be difficult for these families to find child care within the four months, and then there is nowhere else to turn to receive child care.

In order to make the funding already provided to reduce homelessness work best, support this bill. Households experiencing homelessness need child care support to access jobs, educational opportunities, and health care. This bill is the right thing to do for parents and children.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Norma Lobo, Child Care Resources; and Michele Thomas, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.