

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6483

As Passed Senate, February 19, 2020

Title: An act relating to rating requirements for child care providers.

Brief Description: Concerning rating requirements for child care providers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, C. and Nguyen; by request of Department of Children, Youth and Families).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/03/20, 2/07/20 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 2/19/20, 45-3.

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Makes changes to Early Achievers, the state's quality rating and improvement system for early child care and education with a scale of 1-5.
- Allows new Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program providers that are participating in remedial activities to rate at a level 4 or 5 in Early Achievers within 12 months, instead of six months.
- Allows child care providers to receive subsidy payments if the providers do not rate at a level 3 and are completing remedial activities.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6483 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Holy, Hunt, McCoy, Mullet, Padden, Pedersen, Salomon and Wagoner.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Early Achievers. This program is the state's quality rating and improvement system for early child care and education. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) administers the program in partnership with other organizations. The quality of care

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is assigned a rating on a scale of 1-5, with level 1 being the minimum requirements for licensing and level 5 being the highest possible level of quality.

In 2015, the Early Start Act required licensed child care and early learning providers serving non-school-age children and receiving state subsidies to be enrolled in Early Achievers and meet certain rating deadlines.

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. This state-funded voluntary preschool program serves children ages three and four from low-income households, eligible for special education, or who have other risk factors.

New Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) providers must enroll in Early Achievers within 30 days of the start of the ECEAP contract. The providers, including licensed or certified child care centers and homes, must rate at a level 4 or 5 within 24 months of enrollment or the start of the ECEAP contract.

If ECEAP providers rate below a level 4, providers must complete remedial activities and rate at level 4 or 5 within six months of beginning remedial activities.

Child Care Providers Receiving State Subsidy Payments. Subsidized child care programs include Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and Seasonal Child Care.

Existing child care providers serving non-school-age children and receiving state subsidy payments had to rate or request to be rated at level 3 or higher in Early Achievers by December 31, 2019. If child care providers did not meet this deadline, they are no longer eligible to receive state subsidy.

New child care providers must rate or request to be rated at level 3 or higher within 30 months of enrollment. If new child care providers do not meet this deadline, they are no longer eligible to receive state subsidy.

If providers do not rate or request to be rated at level 3 or higher following a remedial period, they are no longer eligible to receive state subsidy.

Reports. DCYF must submit two reports regarding certain topics related to ECEAP and WCCC in 2020 and 2021.

Summary of First Substitute Bill: Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. If ECEAP providers, including licensed or certified child care centers and homes, rate below level 4, providers must rate or request to be rated at level 4 or 5 within 12 months, instead of six months, of beginning remedial activities.

If ECEAP providers do not rate or request to be rated at level 4 or 5 following the remedial period, providers are not eligible to receive state-funded support.

Child Care Providers Receiving State Subsidy Payments. If existing or new child care providers do not rate at level 3 within the required deadlines, they may receive state subsidy payments while completing remedial activities.

Reports. An expiration date regarding the two reports is corrected, so it occurs after the reports are due. The due date for the first report is delayed by two months.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This bill supports child care providers while they are working on improving the quality of care. This bill cleans up changes from last year that were based on the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Early Achievers. All providers would have the same amount of time to complete remedial activities.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Allison Krutsinger, Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.