

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## 2SSB 5225

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Increasing access to the working connections child care program.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, C., Conway, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Lovelett, Nguyen, Salomon, Shewmake, Stanford and Valdez).

**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

**House Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** Working Connections Child Care. The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program is a federally and state-funded program that provides child care subsidies to families, and is administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Families may be eligible for child care subsidies if they have a household income at or below 60 percent of the state median income (SMI) and have one or more children younger than 13, or younger than 19 with a verified special need or are under court supervision. As of October 1, 2022, 60 percent of the state median income is \$4,274 maximum monthly income for a family of three.

To be eligible for WCCC, the parent or guardian must meet certain eligibility requirements including being employed, self-employed, or in approved work or education activities. Children must be a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, a qualified alien, or a nonqualified alien who meets the Washington State residency requirements and legally reside in the state.

The family is responsible for making a co-payment to the child care provider based on the family's countable income, which are established in state law. In 2021, WCCC eligibility was expanded by phasing in higher income thresholds and lower copayments.

Authorizations for WCCC subsidies are effective for 12 months.

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

Therapeutic Courts. State law defines specialty courts and therapeutic courts to mean a court using a program structured to achieve both a reduction in recidivism and an increase in the likelihood of rehabilitation, or to reduce child abuse and neglect, out-of-home placements of children, termination of parental rights, and substance abuse and mental health symptoms among parents or guardians and their children through continuous and intense judicially supervised treatment, and the appropriate use of services, sanctions, and incentives.

**Summary:** Child Care Employees. A family is eligible for WCCC when the household's annual income is at or below 85 percent of SMI adjusted for family size and:

- the child is less than 13, or less than 19 with a special need;
- the applicant or consumer is employed in a licensed child care center or family home provider; and
- the household meets all other program eligibility requirements.

DCYF must waive the copayment to the extent allowable under federal law; otherwise, a maximum of a \$15 copayment.

Therapeutic Court Participants. DCYF must establish and implement policies to allow WCCC eligibility for families with children who in the last six months have a parent or guardian who is either participating or is listed as a victim in a specialty court or therapeutic court. These participants or victims do not have to remain active in these courts to maintain 12-month authorization for WCCC.

Immigration Status. DCYF may not consider the immigration status of an applicant or consumer's child when determining WCCC eligibility.

These WCCC eligibility provisions take effect October 1, 2023.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	36	13
House	81	16

**Effective:** July 23, 2023  
October 1, 2023 (Section 3)