

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2688

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to adjustments to the early support for infants and toddlers program.

Brief Description: Providing adjustments to the early support for infants and toddlers program.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregerson, Ormsby and Macri; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/5/26, 2/7/26 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Changes the multiplier for the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program funding formula from aligning with the special education excess cost multiplier for prekindergarten students to a set multiplier of 1.00.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Berg, Bergquist, Cortes, Doglio, Fitzgibbon, Leavitt, Lekanoff, Peterson, Ryu, Springer, Stonier, Street and Thai.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Couture, Ranking Minority Member; Connors, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Penner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Schmick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Burnett, Dye, Keaton, Manjarrez and Marshall.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives

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.

Callan and Pollet.

Staff: Jordan Clarke (786-7123).

Background:

Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides grant funding to states to operate a comprehensive program of individual and family intervention services for children from birth to age 3 who have been diagnosed with a disability or developmental delay. In Washington, these intervention services are administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) through the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program. The ESIT program provides an array of services, such as developmental services, occupational and physical therapy, language therapy, and service coordination to clients according to an individualized family service plan.

The DCYF contracts with provider agency organizations, including public, private, tribal, and nonprofit entities, and school districts, to provide early intervention services within an assigned area. In some counties, services are coordinated through county lead agencies, which subcontract with provider agencies for service delivery.

Funding for the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program.

Funding for the ESIT program is through multiple sources including state special education funding and other state funding, as well as federal IDEA funds. Funding is appropriated to the DCYF based on the annual average headcount of children who are eligible for and receiving early intervention services. The headcount must be multiplied by the per pupil statewide allocation for the prototypical kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) school, multiplied by the special education cost multiplier for prekindergarten students, which is currently 1.20. The DCYF is required to distribute funds to ESIT service providers and, when appropriate, to county lead agencies. A child is considered to have received ESIT services if the child has received services within the same month as the monthly count day, which is the last business day of the month.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The multiplier for the ESIT program funding formula is changed from aligning with the special education cost multiplier for prekindergarten students and is instead set at 1.00.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The multiplier for the ESIT program funding formula is changed from 1.20 to 1.00.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The goal of this bill is to hold steady the current ESIT multiplier in order to avoid potential costs without significantly impacting the program. Please support the bill.

(Opposed) Early intervention services and investments save lives and money. This program prioritizes the youngest children with disabilities and provides supports for those children. Over 80 percent of brain development happens within the first few years of life, and many children served do not need further special education services in the future. In general, increased ESIT services help the K-12 system by reducing the number of children who require Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) when they reach the K-12 system. The caseload has grown significantly over the last few years due to family needs, and providers travel across the state to provide these services to families.

The last time the ESIT multiplier and the prekindergarten special education multiplier were separated, providers faced financial difficulties and were forced to reduce services to children. Providers often rely on community generosity to help cover gaps in state funding. Any funding change to the program will negatively affect ESIT providers across the state. The recent increases to special education investments have helped improve outcomes for families statewide.

The Legislature fixed the separated multipliers last year, and this bill would undo that work and make it easier for ESIT to be excluded from any additional investments provided in the pre-K special education program. The state is facing budget difficulties, but please do not reduce funding for this important program. Reducing ESIT services will lead to higher costs later on when children reach the K-12 system and require IEPs.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Sheri Sawyer, Office of Financial Management.

(Opposed) Kristina Mendieta, Kinderling; Stephanie Walsh; Jessica Laughery, Joya Child and Family Development; Magan Cromar, King County Developmental Disabilities and Early Childhood Supports Division; Brad Banks, Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC); and Janelle Bersch, North Central Educational Service District.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.