CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1648

69th Legislature
2025 Regular Session

Passed by the House April 22, 2025
Yeas 96 Nays 0

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Passed by the Senate April 8, 2025
Yeas 48 Nays 0

President of the Senate

Approved

Governor of the State of Washington

CERTIFICATE

I, Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1648** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.

Chief Clerk

FILED

Secretary of State
State of Washington

ENGROSSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1648

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2025 Regular Session

State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Dent, Eslick, Burnett, Penner, Jacobsen, and Graham)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/25.

AN ACT Relating to child care provider qualifications; amending RCW 43.216.755; adding a new section to chapter 43.216 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic impact on all people, but had a particularly dramatic impact on child care and the child care industry. Many child care facilities closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and providers left the child care field. It became clear during the COVID-19 pandemic how critical child care is to the success of every industry as parents need child care to work.

(2) The legislature further finds that because of the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child care industry, the plans of many child care providers to receive education were put on hold as efforts were focused on addressing the immediate needs of child care providers and families. Additionally, the current market-based funding model results in wages so low that affording college tuition is often impossible for child care providers. The limited availability of college courses in multiple languages and the scarcity of early childhood education college programs further hinders access to required training and certification. Similar to the

mixed delivery system of early learning, child care providers should also have access to a mix of pathways to meet staff qualification requirements.

(3) For those reasons, the legislature intends to delay the requirement for child care providers to meet certification and training qualification conditions and honor the experience of child care providers by extending the timeline for licensed child care providers to demonstrate experience-based competency. Extending these timelines will support child care providers in their professional journey.

Sec. 2. RCW 43.216.755 and 2020 c 342 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) By July 1, 2021, the department shall implement a noncredit-bearing, community-based training pathway for licensed child care providers to meet professional education requirements associated with child care licensure. The community-based training pathway must be offered as an alternative to existing credit-bearing pathways available to providers.

(2) ((~~The department shall consult with the following stakeholders in the development and implementation of the community-based training pathway: The statewide child care resource and referral network, a community-based training organization that provides training to licensed family day care providers, a statewide organization that represents the interests of family day care providers, a statewide organization that represents the interests of licensed child day care centers, an organization that represents the interests of refugee and immigrant communities, a bilingual child care provider whose first language is not English, an organization that advocates for early learning, an organization representing private and independent schools, and the state board for community and technical colleges.~~

~~(3)~~)) The community-based training pathway must:

(a) Align with adopted core competencies for early learning professionals;

(b) Be made available to providers in multiple languages;

(c) Include culturally relevant practices; ((~~and~~))

(d) Be made available at low cost to providers and at prices comparable to the cost of similar community-based trainings, not to exceed ((~~two hundred and fifty dollars~~)) $250 per person; and

(e) Be accessible to providers in rural and urban settings.

((~~(4)~~)) (3) The department shall allow licensed child care providers until at least August 1, ((~~2026~~)) 2030, to:

(a) Comply with child care licensing rules that require a provider to hold an early childhood education initial certificate or an early childhood education short certificate; or

(b) Complete the community-based training((~~s~~)) pathway.

((~~(5) For the purposes of this section, "demonstrated competence" means an individual has shown that he or she has the skills to complete the required work independently.~~)) (4) Nothing prohibits the department from adopting rules that provide timelines beyond August 1, 2030, to allow providers additional time to meet staff qualification requirements based on their date of licensure, hire, or promotion, which can be no more than five years.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.216 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the department shall allow licensed child care providers until August 1, 2030, to demonstrate experience-based competency as an alternative means to comply with child care licensing rules that require a provider to hold an early childhood education initial, short, or state certificate, when the provider has all of the following documented in the department's electronic workforce registry:

(a) Active employment in a position that requires an early childhood education initial, short, or state certificate;

(b) Employment in a licensed or certified child care center or licensed family home provider without a break in service since August 1, 2021, as of the effective date of this section or a cumulative five years of employment in a licensed or certified child care center or licensed family home provider; and

(c) Completion of and maintained compliance with all health and safety and child care or school-age care basics training required by the department.

(2) Nothing in this section prohibits the department from establishing more restrictive requirements for providers serving the early childhood education and assistance program including, but not limited to, excluding experience-based competency as an alternative means to fulfill staff qualification requirements, nor does it prohibit the department from excluding experience-based competency

from the calculation of early achievers professional development points.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The department of children, youth, and families shall convene a stakeholder group to assist the department in identifying strategies to improve early learning and school-age staff qualification requirements and verification processes including, but not limited to:

(a) Identifying measures to streamline and clarify relevant administrative rules and department policies;

(b) Defining criteria and methods by which to honor equivalent out-of-state education and training; and

(c) Identifying options for offering the community-based training pathway in an online format.

(2) At a minimum, the stakeholder group must include:

(a) Family home and child care center providers, including at least one provider from a child care center that is part of a national chain or has 10 or more sites; and

(b) Representation from the following organizations:

(i) The statewide child care resource and referral network;

(ii) A community-based training organization that provides training to licensed family day care providers;

(iii) A statewide organization that represents the interests of family day care providers;

(iv) A statewide organization that represents the interests of licensed child day care centers;

(v) The statewide out-of-school time intermediary organization;

(vi) An organization that represents the interests of refugee and immigrant communities;

(vii) A bilingual child care provider whose first language is not English;

(viii) An organization that advocates for early learning;

(ix) An organization representing private and independent schools; and

(x) The state board for community and technical colleges.

(3) The department of children, youth, and families shall report to the legislature by December 1, 2026, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, on strategies identified by the stakeholder group and the department's plans and timelines under which to carry out those strategies.

(4) The department of children, youth, and families must convene the stakeholder group and produce the report as required in this section within existing resources.

(5) This section expires July 1, 2028.

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