

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT
SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1128

Chapter 148, Laws of 2026

69th Legislature
2026 Regular Session

CHILD CARE WORKFORCE STANDARDS BOARD

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 11, 2026

Passed by the House March 9, 2026
Yeas 68 Nays 27

LAURIE JINKINS

**Speaker of the House of
Representatives**

Passed by the Senate March 4, 2026
Yeas 28 Nays 19

DENNY HECK

President of the Senate

Approved March 23, 2026 3:06 PM

BOB FERGUSON

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 **SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1128** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.

BERNARD DEAN

Chief Clerk

FILED

March 24, 2026

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1128

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2026 Regular Session

State of Washington 69th Legislature 2026 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Fosse, Stonier, Berry, Bronoske, Davis, Taylor, Wylie, Nance, Pollet, Ormsby, Scott, Mena, Doglio, Alvarado, Berg, Peterson, Goodman, Reeves, Reed, Parshley, Stearns, Simmons, Cortes, Ramel, Ryu, Timmons, Hackney, Kloba, Callan, Farivar, Ortiz-Self, Paul, Morgan, Shavers, Macri, Obras, Rule, Fey, Lekanoff, Bergquist, Salahuddin, Bernbaum, and Hill)

READ FIRST TIME 02/09/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a child care workforce standards
2 board; adding a new chapter to Title 49 RCW; and creating a new
3 section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds and declares the
6 following:

7 (a) High quality child care and early learning enable parents to
8 go to work, keeping the economy going at all levels and returning six
9 dollars in value for every one dollar invested. High quality early
10 learning services help prepare children for success in school and in
11 life. A high quality child care and early learning system depends on
12 a thriving, healthy, and competitively compensated workforce. Current
13 conditions for child care workers have resulted in lack of access,
14 unaffordable prices, and poorer outcomes for children and families;

15 (b) Low compensation and poor working conditions impair the
16 health, efficiency, and well-being of persons employed to provide
17 child care, constitute unfair competition against other employers and
18 their employees, threaten the stability of the child care market,
19 create economic instability for providers, and result in a provider
20 workforce that must rely in public and private assistance to support
21 their own families;

1 (c) The fissured nature of child care workplaces exacerbates
2 these conditions and create barriers preventing workers from being
3 able to address these problems on their own; and

4 (d) Employment under these conditions threatens the health and
5 well-being of the people of Washington and injures the overall
6 economy.

7 (2) Therefore, it is the declared policy of the state that such
8 working conditions for child care workers be eliminated as rapidly as
9 practicable through establishment of a workforce standards board
10 comprised of employer and worker representatives and state agency
11 representatives to recommend minimum compensation and other
12 employment standards.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
14 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
15 otherwise.

16 (1) "Board" means the Washington state child care workforce
17 standards board established pursuant to this chapter.

18 (2)(a) "Child care employer" means any employer of child care
19 workers.

20 (b) "Child care employer" does not include any private school
21 approved under chapter 28A.195 RCW operating a preschool or otherwise
22 providing child care or early learning services requiring a child
23 care provider license or certification from the department of
24 children, youth, and families.

25 (3)(a) "Child care worker" means any worker providing child care
26 services, excluding administrative staff, at a child care provider
27 licensed or certified by the department of children, youth, and
28 families. "Child care worker" includes family child care providers as
29 defined in RCW 41.56.030.

30 (b) "Child care worker" does not include any employee of a
31 provider described under subsection (2)(b) of this section.

32 (4) "Department" means the department of labor and industries.

33 (5) "Director" means the director of the department of labor and
34 industries or the director's designee.

35 (6) "Employer organization" means:

36 (a) An organization that is exempt from federal income taxation
37 under section 510(c)(6) of the internal revenue code that represents
38 child care employers; or

1 (b) An entity that employers, who together employ the largest
2 number of child care workers in Washington, have selected as a
3 representative.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The Washington state child care
5 workforce standards board is created with the powers and duties
6 established by law. The board is composed of members appointed by the
7 governor as provided in this subsection:

8 (a) Three members who represent child care workers, subject to
9 the following:

10 (i) One member must be appointed from a list of at least three
11 names submitted by the largest organization representing family child
12 care providers;

13 (ii) One member must be appointed from a list of at least three
14 names submitted by the largest organization representing child care
15 center workers; and

16 (iii) One member must represent workers in school-age programs;

17 (b) Three members who represent child care employers or employer
18 organizations, with at least one representing child care family home
19 providers and one representing a small business of 15 or fewer
20 employees;

21 (c) One representative of a professional development or training
22 program for child care workers;

23 (d) One representative of an organization representing parents;
24 and

25 (e) The secretary of the department of children, youth, and
26 families and the director of the department of labor and industries,
27 or their designees.

28 (2) Board members appointed under subsection (1)(a) or (b) of
29 this section shall serve four-year terms following the initial
30 staggered lot determination in subsection (3) of this section and
31 must not be appointed to more than two full consecutive four-year
32 terms. The governor shall fill vacancies occurring prior to the
33 expiration of a member's term by appointment for the unexpired term.
34 A member serves until a successor is appointed.

35 (3) (a) The governor must make initial appointments to the board
36 no later than September 1, 2026. The initial terms for board members
37 appointed under subsection (1)(a) and (b) of this section must be
38 determined by lot as follows:

1 (i) One member appointed under subsection (1)(a) and (b) of this
2 section shall serve a two-year term;

3 (ii) One member appointed under subsection (1)(a) and (b) of this
4 section shall serve a three-year term; and

5 (iii) One member appointed under subsection (1)(a) and (b) of
6 this section shall serve a four-year term.

7 (b) The director must convene the first meeting of the board by
8 October 1, 2026. The board must elect a chair at its first meeting.

9 (4) The board shall elect a member by majority vote to serve as
10 its chairperson and shall determine the term to be served by the
11 chairperson.

12 (5) Board members must be compensated in accordance with RCW
13 43.03.220 and must be reimbursed for travel expenses as provided in
14 RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

15 (6) The affirmative vote of six board members is required for the
16 board to approve recommendations.

17 (7) To carry out its duties, the board shall hold public hearings
18 that include public comment on, gather data on, and conduct
19 investigations into, working conditions in the child care industry in
20 accordance with section 4 of this act.

21 (8) The director may employ personnel to carry out duties of the
22 board under this chapter.

23 (9) The director shall provide administrative staff support to
24 the board.

25 (10) The board shall establish operating procedures that meet all
26 state and federal antitrust requirements and may prohibit board
27 member access to data to meet the requirements of this subsection.

28 (11) The board is subject to the requirements of chapters 34.05
29 and 42.56 RCW.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1)(a) The board must meet quarterly and
31 make recommendations to the director that will enhance and improve
32 the employment standards of child care workers. The board must
33 recommend statewide standards and may also recommend standards that
34 apply to specific child care occupations or geographic regions.

35 (b) The board may not recommend standards regarding licensing of
36 child care facilities. The board may not recommend standards that are
37 less protective of or beneficial to child care workers as any other
38 applicable statute or rule or any standard previously established by
39 the board.

1 (2) (a) The board's initial investigations, public hearings, data
2 gathering, and recommendations must prioritize child care worker
3 staffing, recruitment, retention, and staffing ratios.

4 (b) Additionally, the board may investigate:

5 (i) The adequacy of wage rates and other compensation policies of
6 child care employers to ensure the provision of quality services and
7 sufficient levels of recruitment and retention of child care
8 employees;

9 (ii) The sufficiency of levels of recruitment and retention of
10 child care employees;

11 (iii) The adequacy of the role of child care employees in making
12 decisions affecting their wages and working conditions;

13 (iv) The adequacy and enforcement of training requirements for
14 child care employees;

15 (v) The impact of systemic racism and economic injustice on child
16 care employees and the adequacy of efforts to alleviate such impact
17 through the development of career paths through partnerships between
18 labor and management and other methods;

19 (vi) The adequacy of payment practices and policies of the state
20 as such practices and policies relate to the reimbursement of child
21 care employers for the provision of services under a child care
22 program; and

23 (vii) The adequacy of access and costs to workers of background
24 checks, fingerprinting, bloodborne pathogen training, tuberculosis
25 tests, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid certification, and
26 other safety requirements.

27 (3) The board may consider the following types of information
28 when developing recommendations:

29 (a) Wage rate and benefit data collected by or submitted to the
30 board for child care workers in the relevant geographic area and
31 child care occupations, including wage and benefit data of similarly
32 situated child care occupations on the west coast of the United
33 States;

34 (b) Statements showing wage rates and benefits paid to child care
35 workers in the relevant geographic area and child care occupations,
36 including wage and benefit statements of similarly situated child
37 care occupations on the west coast of the United States;

38 (c) Signed collective bargaining agreements applicable to child
39 care workers in the relevant geographic area and child care
40 occupations, including collective bargaining agreements of similarly

1 situated child care occupations on the west coast of the United
2 States;

3 (d) Testimony and information from current and former child care
4 workers, organizations representing child care workers, child care
5 employers, parents of children currently in child care, and child
6 care organizations;

7 (e) Local minimum employment standards;

8 (f) Information submitted by or obtained from state and local
9 government entities, including registries or data regarding employee
10 training, recruitment, and retention;

11 (g) Information from a federally approved rate-setting tool for
12 child care funding; and

13 (h) Any other information pertinent to establishing minimum child
14 care employment standards.

15 (4) Based on the investigations and information gathered pursuant
16 to this section, the board shall prepare a series of reports with
17 findings and recommendations, and shall make those reports publicly
18 available on the department's website. The board must allow a
19 minority report to be included with any report prepared by the board,
20 if requested by a member of the board. The reports must include a
21 breakdown of the vote on each of the board's recommendations,
22 including the votes in favor of and against each recommendation and
23 how each board member voted on the recommendations.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** By October 1, 2026, the department and the
25 department of children, youth, and families must jointly enter into a
26 formal agreement that includes data sharing of information necessary
27 to implement the provisions of this chapter.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** This act may be known and cited as the
29 child care workforce standards board act.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 2 through 6 of this act
31 constitute a new chapter in Title 49 RCW.

Passed by the House March 9, 2026.
Passed by the Senate March 4, 2026.
Approved by the Governor March 23, 2026.
Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 24, 2026.

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