

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2219

Chapter 82, Laws of 2026

69th Legislature
2026 Regular Session

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS—LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 11, 2026

Passed by the House March 9, 2026
Yeas 67 Nays 28

LAURIE JINKINS

**Speaker of the House of
Representatives**

Passed by the Senate March 3, 2026
Yeas 49 Nays 0

DENNY HECK

President of the Senate

Approved March 17, 2026 4:09 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 **ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2219** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.

BERNARD DEAN

Chief Clerk

FILED

March 18, 2026

**Secretary of State
State of Washington**

ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2219

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2026 Regular Session

State of Washington 69th Legislature 2026 Regular Session

By House Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Cortes, Simmons, Berry, Eslick, Santos, Zahn, Nance, Callan, Kloba, Stonier, Goodman, Reeves, Macri, Fosse, Bergquist, Hill, Bernbaum, and Salahuddin)

READ FIRST TIME 01/27/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to enhancing the operational efficiency of child
2 care providers; amending RCW 43.216.255; and adding a new section to
3 chapter 43.216 RCW.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.216.255 and 2021 c 304 s 10 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) No later than November 1, 2016, the department shall
8 implement a single set of licensing standards for child care and the
9 early childhood education and assistance program. The department
10 shall produce the single set of licensing standards within the
11 department's available appropriations. The new licensing standards
12 must:

13 (a) Provide minimum licensing requirements for child care and
14 preschool programs, subject to subsection (2) of this section, which
15 must include a zero tolerance policy for imminent physical harm. Upon
16 violation of the zero tolerance policy, the department shall issue an
17 immediate summary suspension to the licensee;

18 (b) Rely on the standards established in the early achievers
19 program to address quality issues in participating early childhood
20 programs;

1 (c) Take into account the separate needs of family care
2 providers, outdoor nature-based child care providers, and child care
3 centers; and

4 (d) Promote the continued safety of child care settings, and
5 expressly require that the premises of all licensed settings are
6 absent of high-potency synthetic opioids, drug manufacturing
7 equipment, and drug paraphernalia.

8 (2) In establishing the maximum group sizes and staff-to-child
9 ratios for child care centers, the licensing standards established
10 and implemented by the department must allow for the following
11 periods of mixed-ratio time in which children of different age groups
12 may be combined, provided the staff-to-child ratio and group size
13 designated for the youngest child in the mixed group are maintained:

14 (a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, up to 2.5 hours
15 per day, to be used on a schedule established by the center; and

16 (b) Up to four hours per day, to be used on a schedule
17 established by the center, if at least 90 minutes of that time is
18 reserved for allowing meal and rest breaks for center staff.

19 (3) Private schools that operate early learning programs and do
20 not receive state subsidy payments shall be subject to the minimum
21 health and safety standards as defined in RCW 43.216.395(2)(b), the
22 health and safety requirements under chapter 28A.195 RCW, and the
23 requirements necessary to assure a sufficient early childhood
24 education to meet usual requirements needed for transition into
25 elementary school. The state, and any agency thereof, shall not
26 restrict or dictate any specific educational or other programs for
27 early learning programs operated by private schools except for
28 programs that receive state subsidy payments.

29 (4) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions
30 apply:

31 (a) "Drug paraphernalia" has the same meaning as in RCW
32 69.50.4121.

33 (b) "High-potency synthetic opioids" has the same meaning as in
34 RCW 13.34.030; and

35 (c) "Imminent physical harm" means the presence of high-potency
36 synthetic opioids or drug manufacturing equipment in the licensed
37 facility or program space.

38 (5) Nothing in this section creates a private right of action.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.216
2 RCW under the subchapter heading "licensing" to read as follows:

3 The department must waive the early learning program preservice
4 requirement to complete a department-provided orientation when an
5 individual has previously completed the applicable orientation and:

6 (1) It has been less than five years since completion of the
7 orientation;

8 (2) The orientation content and licensing process have not
9 substantially changed since the date of completion; and

10 (3) The individual has not had a break in service either as a
11 licensed child care provider or working in a licensed child care
12 facility.

Passed by the House March 9, 2026.

Passed by the Senate March 3, 2026.

Approved by the Governor March 17, 2026.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 18, 2026.

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