

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6432

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Human Services*

Title: An act relating to early intervention services for infants and toddlers.

Brief Description: Providing coordinated services for children with disabilities.

Sponsor(s): Senators L. Smith, West and Sellar.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 20, 1992, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN SERVICES**

Staff: Melissa Pailthorp (786-7118).

Background: The state provides a variety of services and supports through five state agencies that offer opportunities for personal growth and development to persons who are developmentally disabled. The developmental disability must be attributed to mental retardation or other similar conditions, must originate before the age of 18, must continue indefinitely, and constitute a substantial handicap to the individual.

Currently, there is no statewide, comprehensive, coordinated system of early intervention and family support services for infants who are handicapped or are at risk for experiencing significant developmental problems.

The Birth-to-Six Planning Project began as a planning project for zero-to-three infants in 1982. Since that time, a combination of federal grants and state appropriations have continued the project. Interagency coordination has been encouraged and the foundation of a statewide plan has been developed.

Summary of Amended Bill: The governor will appoint a Birth-to-Six Interagency Coordinating Council involving all agencies serving infants and toddlers with disabilities. The council will promote coordinated, collaborative planning and service delivery for infants and toddlers with

disabilities and their families. State and local agencies currently providing services to disabled infants and toddlers will enter into interagency agreements covering planning and service delivery issues. The state Interagency Coordinating Council will work with early childhood interagency coordinating councils to address the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Bill: Language prohibiting diversion of funds to other programs is deleted, but a requirement that interagency agreements include maintenance of effort provisions is added. Minor language changes make the bill consistent with the companion bill, ESHB 1090.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Early intervention services and support for families is especially important in the early stages of parenting a child with disabilities. County early childhood interagency coordinating councils are doing good work; collaboration and coordination at the state level will improve services further. The state council created by this legislation is essential to providing effective support to children with disabilities and their families.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Margaret Casey, The Children's Budget Coalition; Sandy Loerch, Department of Social and Health Services; Julia Bell, Wee Care Coalition; Mary Jo Wilcox, Washington Assembly; and Joe Terhaar, parent.