

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1561

As Reported By House Committee On:
Human Services

Title: An act relating to preschools.

Brief Description: Studying whether preschools should be regulated like agencies that care for children, expectant mothers, and developmentally disabled people.

Sponsors: Representatives Brown, Wolfe, Thibaudeau, Mastin, J. Kohl, H. Myers, Johanson, Romero, Leonard, Karahalios and L. Johnson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Human Services, February 17, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members:
Representatives Leonard, Chair; Riley, Vice Chair; Cooke, Ranking Minority Member; Brown; Karahalios; Patterson; Thibaudeau; and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members:
Representatives Talcott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Lisk; and Padden.

Staff: Jim Erlandson (786-7093).

Background: Current law establishes licensing and regulatory authority over agencies that receive children, expectant mothers, or persons with developmental disabilities for control, care, or maintenance outside their homes. Excluded from the definition as such an agency are nursery schools and kindergartens which are primarily engaged in educational work with preschool children for four or less hours per day.

Educational programs and facilities for preschool children are provided by both public and private providers. Public programs and providers funded through the Early Childhood Assistance Program are subject to rules promulgated by the Department of Community Development (RCW 28A.215). Private providers may choose to be accredited through application to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

(SPI), but there is no requirement under law that they do so.

Summary of Bill: This bill requires the child care coordinating committee develop phase-in strategy recommendations for regulating, by the year 1998, educational programs that enroll preschool children for four or fewer hours per day. These recommendations shall include impact statements and shall be presented to the Legislature by December 1, 1993.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The testimony centered on the fact that SPI voluntary accreditation was not geared toward health and safety in the faculty and that very few preschools applied for accreditation since it is hard to meet the educational requirements for staff. Health and safety regulation will make preschools more easily insurable.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Diane Olson, Child Care Coordinating Council; Lonnie Johns-Brown, National Organization for Women; Ann Simons, Washington Women United; and Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society.