

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1561

As Passed Legislature

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: By House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by 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 3, 1994, DPS;
Passed House, February 10, 1994, 69-23;
Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Leonard, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Cooke, Ranking Minority Member; Brown; Caver; Karahalios; Patterson and Wolfe.

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

Staff: John Welsh (786-7133).

Background: Agencies that receive children, expectant mothers, or persons with developmental disabilities for care, control or maintenance outside their homes are licensed by the Department of Social and Health Services. These agencies include child-placing agencies, maternity services, day-care centers, foster-family homes, and crisis residential centers.

However, nursery schools and kindergartens which are primarily engaged in educational work with preschool children for less than four hours a day are exempted from the requirements of licensure as child care agencies.

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

Summary of Bill: The Child Care Coordinating Committee is required to develop a phase-in strategy with specific recommendations involving programs serving preschool children, and to report to the Legislature by December 1, 1994.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Currently, there are no general safety and health regulations in place governing preschool children in nursery schools and kindergartens, nor oversight by the state. A study should be done to determine what appropriate safeguards are necessary to address any safety and health concerns.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Ann Simons, Washington Women United (pro); and Margie Reeves, Washington Association Education of Young Children (pro).