

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1561

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 2, 1994

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

SPONSORS: House Committee on Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Brown, Wolfe, Thibaudeau, Mastin, J. Kohl, H. Myers, Johanson, Romero, Leonard, Karahalios and L. Johnson)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Talmadge, Chairman; Wojahn, Vice Chairman; Deccio, Erwin, Franklin, Fraser, Hargrove, McAuliffe, Moyer, Niemi, Prentice and Winsley.

Staff: Richard Rodger (786-7461)

Hearing Dates: April 1, 1993; February 23, 1994

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 exempt 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 of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

SUMMARY:

The Child Care Coordinating Committee is required to develop a phase-in strategy with specific recommendations involving programs serving preschool children for four or fewer hours per day. The recommendations shall include impact statements and shall be presented to the Legislature by December 1, 1994.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

This bill will help ensure safe and healthy environments for young children in preschool programs. If these programs are regulated by DSHS, background checks will be available for the employees who care for children.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: Representative Lisa Brown, original prime sponsor (pro); Margie Reeves, WA Association for Education of the Young Children (pro)