
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2360

Brief Description: Establishing a wage ladder for child care workers.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Kenney, Wood, Santos, Hunt, Dickerson, Schual-Berke, Haigh, McDermott, Morrell, Darneille, Flannigan and Hudgins.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes a wage ladder for child care workers.• Appropriates \$2,000,000 to the Department of Social and Health Services.

Hearing Date: 1/22/04

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

In July 2000, the state instituted a Child Care Career and Wage Ladder Pilot Project (Pilot Project), which was funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reinvestment funds. The purpose of the Pilot Project was to enable child care centers to increase wages and offer benefits for child care workers and encourage child care workers to obtain further education.

The Pilot Project emphasized education, responsibility, and experience, and consisted of the following:

- wage increments of 50 cents for education beyond state regulatory requirements, paid by the state;
- wage increments of 50 cents for levels of responsibility, paid by the child care centers; and
- wage increments of 25 cents for years of experience, paid jointly by the state and child care centers.

In order to participate in the Pilot Project, child care centers had to meet the following criteria:

- at least 10 percent of child capacity in state-subsidized child care programs;
- provide employees with 12 days paid leave; and
- provide employees with assistance with medical premiums of up to \$25 per month.

Prior to elimination of the Pilot Project in June 2003, the Pilot Project included 120 child care centers, 1,500 child care workers, and 8,700 children served. An evaluation of the Pilot Project conducted by Washington State University found the following:

- Wages for all positions at pilot child care centers were higher than non-pilot comparison centers.
- More pilot child care centers provided their employees with benefits than non-pilot comparison centers, both with respect to benefits required for participation in the Pilot Project and benefits not required for participation in the Pilot Project.
- Educational attainment of employees of pilot child care centers was greater than that of non-pilot centers, with more employees at the pilot centers having earned a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or some early childhood education credits and fewer employees at the pilot centers having completed no college study.
- Employees of pilot child care centers pursued more additional education and training than employees of non-pilot centers.
- Employee retention at pilot and non-pilot child care centers was about the same.
- When the date of hire was not taken into consideration, there were no differences in the average length of employment for employees of pilot and non-pilot child care centers. However, among employees hired during the first months of the Pilot Project, employees of the pilot child care centers worked significantly longer than employees of non-pilot centers.

Summary of Bill:

The Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCEL) in the Department of Social and Health Services is required to establish a wage ladder for child care workers in licensed child care centers that meet the following criteria:

- at least 10 percent of child care slots are dedicated to children whose care is subsidized by the state or any local government;
- agree to adopt the wage ladder; and
- meet further program standards as established by the DCCEL by rule.

The wage ladder must include wage increments for levels of education, years of relevant experience, levels of work responsibility, and relevant early childhood education credits. The wage ladder must provide a 50 cents an hour wage increment for all workers listed in the State Training and Registry System (STARS).

Child care centers adopting the wage ladder are required to increase wages for child care workers who have earned a high school diploma or GED certificate, gain additional years of experience, or accept increasing levels of responsibility in providing child care, in accordance with the wage ladder. The DSHS is required to pay wage increments for child care workers employed by child care centers adopting the wage ladder who earn early childhood education credits or who are listed in the STARS, in accordance with the wage ladder.

The DCCEL is required to establish by rule further program standards for licensed child care centers adopting the wage ladder. The DCCEL is also required to study the impact of the wage ladder on the quality of child care and the child care work force, and report its findings to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2005.

Appropriation: The sum of \$2,000,000.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2004.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.