HOUSE BILL REPORT
SSB 5141

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to early intervention services for children with disabilities.

Brief Description: Providing for early intervention services for children with disabilities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen, Schmidt, McAuliffe, Delvin, Rockefeller, Shin, Weinstein, Berkey, Pflug, Kohl-Welles, Hargrove, Kline, Regala, Thibaudeau and Spanel).

Brief History:
Committee Activity:
Children & Family Services: 2/20/06, 2/23/06 [DP];
Appropriations: 2/27/06 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires school districts to provide or contract for early intervention services to eligible children with disabilities from birth to three years of age.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Darneille, Dickerson, Dunn, Haler and Pettigrew.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

Special education consists of instruction and related services specially designed to meet the unique needs and abilities of students with disabilities. It is provided at no cost to eligible students between three and 21 years of age.

School districts may, but are not required to, provide early intervention services to eligible preschool-age children with disabilities. Districts that provide these services are entitled to the regular apportionments from state and county school funds in addition to allocations from state excess cost funds made available for special services for children with disabilities. If school districts opt to serve eligible preschool-age children, they must do so in the birth-to-

three age group under state regulations implementing part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is the lead state agency responsible for early intervention services to children with a disability in the birth-to-three age group.

Summary of Bill:

By September 1, 2009, each school district is required to provide or contract for early intervention services to all eligible children with disabilities from birth to three years of age. Eligibility must be determined according to Part C of the IDEA and as specified in state regulation.

School districts are required to provide or contract for early intervention services in partnership with local birth-to-three lead agencies and birth-to-three providers. The early intervention services must not supplant services or funding currently provided in the state for early intervention services to eligible children with disabilities from birth to three years of age.

The state-designated birth-to-three lead agency must be payor of last resort for provided birth-to-three early intervention services.

Beginning September 1, 2009, special education and training programs provided by the state and school districts for children with disabilities must be extended to include children of preschool age. The birth-to-three early intervention services are not part of the state's program of basic education pursuant to Article IX of the State Constitution.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except section 3, relating to mandatory special education programs, which takes effect September 1, 2009.

Testimony For: This makes good public policy. It helps children get a good start to develop to their fullest potential. It helps parents of children with disabilities learn how to better support their children. It helps school districts by getting more children prepared for kindergarten. Twenty-two percent of the children who participate in early intervention programs do not need to be placed in special education upon entering school. Early intervention is the best foundation and strongest force to help children with disabilities reach their full potential. All parents want the opportunity to partner with local school districts to help their children who have disabilities.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Cecile Lindquist and Cassie Johnston, Wee Care Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Bailey, Buri, Clements, Cody, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, P. Sullivan, Talcott and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Chandler.

Staff: Ben Rarick (786-7349).
Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Children & Family Services:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except section3, relating to mandatory special education programs, which takes effect September 1, 2009.

Testimony For: On behalf of the WeeCare coalition, thank you for passing house bill 1107 and for hearing the Senate companion bill. Many organizations support this bill because it will strengthen the birth to three system statewide. It makes the system better, prepares young children with special needs for school, and helps families become the "first teacher" for their children. Data suggest that of the children that received services last year, 21 percent no longer qualify for special education services. Thank you for your support.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Cecile Lindquist, WeeCare Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.