

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3269

As Reported by House Committee On:
Early Learning & Children's Services

Title: An act relating to the roving early intervention specialist pilot program.

Brief Description: Creating a roving early intervention specialist pilot program.

Sponsors: Representatives Roach, Haler, Williams, Campbell, Rodne and Ross.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Children's Services: 2/5/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Early Learning to implement a pilot program to provide for a roving early intervention specialist to assist licensed child care providers.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Goodman, Hinkle and Pettigrew.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) has responsibility for implementing state early learning policy and coordinating, consolidating, and integrating child care and early learning programs in order to administer programs and funds efficiently.

The Legislature in 2007 appropriated a total of \$500,000 to the DEL for child care consultation services, \$250,000 in each of the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years. In November 2007 the DEL issued a request for proposal for child care consultation services to be provided in 10

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pilot communities. In January 2008 the selected providers began offering consultation services in the three DEL service regions.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Subject to the availability of funds, the DEL must administer the Roving Early Intervention Specialist Pilot Program (Program) beginning July 1, 2008. The purpose of the Program is to provide assistance to licensed child care providers and families in Pierce County with children ages birth to 5 years with special needs.

One roving early intervention specialist must be housed at the local Child Care Resource and Referral Office in Pierce County. The specialist must, at a minimum, have a Bachelor of Arts degree, preferably in child and family counseling or early intervention services. The specialist must:

- (1) assist families in finding child care and other related services;
- (2) coordinate with families and child care providers to ensure a child's enrollment and smooth transition into a child care facility;
- (3) recruit child care providers and provide professional and technical assistance to licensed child care providers; and
- (4) encourage child care providers not to expel a child with special needs until the specialist has had the opportunity to ameliorate concerns.

Professional and technical assistance will include site visits to assist with the providers' challenges and to provide training to workers.

By August 1, 2009, the DEL must report findings to the Governor and the appropriate education and fiscal committees of the Legislature. The DEL must report on the following elements of the Program:

- (1) how often providers received timely consulting and evaluation assistance;
- (2) how many children who might have been asked to leave a child care facility were retained due to the intervention of the specialist; and
- (3) how many providers reported improvement with children's learning progress and readiness.

The DEL also must include recommendations for increasing the number of roving early intervention specialists to serve statewide.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds the duty to recruit child care providers to the duties of the roving early intervention specialist.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is an attempt to deal with some of the issues surrounding autism. Pierce County is experiencing an increase in calls from parents seeking child care for children with special needs. Some of these children are foster children as well. Families of children with special needs report that child care providers don't accept these children into care because the providers do not have the skills or resources necessary to meet the children's needs. Enhanced child care services would improve this situation for families. Parents in Pierce County struggle to find any facility where a child with special needs can be served. If child care providers knew they had the benefit of consultation with a specialist, they would be more willing to take these children into care.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Roach, prime sponsor; Diana Stadden, Autism Society of Washington; and Helen Myrick, Pierce County Early Learning Consortium.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.