
HOUSE BILL 3168

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Representatives Goodman, Kagi, Walsh, Haler, Roberts, Pettigrew, Hinkle, Sullivan, Kessler, Green, Hudgins, Darneille, McIntire, Lias, Kelley, Kenney, Hankins, Nelson, Santos, and Ormsby

Read first time 01/23/08. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to the creation of the Washington head start
2 program; and adding new sections to chapter 43.215 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

5 (a) The state is committed to providing early learning services to
6 all eligible economically disadvantaged families;

7 (b) Research has demonstrated that comprehensive services,
8 including family support services designed to meet the early education
9 needs of low-income and at-risk children, are successful in improving
10 school readiness, reducing the risk of juvenile delinquency and
11 incarceration, and reducing reliance on public assistance among these
12 children later in life;

13 (c) The state's early childhood education and assistance program
14 was originally established to serve as the state counterpart to the
15 federal head start program. When it was created, it aligned with the
16 federal program in both standards and funding levels;

17 (d) The state early childhood education and assistance program has
18 served an important role in providing comprehensive services to low-
19 income children. However, since it was first created, per-child

1 funding levels for the state program have not kept pace with funding
2 levels for the federal program. This has resulted in fewer service
3 hours, fewer home visits, and fewer services to children with
4 disabilities;

5 (e) Aligning performance standards and funding levels for the state
6 early childhood education and assistance program with federal head
7 start will improve the quality of state-supported early learning
8 programs. Additionally, it will improve school readiness through
9 measures, such as a forty percent increase in class time, and it will
10 achieve administrative efficiencies making the state-supported services
11 more easily recognizable and accessible to parents and families
12 eligible for these programs; and

13 (f) Providing quality early learning services for children from
14 birth to age three is the most cost-effective investment society can
15 make. Additionally, the state can use the demonstrated results from
16 the federal early head start program as an example to expand its reach
17 of services already provided to three and four-year old children to
18 children in the critical birth to three years age category.

19 (2) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to establish the
20 goal of aligning the state early childhood education and assistance
21 program with the federal head start and early head start programs by
22 the year 2010. There should then be one integrated Washington head
23 start program implemented statewide, supported by both state and
24 federal funds.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department shall develop a plan to
26 implement a statewide Washington head start program. The program must
27 align the state early childhood education and assistance program with
28 federal head start program eligibility criteria, guidelines, and
29 performance standards. In this plan, the department shall make
30 recommendations that:

31 (a) Identify federal head start program guidelines, performance
32 measures and standards, or other requirements for which state
33 flexibility would be recommended. This shall include an analysis of
34 how state flexibility may impact outcomes for children and how that
35 flexibility might deviate from outcomes associated with the federal
36 standards. Areas to be examined must include, but are not limited to,

1 transportation requirements, service hour configurations, and delivery
2 methods;

3 (b) Identify any change in the state early childhood education and
4 assistance program laws that would be required to implement a
5 Washington head start program;

6 (c) Identify additional resources needed to meet federal guidelines
7 and standards. Areas to be examined must include, but are not limited
8 to: Per-child funding levels, professional development and training
9 needs, facilities needs, and technical assistance;

10 (d) Identify state early childhood education and assistance
11 programs that offer full-day, full-year services to children, and what
12 steps need to be taken to transition these programs into a Washington
13 head start program; and

14 (e) To the extent that state funds are provided for this purpose,
15 identify and report on the implementation of state-supported pilot
16 programs modeled on the federal early head start program.
17 Recommendations must include a timeline, strategy, and funding needs to
18 implement a statewide, state-supported early head start program that
19 will be a part of the Washington head start program.

20 (2) The department shall deliver this report to the governor and
21 legislature by December 1, 2008. In developing its recommendations for
22 this plan, the department shall consult with and solicit input from
23 existing state early childhood education and assistance program
24 providers, including providers who operate solely state-supported
25 programs.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Sections 1 and 2 of this act are each added
27 to chapter 43.215 RCW.

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