

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2867

As of February 23, 2010

Title: An act relating to early learning.

Brief Description: Promoting early learning.

Sponsors: House Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi, Sells, White, Hunt, Chase, Kessler, Morrell, Van De Wege, Kenney and Hasegawa; by request of Governor Gregoire).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/15/10, 66-32.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/22/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: The Department of Early Learning (DEL) was established in 2006 as an executive branch agency. The primary duties of DEL are to implement early learning policy and to coordinate, consolidate, and integrate child care and early learning programs in order to administer programs and funds efficiently. In 2007 the Legislature established the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) to advise DEL on statewide early learning needs and to develop a statewide early learning plan.

In 2006 the Legislature created a nongovernmental private-public partnership to focus on supporting the government's investments in early learning and ensuring that every child in the state is prepared to succeed in school and in life. This partnership is known as Thrive by Five Washington.

Summary of Bill: DEL is directed to develop a comprehensive birth-to-three plan to provide education and support through a continuum of options.

As funding for the expansion of prekindergarten for three- and four-year olds is appropriated, the Legislature also intends to appropriate a proportional amount of funding to DEL for implementation of services and programs under the birth-to-three plan. Such services may include, but are not limited to:

- home visiting;
- quality incentives for infant and toddler child care subsidies;

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- quality improvements for family home and center-based child care programs serving infants and toddlers;
- professional development;
- early literacy programs; and
- informal support for family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Within existing resources, DEL, in collaboration with the nongovernmental private-public partnership and ELAC, must develop a birth-to-three plan, including recommended appropriation levels, and report to the Legislature and the Governor by December 1, 2010.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The bill is an effort to keep us focused on birth to three and requires DEL to develop a comprehensive birth to three plan and a cost. Birth to three is an essential building block that is necessary for all systems the Legislature creates. Babies begin learning at birth, and birth to three are key years for school readiness. We need this bill because things are happening at the state level that are unacceptable. Children are having to have multiple caregivers because of turnover and children are often expelled from child care when their subsidies are lost. Child care slots are not there for parents seeking high quality child care. We need to have a state plan that addresses the needs of children and provides family supports and technical assistance. A toddler entered an Early Head Start program with a significant development delay, which is no longer present as he is entering kindergarten. Instead of starting out behind and demographically at risk of dropping out he believes he is capable of completing school and he has a dream. Cost savings to schools avoiding remedial education and special education is at least \$3,000 per year.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kagi, prime sponsor; Teresa Mosqueda, Early Learning Action Alliance, Children's Alliance; Cathy Garland, Children's Home Society, Washington State Association Head Start/Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program; John Bancroft, White Center Early Learning Initiative/Educare; Rick Allen, United Ways of Washington/United Way of Pierce County; Ryan Pricco, Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network; Erin Okuno, Foundation for Early Learning.