
HOUSE BILL 2107

State of Washington 61st Legislature 2009 Regular Session

By Representatives Kagi, Roberts, Kessler, Kenney, and Santos

Read first time 02/10/09. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Children's Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to delivery of early learning home visitation
2 programs; adding new sections to chapter 43.215 RCW; creating a new
3 section; and repealing RCW 43.121.170, 43.121.175, and 43.121.180.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that parents are a
6 child's first and most important teachers. Infants and toddlers, in
7 particular, are significantly impacted by their earliest experiences at
8 home with parents. The legislature also finds there is ample research
9 demonstrating that evidence-based home visitation programs are highly
10 effective early interventions for children born to families with risk
11 factors linked to poor child outcomes. Well-coordinated delivery of
12 high-quality home visitation programs can produce multiple benefits for
13 children, families, and communities. The legislature finds further
14 that multidisciplinary research on early child development documents
15 the high returns that investments in early childhood programs can pay
16 in terms of subsequent educational attainment and in lower rates of
17 social problems, such as teenage pregnancy, welfare dependency, and
18 criminal activity. The legislature finds that sustaining the
19 investments in evidence-based early learning home visitation programs

1 can produce measurable and long-term economic benefits to the state by
2 overcoming the cognitive, emotional, and resource limitations that
3 often characterize the environments of disadvantaged children during
4 their first several years of life.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.215 RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 The legislature finds that compelling scientific research continues
8 to reveal that:

9 (1) The years from birth to three are most critical in building the
10 social, emotional, and cognitive developmental foundations of a young
11 child. Research into the brain development of very young children
12 proves that children are born learning. The quality of baby's earliest
13 social interactions with parents is paramount in the child's continuing
14 development across all domains.

15 (2) Research also demonstrates that infants and young children
16 exposed to chronic environmental stress in families with few protective
17 factors develop significantly fewer of the neural brain connections
18 essential for the child's later learning. The farther behind children
19 are in their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development,
20 the more unlikely it is they will be able to catch up when they enter
21 preschool or kindergarten.

22 (3) A significant number of Washington's children ages birth to
23 five years are in homes where two or more of the following risk factors
24 are present, creating a greater likelihood of the child's failure in
25 school and beyond: Poverty; single parent, teen parent, or no parent;
26 no parent employed full time or year-round; both parents with a
27 disability; and mother without a high school diploma.

28 (4) Longitudinal research and rigorous studies demonstrate that
29 children and parents receiving high-quality, evidence-based home
30 visitation services exhibit better birth outcomes; enhanced parent-
31 child interactions; more efficient use of appropriate health care
32 services; enhanced child development including improved school
33 readiness, and early detection of developmental delays; reduced
34 dependence on public assistance; higher rates of high school
35 graduation, completion of postsecondary training, and job retention;
36 and reduced frequency and severity of child maltreatment.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The following acts or parts of acts are each
2 repealed:

3 (1) RCW 43.121.170 (Home visitation programs--Findings--Intent) and
4 2007 c 466 s 1;

5 (2) RCW 43.121.175 (Home visitation programs--Definitions) and 2007
6 c 466 s 2; and

7 (3) RCW 43.121.180 (Home visitation programs--Funding--Home
8 visitation services coordination or consolidation plan--Report) and
9 2008 c 152 s 6 & 2007 c 466 s 3.

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