

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5715

As Passed Senate, February 9, 2012

Title: An act relating to adopting core competencies for early care and education professionals and child and youth development professionals.

Brief Description: Requiring adoption of core competencies for early care and education professionals and child and youth development professionals.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe, Litzow, Harper and Kline).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/09/11, 2/14/11 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 2/09/12, 38-9.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5715 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Harper, Vice Chair; Litzow, Ranking Minority Member; Fain, Hobbs, King, Nelson and Rockefeller.

Staff: Lidia Mori (786-7755)

Background: In 2009 the Legislature directed the Professional Development Consortium (PDC) to develop recommendations for a statewide system of preparation and professional development for the early learning workforce. The December 2010 report provides recommendations to build policy support, build organizational capacity, and advance professional development of staff in early learning settings. One of the recommendations is to adopt the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education, which addresses caregivers and teachers working with children birth to age eight.

In 2007 the Legislature directed the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to design and implement a voluntary quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). Seeds to Success, Washington's QRIS model, is designed to support licensed child care providers in improving the quality of child care they offer children and families. DEL and Thrive by Five Washington are testing the system in five communities around the state

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In 1985 Washington created the state-funded Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), a comprehensive whole child, family-focused, preschool program designed to help low-income and at-risk children and their families succeed in school and life. In 2010 there were 8053 ECEAP slots funded at \$6,662 per child. DEL administers ECEAP, and directly contracts with service providers.

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) provides services to children from birth to age three who have disabilities and/or developmental delays. Eligible infants and toddlers and their families are entitled to individualized, quality early intervention services in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), part C. DEL houses ESIT.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: By December 31, 2012, DEL must adopt core competencies for early care and education professionals and child and youth development professionals and develop an implementation plan. DEL must incorporate the core competencies into all appropriate professional development opportunities including, but not limited to, QRIS, ECEAP, child care licensing, and ESIT. The purpose of the core competencies is to serve as a foundation for what early care and education professionals and child and youth development professionals need to know and do to provide quality care for children. The core competencies must be reviewed and updated every five years.

The Legislature finds that adopting statewide core competencies for early care, education, and child and youth development professionals is important because the competencies also recognize existing standards met by the national nonprofit agencies providing after school services as relevant and sufficient.

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 on Original Bill: PRO: We have worked very hard to ensure the safety and well-being in child care centers. We have made progress in safety and quality. We all share the love of children and want to make sure they have really top notch learning opportunities. There is a lot more that needs to be done. We need to do everything we can to professionalize the staff. Those who work with and care for young children are professionals and this would strengthen that belief. The core competencies are excellent and were created in partnership with many organizations. The next step is to ensure they are implemented, so they become a reality. We believe whole-heartedly in a competency-based system.

Core competencies tell professionals what it is they need to do to grow, including cultural competence. The number one recommendation from the PDC is to recommend core competencies. We have four recommendations to strengthen the bill: (1) adopt core competencies for child and youth professionals too because DEL is responsible for licensing

all child care; (2) core competencies should be incorporated in child care licensing; (3) add a professional development subgroup to the Early Learning Advisory Council; (4) plan for aligning compensation with increased credentials in early learning.

CON: For the Colville tribe, elders and knowers of language are equally valued and important in the lives of children. We oppose the bill because it isn't clear there is an allowance for that. Across the state, it is important for tribal languages to be acknowledged. A preschool teacher with an AA degree is still in poverty. If child care providers are professionals they should be duly compensated.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles, prime sponsor; Agda Burchard, WA Assn. for the Education of Young Children; Amy Blondin, DEL; Ryan Pricco, Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral.

CON: Jaclyn Haicht, Port Gamble S'klallam Tribe.