

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6293

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As of February 14, 2012

**Title:** An act relating to adopting early learning guidelines.

**Brief Description:** Requiring the department of early learning to develop state early learning guidelines.

**Sponsors:** Senators Harper, McAuliffe, Shin, Rolfes and Chase; by request of Department of Early Learning.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education:

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Lidia Mori (786-7755)

**Background:** The Washington State early learning guidelines were formerly known as the Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks. The Benchmarks were created in 2005 through a joint effort of the Office of the Governor and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The creators of the Benchmarks recognized the importance of regularly revising the Benchmarks and agreed that they would be reviewed and updated every five years. The Benchmarks were created to be a tool to enhance the health and development of children in Washington State. The Benchmarks depict what children typically know and are able to do at various ages, and include ideas to guide the type of activities and interactions that help promote children's development at specific ages.

A guidelines redesign steering committee was convened in October 2010 by the Department of Early Learning (DEL), OSPI, and Thrive by Five Washington (Thrive) to redesign the early learning guidelines based upon the results of a widely distributed user survey and input from diverse stakeholder groups. The outreach process has sought to obtain feedback from individuals and communities around the state, with an emphasis on traditionally underrepresented communities. On January 3, 2012, the steering committee began the final round of outreach to solicit advice on the final guidelines.

For parents, early child care professionals, and educators, it is believed that the early learning guidelines will be a resource that will provide information as to what they might expect to see as children grow and learn and how to support and even enhance the child's development

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and learning. It is expected that another benefit of the guidelines will be that teachers can use them as a framework for a learning continuum that will help ease children's transition from one stage of development to the next.

**Summary of Bill:** One of the duties of DEL is to develop early learning guidelines and make them widely available, in partnership with OSPI and the nongovernmental private-public partnership. In addition, the guidelines are to be periodically reviewed and revised with a committee offering broad stakeholder representation.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**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: This bill simply adds early learning guidelines to our statute. Having early learning guidelines is such a basic part of any good early learning system. We want to cement them into our statute. What are early learning guidelines? It is a document that breaks children down into age groups and offers what your child might be able to do at a certain age and gives ideas to try with your child to enhance and support their development. The updated version of the guidelines should be ready in February or March. The terminology is user friendly and it has been through a culture competence review to make sure it reflects the diversity of our state. The Superintendent of Public Instruction supports the early learning guidelines but would like a small change in the bill. It would be better if the bill specified that the DEL will work jointly with OSPI and in partnership with the nongovernmental private-public partnership to develop and make widely available the early learning guidelines.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Amy Blondin, Government and Community Relations Manager, DEL; Robert Butts, Assistant Superintendent for Early Learning.