
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

ESSB 6181

Brief Description: Concerning child care subsidies and child support enforcement services.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Braun, Angel, Bailey, Rivers, Becker and Honeyford).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Directs the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to establish and implement policies to train staff on detecting and reporting child care subsidy fraud.
- Directs the DEL to waive a child care copayment for one month if a parent seeks child support enforcement services for the first time.
- Identifies seeking child support services for the first time as a change in circumstance that requires the Department of Social and Health Services to complete a reauthorization to determine child care eligibility.

Hearing Date: 2/24/14

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program offers subsidies to child care providers serving families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). The Department of Early Learning (DEL) sets child care subsidy policy and provides oversight for child care licensing. The Department of Social Health Services (DSHS) helps families apply for WCCC, determines eligibility and parent or caregiver copayments, authorizes child care, and issues payments to providers.

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.

When applying for the WCCC program, a parent must provide various information to the DSHS including but not limited to the following: Workfirst Individual Responsibility Plans for parents receiving TANF; employer information; hourly wage or salary information; and monthly unearned income the parent or caregiver receives such as child support payments or supplemental security income benefits. If the DSHS has reason or cause to believe that information received from a parent or caregiver is inconsistent or conflicts, the DSHS may ask the parent to provide additional information. An investigator from the Office of Fraud and Accountability also has the authority to make an unannounced visit to the parent's or caregiver's home to verify the parent's or caregiver's circumstances.

If determined eligible, the state pays a portion of the child care costs and parents or caregivers are responsible for making a copayment to the child care provider. Copayment rates are based on household income and family size. For example, in a family of three with a household income between 83 percent of FPL and 137.5 percent of FPL, the parent's or caregiver's copayment would be \$65.00 a month. Parents receiving child care benefits are also required to notify the DSHS within 10 days of any significant changes in circumstance related to the number of hours of child care needed, cost sharing, or eligibility.

Summary of Bill:

The DEL is directed to establish and implement policies to train staff on child care subsidy fraud, including methods to detect suspected fraud and procedures for reporting fraud. Additionally, the DEL is also directed to waive a child care copayment for one month for parents who seek child support enforcement services for the first time. Finally, seeking child support services for the first time is identified as a change in circumstance that requires the DSHS to complete a reauthorization to determine child care eligibility.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.