
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6538

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rivers, Cleveland, Brown, Litzow, Billig, and McAuliffe)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/14.

1 AN ACT Relating to connecting children involved in the child
2 welfare system to quality early care and education programming;
3 amending RCW 43.215.405; and adding a new section to chapter 26.44 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 26.44 RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) The family assessment response worker shall assess for child
8 safety and child well-being when collaborating with a family to
9 determine the need for child care, preschool, or home visiting
10 services.

11 (2) Effective July 1, 2015, the family assessment response worker
12 may only refer children to preschool programs that are enrolled in the
13 early achievers program and rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 unless one of
14 the following conditions applies:

15 (a) The family lives in an area with no local preschool programs
16 that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 in the early achievers program;

17 (b) The local preschool programs that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 in
18 the early achievers program are not able to meet the needs of the
19 child; or

1 (c) The child is attending a preschool program prior to the family
2 assessment response case and the parent or caregiver does not want the
3 child to change preschool programs.

4 (3) Effective July 1, 2019, the family assessment response worker
5 shall only make child care referrals for nonschool-aged children to
6 licensed child care programs that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 in the
7 early achievers program described in RCW 43.215.100 unless one of the
8 following conditions applies:

9 (a) The family lives in an area with no local programs that rate at
10 level 3, 4, or 5 in the early achievers program;

11 (b) The local child care programs that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5
12 in the early achievers program are not able to meet the needs of the
13 child; or

14 (c) The child is attending a child care program prior to the family
15 assessment response case and the parent or caregiver does not want the
16 child to change child care programs.

17 (4) The family assessment response worker shall make every effort
18 to provide referrals to high quality child care and early learning
19 programs.

20 (5) The family assessment response worker shall make every effort
21 to provide referrals to state and federally subsidized programs such
22 as, but not limited to, licensed child care programs that receive state
23 subsidy pursuant to RCW 43.215.135; early childhood education and
24 assistance programs; head start programs; and early head start
25 programs.

26 (6)(a) At least fifteen days prior to closing the family assessment
27 response case, the family assessment worker shall meet with the child's
28 parent or caregiver to discuss child care and early learning services.
29 If the family plans to use child care or early learning services, the
30 family assessment worker shall work with the family to facilitate
31 successful enrollment.

32 (b) The family assessment worker shall document if the family
33 elects to use child care and early learning services.

34 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.215.405 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 16 s 4 are each
35 amended to read as follows:

36 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in

1 this section apply throughout RCW 43.215.400 through ((43.215.450,
2 43.215.455, 43.215.456,)) 43.215.457((7)) and 43.215.900 through
3 43.215.903.

4 (1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW
5 43.215.420.

6 (2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and
7 special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as
8 meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to qualify
9 under RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.450 and 43.215.900 through
10 43.215.903 and are designated as eligible for funding by the department
11 under RCW 43.215.430 and 43.215.440.

12 (3) "Comprehensive" means an assistance program that focuses on the
13 needs of the child and includes education, health, and family support
14 services.

15 (4) "Department" means the department of early learning.

16 (5) "Eligible child" means a child not eligible for kindergarten
17 whose family income is at or below one hundred ten percent of the
18 federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal department
19 of health and human services, and includes a child whose family is
20 eligible for public assistance, and who is not a participant in a
21 federal or state program providing comprehensive services; children
22 involved in the child welfare system are eligible; a child who is
23 eligible for special education due to disability under RCW 28A.155.020;
24 and may include children who are eligible under rules adopted by the
25 department if the number of such children equals not more than ten
26 percent of the total enrollment in the early childhood program.
27 Priority for enrollment shall be given to children from families with
28 the lowest income, children ((in foster care)) involved in the child
29 welfare system, or to eligible children from families with multiple
30 needs.

31 (6) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for
32 parents to:

- 33 (a) Actively participate in their child's early childhood program;
34 (b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting
35 skills;
36 (c) Further their education and training;

- 1 (d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the community;
- 2 (e) Increase their self-reliance.

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