
SENATE BILL 6538

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senators Rivers, Cleveland, Brown, Litzow, Billig, and McAuliffe

Read first time 02/03/14. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

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; adding a new section to chapter 26.44 RCW; and
4 adding a new section to chapter 43.215 RCW.

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

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

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

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

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

18 (b) The local preschool programs that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 in

1 the early achievers program are not able to meet the needs of the
2 child; or

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 (1) Children who received family assessment response services
2 pursuant to RCW 26.44.260 are eligible for the working connections
3 child care program described in RCW 43.215.135 for a twelve-month
4 enrollment period and may not be deemed ineligible due to any change in
5 circumstance.

6 (2) Eligibility begins the day the family assessment response case
7 is closed by the department of social and health services, children's
8 administration.

9 (3) Parents or caregivers must redetermine eligibility for the
10 working connections child care program described in RCW 43.215.135
11 after twelve months from the time the family assessment response case
12 closed.

13 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.215.405 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 16 s 4 are each
14 amended to read as follows:

15 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in
16 this section apply throughout RCW 43.215.400 through ((43.215.450,
17 ~~43.215.455, 43.215.456,~~) 43.215.457((7)) and 43.215.900 through
18 43.215.903.

19 (1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW
20 43.215.420.

21 (2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and
22 special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as
23 meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to qualify
24 under RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.450 and 43.215.900 through
25 43.215.903 and are designated as eligible for funding by the department
26 under RCW 43.215.430 and 43.215.440.

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

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

31 (5) "Eligible child" means a child not eligible for kindergarten
32 whose family income is at or below one hundred ten percent of the
33 federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal department
34 of health and human services, and includes a child whose family is
35 eligible for public assistance, and who is not a participant in a
36 federal or state program providing comprehensive services; children
37 involved in the child welfare system are eligible; a child who is

1 eligible for special education due to disability under RCW 28A.155.020;
2 and may include children who are eligible under rules adopted by the
3 department if the number of such children equals not more than ten
4 percent of the total enrollment in the early childhood program.
5 Priority for enrollment shall be given to children from families with
6 the lowest income, children ((in foster care)) involved in the child
7 welfare system, or to eligible children from families with multiple
8 needs.

9 (6) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for
10 parents to:

- 11 (a) Actively participate in their child's early childhood program;
- 12 (b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting
13 skills;
- 14 (c) Further their education and training;
- 15 (d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the community;
- 16 (e) Increase their self-reliance.

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