

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2716

As of March 1, 2016

Title: An act relating to working connections child care eligibility for vulnerable children.

Brief Description: Concerning working connections child care eligibility for vulnerable children.

Sponsors: House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Senn, Walsh, Kagi, Walkinshaw, McCabe, Ortiz-Self, Bergquist, Stanford, Gregerson, Ormsby and Goodman).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/12/16, 90-6.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/18/16, 2/25/16 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/29/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Billig, Fain, Hill, Mullet, Rivers and Rolfes.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

Background: Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). This program offers subsidies to childcare providers serving families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The state pays part of the cost of childcare when a parent is employed, self-employed, or meets the requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or WorkFirst programs. The family is responsible for making a copayment to the childcare provider.

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) sets childcare subsidy policy and provides WCCC oversight for childcare licensing and early learning services. The Department of Social Health Services (DSHS) helps families apply for WCCC, determines eligibility and consumer copayments, authorizes child care, and pays providers. Both childcare centers and family home providers are able to receive WCCC subsidy payments. Beginning July 1,

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2016, authorizations for the WCCC subsidy must be effective for 12 months even if there is a change of circumstances.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Child Care and Child Welfare Services (CWS) Child Care. DSHS administers several child care subsidy programs including CPS and CWS child care. CPS child care provides short-term, time-limited, subsidized child care for families that are currently involved in a CPS investigation by Children's Administration. The CPS child care subsidy must end when the case is no longer classified as a CPS case or is transferred to another program.

CWS child care provides short-term, time-limited, subsidized child care for families to avoid out-of-home placement or other state intervention.

Summary of Bill: DEL must adopt rules, in accordance with federal law, that would require that a child is eligible for WCCC if the child has received CPS child care or CWS child care within the prior six months and the response DSHS initiated pursuant to state law has concluded.

A definition of protective services would only apply for the purposes of WCCC eligibility and would not require DSHS or DEL to automatically consider these children to be in official child protective services under state law. These children must not be identified as needing a response by DSHS or intervention by DEL, except in cases where that is appropriate for reasons other than the inclusion of the child in the new category of vulnerable child for purposes of WCCC eligibility.

DSHS's involvement with the family referred for WCCC ends for purposes of child protective services at the time that the response of DSHS initiated pursuant to state law has concluded.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on December 1, 2017.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: When children return home after being involved with protective or welfare services, the families are unable to access child care. The Early Start Act did not include these vulnerable children in making sure they receive continuous child care. Families in these situations are dealing with stress, and children should not be caught in the middle without child care. This bill would make these children eligible for 12 months of child care. Children in these circumstances need consistency and help with transitions between programs. It is vital that these families who are in a vulnerable state keep their child care.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Representative Senn, Prime Sponsor; Suzie Hanson, Washington Federation of Independent Schools; Melissa

Johnson, Washington State Association of Headstart/ECEAP Programs; Shrounda Selivanoff, Washington State Parent Advocacy Committee/Co-Facilitator; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): This bill would bring some of the most vulnerable children into our system of high quality early childhood education. Working Connections Child Care isn't just for the benefit of the parents. It is also to benefit the children. It can provide a stable adult in the child's life and can help prepare the child for success in school.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Representative Senn, Prime Sponsor; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children'; Melissa Johnson, Washington State Association of Headstart/ECEAP Programs; Kristina Jorgensen, Children's Home Society of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.