

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5098

As of January 30, 2015

Title: An act relating to increased efficiency in child care reporting.

Brief Description: Increasing efficiency in child care reporting.

Sponsors: Senators Billig, Litzow, Jayapal and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/26/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program offers subsidies to childcare providers serving families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. In this program, 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 Department of Early Learning sets child care subsidy policy and provides WCCC oversight for child care licensing and early learning services. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) helps families apply for WCCC, determines eligibility and consumer copayments, authorizes child care, and pays providers.

Current law states that a WCCC subsidy is effective for 12 months unless a change in circumstances necessitates reauthorization sooner than 12 months. It also requires that a WCCC applicant or recipient notify DSHS within ten days about any significant change related to the number of child care hours the applicant or recipient needs, cost sharing, or eligibility.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Authorizations for a WCCC subsidy must be effective for 12 months.

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.

A WCCC applicant or recipient no longer must notify DSHS within ten days about any significant change related to the number of child care hours the applicant or recipient needs, cost sharing, or eligibility.

The combined effect of these changes is that a child authorized for the WCCC program remains authorized for 12 months despite a change in circumstances.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: The continuity of care provisions in this bill, which are also part of the Early Start Act, are important. WCCC helps parents go from welfare to work or school, and it also helps kids and helps close the opportunity gap. Many vulnerable families who want or need child care are terminated from WCCC and children's lives are disrupted. Terminations may occur because of medical reasons or seasonal work. This bill promotes efficiency. This bill keeps families in WCCC and saves administrative expenses for processing terminations and reapplications.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Billig, prime sponsor; Melissa Johnson, WA State Assn. of Headstart & Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program programs; Jennifer Jennings Shaffer, Children's Alliance.