
**Early Learning & Human Services
Committee**

HB 1624

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

Sponsors: Representatives Senn, Dent, Kagi, Lytton, Farrell, Pettigrew, Hudgins, Goodman, Frame and Slatter.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows families with children who are residing with the parent or legal guardian and have received child welfare services, child protective services, or a family assessment response in the previous six months to qualify for Working Connections Child Care.

Hearing Date: 2/1/17

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

The Working Connections Child Care Program (WCCC) is a subsidized childcare program funded through federal Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is the designated lead agency for administration of the CCDF program and sets policy for WCCC.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) determines eligibility for WCCC and issues childcare subsidy payments to providers. In general, in order to qualify for WCCC a family must have a household income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level and be working or participating in WorkFirst activities.

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.

Families participating in WCCC may receive up to 12 months of subsidized childcare and may pay a monthly co-payment, depending on the family's income level. A child may not be deemed ineligible during the 12-month period due to a change in the family's circumstances.

Up to 33,000 households may receive WCCC services at any given time. If program participation reaches the paid caseload maximum of 33,000 households, the DSHS will implement a wait list. In the event of a wait list, certain groups will receive priority access to WCCC. These groups include families receiving TANF benefits, children with special needs, and children experiencing homelessness, among others.

The DSHS provides child welfare services designed to ensure child safety, achieve permanency, and strengthen families. Child welfare services can include voluntary and in-home services, out-of-home care, case management, and other services. Child Protective Services (CPS) is responsible for investigating reported allegations of child abuse or neglect. Reports with low or moderately low risk allegations may receive a Family Assessment Response (FAR) as an alternative to a CPS investigation.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning December 1, 2018 the DEL must implement policies to allow 12 months of WCCC eligibility for families with children who:

- are residing with a biological parent or guardian,
- have received child protective services, child welfare services, or a FAR from the DSHS in the previous six months, and
- have a childcare referral as part of the family's case management plan.

A child does not need to continue to receive DSHS services in order to maintain WCCC eligibility for the full 12 months.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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