

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1624

As Passed Senate - Amended, April 11, 2017

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 Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Senn, Dent, Kagi, Lytton, Farrell, Pettigrew, Hudgins, Goodman, Frame and Slatter).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/03/17, 76-21.

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 3/15/17, 3/20/17 [DP-WM, DNP].

Ways & Means: 3/29/17, 4/04/17 [DPA, DNP, w/oRec].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate - Amended: 4/11/17, 43-6.

Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by Senate)

- Establishes that individuals who experience a non-temporary change in their status as working or attending a job training or education program assistance must be discontinued from the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program after a minimum of three months, except for families who are eligible for WCCC subsidy based on that family's involvement in child welfare services.
- Provides that as a condition of receiving a child care subsidy or a WCCC subsidy, an applicant or recipient must seek child support enforcement services unless the Department of Social and Health Services finds that the applicant or recipient has good cause not to cooperate, except for families who are eligible for WCCC subsidy based on that family's involvement in child welfare services.
- Requires the Department of Early Learning to implement policies to allow 12 months of WCCC eligibility to families with children who have been involved in child welfare services in the last six 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.

- Provides the child does not need to continue to receive services from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in order to maintain the 12-month eligibility.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

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

Signed by Senators O'Ban, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Darneille, Ranking Minority Member; Carlyle, Hunt and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Padden.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Braun, Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Vice Chair, Capital Budget ; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Fain, Miloscia, Rivers, Schoesler, Warnick and Zeiger.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Darneille and Padden.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Ranker, Ranking Minority Member; Rolfes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member, Operating Budget; Frockt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member, Capital Budget; Carlyle, Conway, Hasegawa, Keiser and Pedersen.

Staff: Maria Hovde (786-7474)

Background: Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). The WCCC program 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 the WCCC.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) determines eligibility for the WCCC and issues childcare subsidy payments to providers. In general, in order to qualify for the 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.

Families participating in the WCCC may receive up to 12 months of subsidized childcare and may pay a monthly copayment, 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.

DSHS - Child Welfare Services. 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 Amended Bill: Authorizations for the WCCC program must be effective for 12 months except that for non-temporary changes in the status of a child's parent as working or attending a job training or education program assistance must be discontinued after a minimum of three months. Families who are eligible for WCCC subsidy based on that family's involvement in child welfare services are not subject to the working, job training, or education requirements.

As a condition of receiving a child care subsidy or a WCCC subsidy, an applicant or recipient must seek child support enforcement services unless DSHS finds that the applicant or recipient has good cause not to cooperate. Good cause must include consideration of the safety of domestic violence victims. Families who are eligible for WCCC subsidy based on that family's involvement in child welfare services are not required to seek child support enforcement services.

Beginning December 1, 2018, DEL must implement policies to allow 12 months of the 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 the WCCC eligibility for the full 12 months.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on December 1, 2018; however, there is a null and void clause.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute House Bill (Human Services, Mental Health & Housing): PRO: When children come into the system and child care is part of their plan, there is child care subsidy available through DSHS—however, that ends once the case closes. This bill would allow the child care to continue, providing stability to the child and parents. This assistance helps families get back on their feet while providing children a continuity of care and sense of stability.

Persons Testifying (Human Services, Mental Health & Housing): PRO: Representative Tana Senn, Prime Sponsor; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; Melissa Johnson, Washington State Association of Headstart & ECEAP; Kimberly Mays, Parent/Contracted Social Services Worker.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Human Services, Mental Health & Housing): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute House Bill (Ways & Means): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This bill provides continuity and stability to children in the child welfare system and will impact about 200 kids. Sometimes part of the safety plan is for that child to be in child care. When the child welfare case is closed, that family loses child care. Continuity is important to ensure opportunities for success in reunification.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Representative Tana Senn, Prime Sponsor; Laurie Lippold, Partners for Our Children; Melissa Johnson, Washington State Association of Headstart & ECEAP.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.