

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6100

As of January 26, 2018

Title: An act relating to the working connections childcare subsidy.

Brief Description: Concerning the working connections childcare subsidy.

Sponsors: Senators Ranker, Billig, Palumbo, Wellman, Darneille, Keiser, Liias, Frockt, Conway, Saldaña, Kuderer and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/23/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows individuals participating in higher education programs, including public or private four-year colleges or universities, to be eligible for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) benefits.
- Provides that these individuals do not need to work as a condition of receiving WCCC benefits.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: WCCC. This federally and state-funded program offers subsidies to childcare providers serving families with an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$49,200 for a family of four). 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 (TANF) or WorkFirst programs. The family is responsible for making a copayment to the child care provider based on the family's countable income.

Currently, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) sets childcare subsidy policy for WCCC, and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers the program. On July 1, 2018, all of DEL's programs, including WCCC, will transfer to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

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.

Authorizations for a WCCC subsidy are effective for 12 months. DEL must manage the program, so the average monthly caseload does not exceed 33,000 households.

WCCC Education Requirements. Eligibility for WCCC is provided in rule, and these requirements must be in accordance with federal law.

Applicants or consumers participating in WorkFirst may be eligible for WCCC benefits for vocational educational training and up to ten hours per week of study time for approved classes. Vocational education is training that leads to a degree or certificate in a specific occupation, not to result in a bachelor's or advanced degree except in certain circumstances.

Applicants or consumers not participating in WorkFirst may also be eligible for WCCC benefits for certain types of education.

An applicant or consumer who is under 22 may be eligible for benefits for high school or a general educational development (GED) program without a minimum number of employment hours.

An applicant or consumer who is 22 or older may be eligible to receive general education and training benefits. The consumer must work either:

- an average of 22 or more hours per week of unsubsidized employment; or
- an average of 16 or more hours per week in a paid federal or state work study program.

An applicant or consumer who is 22 or older is limited to up to:

- 24 months of benefits during the consumer's lifetime for participation in adult basic education, English as a second language, or high school/GED completion;
- 36 months of benefits during the consumer's lifetime for participation in vocational education offered by a public or private technical college or school, community college, or tribal college; and
- 10 hours per week of benefits for study time for approved classes.

Summary of Bill: An applicant or consumer participating in a higher education program to pursue a degree may be eligible for WCCC benefits at the following accredited entities:

- a public or private technical college or school;
- a public or private four-year college or university;
- a community college; or
- a tribal college.

An applicant or consumer participating in a higher education program is not required to work as a condition of receiving WCCC benefits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Effective Date: Section 2 of the bill takes effect on July 1, 2018; Section 3 of the bill takes effect December 1, 2018.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Child care helps parents go to and finish college and enter the workforce. Child care costs are one of the biggest financial burdens on student parents. Child care subsidies for student parents helps break the cycle of poverty. Washington is one of only a few states that impose a work requirement on parents receiving child care subsidies. It is challenging to be a parent, student, and employee all at the same time. The bill should be limited to eliminate the work requirement only for full-time students. This bill will allow parents to spend more time with their children. This bill will help more student parents to move forward bettering their lives, their children's lives, and the community.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kevin Ranker, Prime Sponsor; Frank Ordway, Department of Early Learning; Melissa Johnson, Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP; John Hurley, Kitsap Community Resources; Angelica Gonzalez, citizen; Samantha De Abreu, citizen; Erin Frasier, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges; Matt Munoz, UW graduate and Professional Student Senate; Matthew Morrow, Associated Students of WSU.

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