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SENATE BILL 5901

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senator Braun

Read first time 03/21/17. Referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

1 AN ACT Relating to eligibility for the working connections child  
2 care and early childhood education and assistance programs; amending  
3 RCW 43.215.135 and 43.215.405; and providing an effective date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.215.135 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 s 6 are each  
6 amended to read as follows:

7 (1) The department shall establish and implement policies in the  
8 working connections child care program to promote stability and  
9 quality of care for children from low-income households. These  
10 policies shall focus on supporting school readiness for young  
11 learners. Policies for the expenditure of funds constituting the  
12 working connections child care program must be consistent with the  
13 outcome measures defined in RCW 74.08A.410 and the standards  
14 established in this section intended to promote stability, quality,  
15 and continuity of early care and education programming.

16 (2) As recommended by Public Law 113-186, authorizations for the  
17 working connections child care subsidy shall be effective for twelve  
18 months beginning July 1, 2016, (~~unless an earlier date is provided~~  
19 ~~in the omnibus appropriations act~~) except that for a change in the  
20 ongoing status of the child's parent as working or attending a job

1 training or education program that is not temporary, assistance shall  
2 be discontinued after a minimum of three months.

3 (3) As a condition of receiving a child care subsidy or a working  
4 connections child care subsidy, the applicant or recipient must seek  
5 child support enforcement services from the department of social and  
6 health services, division of child support, unless the department  
7 finds that the applicant or recipient has good cause not to  
8 cooperate.

9 (4) Existing child care providers serving nonschool-age children  
10 and receiving state subsidy payments must complete the following  
11 requirements to be eligible for a state subsidy under this section:

12 (a) Enroll in the early achievers program by August 1, 2016;

13 (b) Complete level 2 activities in the early achievers program by  
14 August 1, 2017; and

15 (c) Rate at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program by  
16 December 31, 2019. If a child care provider rates below a level 3 by  
17 December 31, 2019, the provider must complete remedial activities  
18 with the department, and rate at a level 3 or higher no later than  
19 June 30, 2020.

20 ~~((4))~~ (5) Effective July 1, 2016, a new child care provider  
21 serving nonschool-age children and receiving state subsidy payments  
22 must complete the following activities to be eligible to receive a  
23 state subsidy under this section:

24 (a) Enroll in the early achievers program within thirty days of  
25 receiving the initial state subsidy payment;

26 (b) Complete level 2 activities in the early achievers program  
27 within twelve months of enrollment; and

28 (c) Rate at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program  
29 within thirty months of enrollment. If a child care provider rates  
30 below a level 3 within thirty months from enrollment into the early  
31 achievers program, the provider must complete remedial activities  
32 with the department, and rate at a level 3 or higher within six  
33 months of beginning remedial activities.

34 ~~((5))~~ (6) If a child care provider does not rate at a level 3  
35 or higher following the remedial period, the provider is no longer  
36 eligible to receive state subsidy under this section.

37 ~~((6))~~ (7) If a child care provider serving nonschool-age  
38 children and receiving state subsidy payments has successfully  
39 completed all level 2 activities and is waiting to be rated by the  
40 deadline provided in this section, the provider may continue to

1 receive a state subsidy pending the successful completion of the  
2 level 3 rating activity.

3 ~~((7))~~ (8) The department shall implement tiered reimbursement  
4 for early achievers program participants in the working connections  
5 child care program rating at level 3, 4, or 5.

6 ~~((8))~~ (9) The department shall account for a child care  
7 copayment collected by the provider from the family for each  
8 contracted slot and establish the copayment fee by rule.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.215.405 and 2014 c 160 s 4 are each amended to  
10 read as follows:

11 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in  
12 this section apply throughout RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.457 and  
13 43.215.900 through 43.215.903.

14 (1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW  
15 43.215.420.

16 (2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and  
17 special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as  
18 meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to  
19 qualify under RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.450 and 43.215.900  
20 through 43.215.903 and are designated as eligible for funding by the  
21 department under RCW 43.215.430 and 43.215.440.

22 (3) "Comprehensive" means an assistance program that focuses on  
23 the needs of the child and includes education, health, and family  
24 support services.

25 (4) "Department" means the department of early learning.

26 (5) "Eligible child" means a child not eligible for kindergarten  
27 whose family income is at or below one hundred ten percent of the  
28 federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal  
29 department of health and human services, and includes a child whose  
30 family is eligible for public assistance, and who is not a  
31 participant in a federal or state program providing comprehensive  
32 services; a child eligible for special education due to disability  
33 under RCW 28A.155.020; and may include children who are eligible  
34 under rules adopted by the department if the number of such children  
35 equals not more than ten percent of the total enrollment in the early  
36 childhood program. However, effective July 1, 2019, three year olds  
37 are eligible subject to funding in the omnibus appropriations act for  
38 this specific purpose. Priority for enrollment shall be given to

1 children from families with the lowest income, children in foster  
2 care, or to eligible children from families with multiple needs.

3 (6) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for  
4 parents to:

5 (a) Actively participate in their child's early childhood  
6 program;

7 (b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting  
8 skills;

9 (c) Further their education and training;

10 (d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the  
11 community;

12 (e) Increase their self-reliance.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Section 2 of this act takes effect June  
14 30, 2018.

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