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SENATE BILL 6100

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senators Ranker, Billig, Palumbo, Wellman, Darneille, Keiser, Llias, Frockt, Conway, Saldaña, Kuderer, and Hasegawa

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1 AN ACT Relating to the working connections childcare subsidy;  
2 amending RCW 43.216.135 and 43.216.135; creating a new section;  
3 providing effective dates; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes the  
6 following:

7 (a) In Washington, over four thousand six hundred community and  
8 technical college students, which represent twenty-three percent of  
9 all community and technical college students in the state, are  
10 parents of dependent children. Student parents represent more than  
11 one quarter of community and technical college students in Washington  
12 who receive financial aid. Financial assistance however, does not  
13 sufficiently cover many student parents' college expenses;

14 (b) Caregiving demands affect student parents' ability to devote  
15 the time needed to succeed in school. Nearly three-quarters of women  
16 community college students living with dependents report spending  
17 over twenty hours per week caring for dependents. Many of these  
18 students report that care demands are likely to lead them to drop  
19 out: Forty-three percent of women and thirty-seven percent of men at  
20 two-year institutions of higher education who live with children say

1 they are likely or very likely to withdraw from college to care for  
2 dependents;

3 (c) In addition, child care costs represent a large financial  
4 burden for parents who are in college. The annual cost of full-time,  
5 center-based infant care averages over thirteen thousand dollars in  
6 Washington, which would amount to half of the median state income for  
7 single parents. Given the financial pressures experienced by student  
8 parents, both married and single, assistance with paying for quality  
9 child care services could dramatically improve their ability to make  
10 ends meet and complete their programs;

11 (d) Research suggests that child care helps parents persist in  
12 and complete higher education programs. A study at Monroe Community  
13 College in New York found that Monroe students with children under  
14 the age of six who used the campus child care center were more likely  
15 to return to school the following year than their counterparts who  
16 did not use the center (sixty-eight percent compared with fifty-one  
17 percent). Parents who used child care were also nearly three times  
18 more likely to graduate or go on to pursue a bachelor of arts degree  
19 within three years of enrollment (forty-one percent compared with  
20 only fifteen percent);

21 (e) Work requirements imposed on student parents as a condition  
22 for receiving child care assistance can have negative consequences  
23 for parents in education or job training. Students working more than  
24 fifteen hours per week achieve significantly lower college attainment  
25 compared with those who work fewer hours. Nationally, fifty-eight  
26 percent of community college student parents who work fifteen or more  
27 hours per week leave school without earning a credential within six  
28 years of enrollment, compared with forty-eight percent who work fewer  
29 than fifteen hours per week.

30 (2) The legislature also recognizes that school districts across  
31 Washington report that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find  
32 K-12 certificated teachers not only in areas that have experienced  
33 shortages for many years, but also teachers with elementary education  
34 and early childhood endorsements. In 2016, legislation passed to help  
35 address the issue of teacher shortage by, among other things,  
36 providing one-time funding for a recruitment campaign, and grants and  
37 scholarships for new teachers. The legislature recognizes that  
38 reducing the teacher shortage is necessary to be able to provide  
39 basic education to Washington students.

1 (3) Therefore, the legislature intends to improve access and  
2 completion rates of student parents enrolled in institutions of  
3 higher education by reducing existing restrictions to subsidized  
4 child care.

5 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.216.135 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 in  
19 the omnibus appropriations act.

20 (3) Existing child care providers serving nonschool-age children  
21 and receiving state subsidy payments must complete the following  
22 requirements to be eligible for a state subsidy under this section:

- 23 (a) Enroll in the early achievers program by August 1, 2016;  
24 (b) Complete level 2 activities in the early achievers program by  
25 August 1, 2017; and  
26 (c) Rate at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program by  
27 December 31, 2019. If a child care provider rates below a level 3 by  
28 December 31, 2019, the provider must complete remedial activities  
29 with the department, and rate at a level 3 or higher no later than  
30 June 30, 2020.

31 (4) Effective July 1, 2016, a new child care provider serving  
32 nonschool-age children and receiving state subsidy payments must  
33 complete the following activities to be eligible to receive a state  
34 subsidy under this section:

- 35 (a) Enroll in the early achievers program within thirty days of  
36 receiving the initial state subsidy payment;  
37 (b) Complete level 2 activities in the early achievers program  
38 within twelve months of enrollment; and

1 (c) Rate at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program  
2 within thirty months of enrollment. If a child care provider rates  
3 below a level 3 within thirty months from enrollment into the early  
4 achievers program, the provider must complete remedial activities  
5 with the department, and rate at a level 3 or higher within six  
6 months of beginning remedial activities.

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

10 (6) If a child care provider serving nonschool-age children and  
11 receiving state subsidy payments has successfully completed all level  
12 2 activities and is waiting to be rated by the deadline provided in  
13 this section, the provider may continue to receive a state subsidy  
14 pending the successful completion of the level 3 rating activity.

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

18 (8) The department shall account for a child care copayment  
19 collected by the provider from the family for each contracted slot  
20 and establish the copayment fee by rule.

21 (9) The department shall not require an applicant or consumer  
22 participating in a higher education program to work as a condition of  
23 receiving working connections child care program benefits.

24 (10) The department shall allow applicants and consumers  
25 participating in a higher education program to pursue a degree  
26 offered by the following accredited entities:

27 (a) A public or private technical college or school;

28 (b) A public or private four-year college or university;

29 (c) A community college; or

30 (d) A tribal college.

31 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.216.135 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 9 s 2 are each  
32 amended to read as follows:

33 (1) The department shall establish and implement policies in the  
34 working connections child care program to promote stability and  
35 quality of care for children from low-income households. These  
36 policies shall focus on supporting school readiness for young  
37 learners. Policies for the expenditure of funds constituting the  
38 working connections child care program must be consistent with the  
39 outcome measures defined in RCW 74.08A.410 and the standards

1 established in this section intended to promote stability, quality,  
2 and continuity of early care and education programming.

3 (2) As recommended by Public Law 113-186, authorizations for the  
4 working connections child care subsidy shall be effective for twelve  
5 months beginning July 1, 2016, unless an earlier date is provided in  
6 the omnibus appropriations act.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

35 (6) If a child care provider serving nonschool-age children and  
36 receiving state subsidy payments has successfully completed all level  
37 2 activities and is waiting to be rated by the deadline provided in  
38 this section, the provider may continue to receive a state subsidy  
39 pending the successful completion of the level 3 rating activity.

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

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

7 (9) The department shall establish and implement policies in the  
8 working connections child care program to allow eligibility for  
9 families with children who:

10 (a) In the last six months have:

11 (i) Received child protective services as defined and used by  
12 chapters 26.44 and 74.13 RCW;

13 (ii) Received child welfare services as defined and used by  
14 chapter 74.13 RCW; or

15 (iii) Received services through a family assessment response as  
16 defined and used by chapter 26.44 RCW;

17 (b) Have been referred for child care as part of the family's  
18 case management as defined by RCW 74.13.020; and

19 (c) Are residing with a biological parent or guardian.

20 (10) Children who are eligible for working connections child care  
21 pursuant to subsection (9) of this section do not have to keep  
22 receiving services through the department of social and health  
23 services to maintain twelve-month authorization. The department of  
24 social and health services' involvement with the family referred for  
25 working connections child care ends when the family's child  
26 protective services, child welfare services, or family assessment  
27 response case is closed.

28 (11) The department shall not require an applicant or consumer  
29 participating in a higher education program to work as a condition of  
30 receiving working connections child care program benefits.

31 (12) The department shall allow applicants and consumers  
32 participating in a higher education program to pursue a degree  
33 offered by the following accredited entities:

34 (a) A public or private technical college or school;

35 (b) A public or private four-year college or university;

36 (c) A community college; or

37 (d) A tribal college.

38 NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. Section 2 of this act takes effect July 1,  
39 2018.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    Section 3 of this act takes effect  
2    December 1, 2018.

3        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 6.**    Section 2 of this act expires December 1,  
4    2018.

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