
Human Services & Early Learning Committee

HB 1378

Brief Description: Concerning education equivalencies for licensed child care providers.

Sponsors: Representatives McCaslin, Dolan, Walsh, Ryu, Senn, Volz, Dent, Graham, Shea, Orwall, Lovick, Corry, Eslick, Slatter and Leavitt.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Children, Youth and Families to adopt professional experience and skills that may be considered equivalent to education levels required by child care licensing rules.

Hearing Date: 1/23/19

Staff: Alyssa Patrick (786-7296).

Background:

Child Care Licensing.

Any individual or entity providing child care or early learning services for a group of children, for more than four hours per day, must be licensed by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). License requirements include meeting health and safety standards, staff qualification levels, and other standards related to quality.

Stackable Certificates.

Community and technical colleges offer common courses in early childhood education (ECE) which build on one another in a sequential manner, referred to as stackable certificates.

Providers can progress through three certificate levels, which are:

- ECE Initial Certificate (12 credits)
- ECE Short Certificate (8 credits)
- ECE State Certificate (27-32 credits)

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Child Care Education Requirements.

Rule changes by the DCYF regarding quality standards for early learning programs go into effect August 2019. The changes include adding education requirements that vary based on provider type and staff position. In all cases the requirement can be substituted by an equivalent activity, which the rule defines as "a department-recognized alternative credential, or demonstration of competency."

Examples of the education and equivalency requirements include:

- Child care center directors and assistant directors must complete an ECE state certificate or equivalent within five years of the rule going into effect.
- Family home program licensees and center lead teachers must have an ECE initial certificate or equivalent within five years, and an ECE short certificate within two years of receiving the initial certificate.
- Assistant teachers at both family homes and child centers must have a high school diploma or equivalent when the rule becomes effective, and a minimum of an ECE initial certificate or equivalent within five years.

Equivalencies Workgroup.

The DCYF convened a workgroup in 2018 to identify credentials to serve as equivalents to education requirements. The stated guiding principles of the workgroup are to:

- recognize an individual's existing knowledge and skills;
- honor the various ways people learn and show their skills;
- recognize the needs of existing workforce and new workforce;
- use innovative options to implement our guidelines for culturally responsive professional development; and
- qualify someone to meet rule requirements for their role.

Summary of Bill:

The DCYF must adopt education equivalencies for licensed child care providers. The equivalencies are professional experiences and skills that may be considered equivalent to education levels required by child care licensing rules. When adopting qualifying equivalencies, the DCYF must take the following into account:

- years of child care or related experience; and
- time spent engaged in professional development activities such as training opportunities, researching peer-reviewed best practices, and engaging in peer-to-peer mentoring.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 18, 2019.

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