

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2556

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing regulatory relief for early learning providers.

Sponsors: House Committee on Human Services & Early Learning (originally sponsored by Representatives Dent, Corry, Eslick, Caldier, Klippert, Jenkin, Griffey, McCaslin, Mosbrucker, Gildon, Dufault and Tharinger).

House Committee on Human Services & Early Learning
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) regulates child care licensing and administers a quality rating and improvement system for early learning programs called Early Achievers (EA). Providers accepting state subsidy and caring for nonschool age children are required to participate in the EA program and meet certain rating levels by statutory deadlines. The DCYF has adopted core competencies for early learning providers that describe the standards of knowledge and skills for early learning professionals required for child care licensure.

Foundational Quality Standards for Early Learning.

In 2018 the DCYF adopted foundational quality standards for early learning that updated licensing standards for child care and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. The licensing standards are required to provide minimum health and safety standards for child care and preschool programs, rely on the standards established by the EA program to address quality issues, take into account the separate needs of family care providers and child care centers, and promote the continued safety of child care centers.

Under the standards, early learning providers must meet certain education requirements or the equivalent by 2024 or within five years of the provider's date of hire if hired after August 2019. Education requirements include earning an initial, short, or full state Early Childhood Education Certificate (ECE) for most positions. To earn an initial ECE requires 12 college credits; the short ECE requires 20 credits; and the full state ECE requires 47 credits.

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.

In 2019 the DCYF received recommendations from an Equivalencies Workgroup related to developing equivalencies to meet education requirements. The recommendations for education equivalents included establishing a process for providers to demonstrate competency and identifying alternate credentials.

Summary:

By July 1, 2021, the DCYF must implement a noncredit-bearing, community-based training pathway for licensed child care providers to meet professional education requirements associated with child care licensure. The DCYF must consult with specified stakeholders in the development and implementation of the pathway, including:

- the statewide child care resource and referral network;
- a community-based training organization that provides training to licensed family day care providers;
- a statewide organization that represents the interests of family day care providers;
- a statewide organization that represents the interests of licensed child care centers;
- an organization representing the interests of refugee and immigrant communities;
- a bilingual child care provider whose first language is not English;
- an organization that advocates for early learning;
- an organization representing private and independent schools; and
- the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

The community-based training pathway must align with early learning core competencies, include culturally relevant practices, and be made available:

- at low cost to providers and at prices comparable to the cost of similar community-based trainings, not to exceed \$250 per person;
- in multiple languages; and
- in an accessible manner for providers in rural and urban settings.

The DCYF must allow licensed child care providers until at least August 1, 2026, to comply with licensing rules that require a provider to hold an ECE initial or short certificate or complete community-based trainings.

The DCYF and the SBCTC must collaborate with local community and technical colleges to develop a plan to allow community-based training that is completed by licensed child care providers to qualify for college credit. The DCYF must submit the plan to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2021.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0
Senate	48	0

Effective: June 11, 2020