
Human Services & Early Learning Committee

SSB 6483

Brief Description: Concerning rating requirements for child care providers.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, C. and Nguyen; by request of Department of Children, Youth and Families).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the timeframe for Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program providers to complete remedial activities in the Early Achievers (EA) Program.
- Allows a provider accepting child care subsidy to continue receiving subsidy payments while completing EA remedial activities.

Hearing Date: 2/26/20

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program.

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is the state's voluntary preschool program. Three and 4-year-olds from families with incomes at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for the ECEAP. Children eligible for special education or who have certain risk factors are also eligible to enroll, regardless of income. Additional children may be enrolled as space is available.

Early Achievers.

Early Achievers (EA) is the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care and early learning. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) administers the EA program. The quality of care is assigned a rating on a scale of 1-5. Participation in the EA

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.

program is mandatory for providers serving non-school-age children and accepting child care subsidy or providing the ECEAP.

Providers must meet certain rating levels by specified statutory deadlines. An ECEAP provider must rate at a level 4 or level 5 within 24 months of enrollment in the EA program or the start of the ECEAP contract. A provider accepting child care subsidy was required to rate or request to be rated at level 3 or higher in EA by December 31, 2019.

If a provider does not meet the rating deadline, the provider must complete remedial activities and rate at the required level or higher within a certain timeframe in order to continue to be eligible to accept state subsidy. For a provider accepting child care subsidy, this time frame is 12 months. For an ECEAP provider, this time frame is six months.

Miscellaneous.

The DCYF must complete two reports that include recommendations related to rates, copayments, and eligibility for the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and ECEAP programs. An initial progress report is due to the Governor and the Legislature by July 1, 2020, and a final report is due July 1, 2021.

Summary of Bill:

Providers in the ECEAP who do not meet EA rating deadlines must complete remedial activities and must rate at or request to be rated at a level 4 or 5 within 12 months, instead of six months, of beginning the remedial activities. If the ECEAP provider does not meet this requirement, the provider is no longer eligible to receive state-funded support under the ECEAP.

Providers accepting child care subsidy may receive subsidy payments while they are completing required remedial activities.

A technical correction is made to the expiration date of the section related to the ECEAP and WCCC reports. The due date for the initial progress report is extended from July 1 to September 1, 2020.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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