
SENATE BILL 5341

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Randall, Wilson, C., Lias, Frockt, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Nguyen, Palumbo, and Saldaña

Read first time 01/17/19. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving access and completion for students
2 at public institutions of higher education, especially at community
3 and technical colleges, by removing restrictions on subsidized child
4 care; amending RCW 43.216.135; adding a new section to chapter 28B.50
5 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes the
8 following:

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

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

1 two-year institutions who live with children say they are likely or
2 very likely to withdraw from college to care for 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 higher education 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 less
29 than fifteen hours per week.

30 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to improve access and
31 completion rates of student parents enrolled in community and
32 technical colleges by reducing existing restrictions to subsidized
33 child care.

34 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.216.135 and 2018 c 52 s 6 are each amended to
35 read as follows:

36 (1) The department shall establish and implement policies in the
37 working connections child care program to promote stability and
38 quality of care for children from low-income households. These
39 policies shall focus on supporting school readiness for young

1 learners. Policies for the expenditure of funds constituting the
2 working connections child care program must be consistent with the
3 outcome measures established by the department and the standards
4 established in this section intended to promote stability, quality,
5 and continuity of early care and education programming.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 this section, the provider may continue to receive a state subsidy
2 pending the successful completion of the level 3 rating activity.

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

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

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

12 (i) In the last six months have:

13 (A) Received child protective services as defined and used by
14 chapters 26.44 and 74.13 RCW;

15 (B) Received child welfare services as defined and used by
16 chapter 74.13 RCW; or

17 (C) Received services through a family assessment response as
18 defined and used by chapter 26.44 RCW;

19 (ii) Have been referred for child care as part of the family's
20 case management as defined by RCW 74.13.020; and

21 (iii) Are residing with a biological parent or guardian.

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

29 (10)(a) Beginning January 1, 2020:

30 (i) The department may not require an applicant or consumer who
31 is a full-time student of a community, technical, or tribal college
32 to meet work requirements as a condition of receiving working
33 connections child care benefits. An applicant or consumer is a full-
34 time student if he or she meets the college's definition of a full-
35 time student; and

36 (ii) The department shall offer working connections child care
37 benefits to otherwise qualified students of community, technical, and
38 tribal colleges who are pursuing all associate degree programs.

39 (b) Nothing in this subsection is intended to change how
40 applicants or consumers are prioritized when applicants or consumers

1 are placed on a wait list for working connections child care
2 benefits.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28B.50
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 Nothing in RCW 43.216.135 requires a community or technical
6 college to expand any of its existing child care facilities. Any
7 additional child care services provided by a community or technical
8 college as a result of RCW 43.216.135 must be provided within
9 existing resources and existing facilities.

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