HOUSE BILL REPORT
HB 1916

As Reported by House Committee On:
Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning

Title: An act relating to funding for the early support for infants and toddlers program.

Brief Description: Concerning funding for the early support for infants and toddlers program.

Sponsors: Representatives Senn, Couture, Leavitt, Taylor, Paul, Callan, Ramos, Cortes, Reed, Fey, Timmons, Street, Doglio, Simmons, Wylie, Reeves, Alvarado, Nance, Riccelli, Fosse, Pollet and Shavers; by request of Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Brief History:
   Committee Activity:
      Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning: 1/9/24, 1/12/24 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that for purposes of funding, a child is considered to have received Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) services if the child received services within the same month as the monthly count day, rather than the month prior.

- Requires the monthly count day for ESIT enrollment to fall on the last business day of the month.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, YOUTH, & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Cortes, Vice Chair; Rule, Vice Chair; Eslick, Ranking Minority Member; Couture, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Callan, Dent, Goodman, Ortiz-Self, Taylor and Walsh.

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

<u>Early Support for Infants and Toddlers</u>.
Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides grant funding to states to operate a comprehensive program of individual and family intervention services for children from birth to age 3 who have been diagnosed with a disability or developmental delay. In Washington, these intervention services are administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) through the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program. The ESIT program provides an array of services, such as developmental services, occupational and physical therapy, language therapy, and service coordination to clients according to an individualized family service plan.

The DCYF contracts with provider agency organizations, including public, private, tribal, and nonprofit entities, and school districts, to provide early intervention services within an assigned area. In some counties, services are coordinated through county lead agencies, which subcontract with provider agencies for service delivery.

<u>Funding for the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program</u>.
Funding for the ESIT program is through multiple sources including state special education funding and other state funding, as well as federal IDEA funds. Funding is appropriated to the DCYF based on the annual average headcount of children who are eligible for and receiving early intervention services. The state provides the basic education allocation rate for the headcount, multiplied by 1.15. The DCYF is required to distribute funds to ESIT service providers and, when appropriate, to county lead agencies. A child is considered to have received ESIT services if the child received services within a month prior to the monthly count day.

Summary of Bill:

For purposes of funding, a child is considered to have received ESIT services if the child received services within the same month as the monthly count day. The monthly count day for ESIT enrollment must fall on the last business day of the month.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In Support) Services by ESIT improve lives. These services provide a good return on

investment, as often children who have access to these services go on to no longer need special education services. It is necessary to provide funding for the expensive first month of the program. Critical and life-changing services are provided at this time, including intake, evaluation, and individualized family service planning. This process can take 10 hours and may require interpreters. This bill creates efficiency in the billing process for providers and for the DCYF in administering the program. More children will be served with this change. The change in the bill will also help alleviate workforce issues and staff retention for the program, which is currently struggling to retain providers.

Parents have received critical support through the ESIT program at the time their child leaves the hospital and on a frequent basis thereafter. Through the program, parents are taught about child development and critical progressions and are given suggestions as to how to communicate with their children and help them develop. When children miss developmental windows, skills are harder to learn later in life. Children who have participated in ESIT have gone on to have rich and full lives.

An amendment to expand the bill to match the special education funding multiplier for 3- to 5-year-olds would improve the bill. The ESIT program used to have the same multiplier as 3- to 5-year-olds, but this was changed through recent legislation and they should match. The youngest children should not be left behind with our special education investments. These services are needed for children to learn to eat, communicate, get around, and thrive.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Tana Senn, prime sponsor; Lisa Greenwald, Kindering; Allison Krutsinger, Department of Children, Youth, and Families; Michael Stewart, Boyer Children's Clinic; Shefali Sareen; Bhrighu Sareen; Magan Cromar, King County Department of Community and Human Services; and Antoinette Rosenberg.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.