

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5774

C 300 L 24
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Increasing the capacity to conduct timely fingerprint-based background checks for prospective child care employees and other programs.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Billig, Hawkins, Wilson, C., Wellman, Dozier, Frame, Kuderer, Lovick, Mullet, Nguyen, Nobles, Padden, Salomon and Shewmake).

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

Background: State law and federal regulation require fingerprint-based background checks through the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for:

- anyone who is authorized to care for or have unsupervised access to children in child care and early learning programs; and
- child welfare programs including foster care or adoptive placement.

Federal regulation allows prospective child care staff members to begin work on a provisional basis if they are supervised at all times and have completed and received the results of an FBI fingerprint check or a check of the state criminal repository using fingerprints.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a Governor proclamation suspended and waived statutes relating to the administrative requirements related to fingerprint-based background checks for child care and foster and adoptive parents to increase the availability of these services. This proclamation has been rescinded.

According to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), effective January 1, 2024, all child care and early learning providers, including those not working directly

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with children or youth, who were previously allowed to work while supervised after submitting their background check application, must complete fingerprints and have a cleared status in the Managed Education and Registry Tool to continue to work at a child care facility. DCYF works with a contractor to conduct the fingerprint process.

Summary: Subject to appropriations and to help satisfy background check requirements, DCYF must maintain the capacity to roll, print, or scan fingerprints in at least seven of DCFY's early learning and child welfare offices for WSP and FBI fingerprint-based background checks. Office locations must:

- be prioritized based on proximity to existing fingerprinting service capacity, regional demand, and criteria to enhance timely access;
- provide staff support of a minimum of 0.5 full-time equivalent employees per office location; and
- provide fingerprinting services solely for prospective and current child care employees, licensed group care employees, families, and relatives involved in child welfare.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	95	0	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: March 26, 2024