
SENATE BILL 5423

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Senators Nobles, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Lias, Lovelett, Pedersen, Randall, Robinson, Saldaña, Shewmake, Stanford, Valdez, Wellman, and C. Wilson

Read first time 01/17/23. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to eligibility for working connections child care
2 benefits for persons participating in registered apprenticeships; and
3 amending RCW 43.216.136.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.216.136 and 2021 c 199 s 202 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The department shall establish and implement policies in the
8 working connections child care program to promote stability and
9 quality of care for children from low-income households. These
10 policies shall focus on supporting school readiness for young
11 learners. Policies for the expenditure of funds constituting the
12 working connections child care program must be consistent with the
13 outcome measures established by the department and the standards
14 established in this section intended to promote stability, quality,
15 and continuity of early care and education programming.

16 (2) As recommended by P.L. 113-186, authorizations for the
17 working connections child care subsidy are effective for (~~twelve~~)
18 12 months beginning July 1, 2016.

19 (a) A household's 12-month authorization begins on the date that
20 child care is expected to begin.

1 (b) If a newly eligible household does not begin care within 12
2 months of being determined eligible by the department, the household
3 must reapply in order to qualify for subsidy.

4 (3)(a) The department shall establish and implement policies in
5 the working connections child care program to allow eligibility for
6 families with children who:

7 (i) In the last six months have:

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

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

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

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

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

17 (b) Families who are eligible for working connections child care
18 pursuant to this subsection do not have to keep receiving services
19 identified in this subsection to maintain twelve-month authorization.

20 (4)(a) Beginning July 1, 2021, and subject to the availability of
21 amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department may
22 not require an applicant or consumer to meet work requirements as a
23 condition of receiving working connections child care benefits when
24 the applicant or consumer is a full-time student of a community,
25 technical, or tribal college and is enrolled in:

26 (i) A vocational education program that leads to a degree or
27 certificate in a specific occupation;

28 (ii) An associate degree program; or

29 (iii) A registered apprenticeship program.

30 (b) An applicant or consumer is a full-time student for the
31 purposes of this subsection if he or she meets the college's
32 definition of a full-time student.

33 (c) Nothing in this subsection is intended to change how
34 applicants or consumers are prioritized when applicants or consumers
35 are placed on a waitlist for working connections child care benefits.

36 (d) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
37 specific purpose, the department may extend the provisions of this
38 subsection (4) to full-time students who are enrolled in a bachelor's
39 degree program or applied baccalaureate degree program.

1 (5) (a) An applicant or consumer is eligible to receive working
2 connections child care benefits for the care of one or more eligible
3 children for the first 12 months of the applicant's or consumer's
4 enrollment in a state registered apprenticeship program under chapter
5 49.04 RCW, regardless of whether or not the applicant or consumer
6 otherwise meets eligibility requirements, when the applicant or
7 consumer:

8 (i) Was eligible for or was receiving working connections child
9 care benefits for a period of 12 months immediately preceding the
10 applicant's or consumer's enrollment in the state registered
11 apprenticeship program; and

12 (ii) Has a household income that does not exceed 85 percent of
13 the state median income at the time of application.

14 (b) The department must adopt a copayment model for benefits
15 granted under this subsection to consumers with household incomes
16 above 60 percent and at or below 85 percent of the state median
17 income at the time of application, which must align with any
18 copayment identified or adopted under RCW 43.216.1368.

19 (6) (a) The department must extend the homeless grace period, as
20 adopted in department rule as of January 1, 2020, from a four-month
21 grace period to a ((~~twelve~~)) 12-month grace period.

22 (b) For the purposes of this section, "homeless" means being
23 without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as
24 described in the federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act (42
25 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a) as it existed on January 1, 2020.

26 ((~~6~~)) (7) For purposes of this section, "authorization" means a
27 transaction created by the department that allows a child care
28 provider to claim payment for care. The department may adjust an
29 authorization based on a household's eligibility status.

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