S-0273.1

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**SENATE BILL 5310**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Braun, Boehnke, and Christian

AN ACT Relating to child care subsidy rates; amending RCW 43.216.828; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.828 and 2021 c 199 s 301 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) It is the intent of the legislature to systemically increase child care subsidy rates over time until rates are equal to the full cost of providing high quality child care.

(2)(a) Beginning July 1, ((~~2021, child care subsidy base rates must achieve the 85th~~)) 2025, the department must pay the lesser of the following to a licensed or certified child care center, family home provider, and outdoor nature-based child care provider receiving state subsidy payments:

(i) The child care provider's rate for a child from a family not eligible for state subsidy payments; or

(ii) The child care subsidy base rate that achieves the 75th percentile of market for licensed or certified child care providers.

(b) The state and the exclusive representative for family ((~~child care~~)) home providers must enter into bargaining over the implementation of the subsidy rate increase under this subsection.

(3)(a) The department shall build upon the work of the child care collaborative task force to develop and implement a child care cost estimate model and use the completed child care cost model to recommend subsidy rates at levels that are sufficient to compensate licensed or certified child care providers for the full costs of providing high quality child care. The department shall consider:

(i) Adjusting rates to reflect cost of living such as area median income, cost of living by zip code, and grouping by categories such as rural, suburban, or urban; and

(ii) Incorporating the rate model for nonstandard child care hours developed under section 306, chapter 199, Laws of 2021.

(b) The department shall build upon the work of the child care collaborative task force to evaluate options to support access to affordable health care insurance coverage for licensed or certified child care providers.

(4) This section does not interfere with, impede, or in any way diminish the right of family ((~~child care~~)) home providers to bargain collectively with the state through the exclusive bargaining representatives as provided for under RCW 41.56.028.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2025.

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