

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5509

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As of February 6, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to the siting of child care centers.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the siting of child care centers.

**Sponsors:** Senators Alvarado, Salomon, Bateman, Conway, Nobles, Saldaña, Trudeau, Valdez and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Local Government: 2/06/25.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires cities, towns, and code cities to allow childcare centers as outright permitted uses in all zones except industrial zones.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Staff:** Karen Epps (786-7424)

**Background:** The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. The GMA establishes land use designation and environmental protection requirements for all Washington counties and cities. The GMA also establishes a significantly wider array of planning duties for 28 counties, and the cities within those counties, that are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA.

The GMA directs fully planning jurisdictions to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land-use plans. Comprehensive plans are implemented through locally adopted development regulations, and both the plans and the local regulations are subject to review and revision requirements prescribed in the GMA. Comprehensive plans must contain certain required elements, including a transportation element, a land use element, and a capital facilities plan

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element, among others.

Development regulations are controls placed on development or land use activities by a county or city, including zoning ordinances, critical areas ordinances, planned unit development ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and binding site plan ordinances. A county or city adopts zoning ordinances to designate land in various zones for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes and to protect critical areas and other sensitive areas within the county or city.

**Summary of Bill:** Cities, towns, and code cities are required to allow childcare centers as outright permitted uses in all zones except industrial zones. Cities and code cities may impose reasonable restrictions on the permit, including pickup and drop-off areas. Cities and code cities must incorporate this requirement by adopting or amending through ordinance, and incorporate into their development regulations, no later than one year after the next comprehensive plan update, or within one year of the bill's effective date.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 31, 2025.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: There are zoning and development regulations that limit where child care centers can be built and many communities require a conditional use permit to build a child care center. Sixty-three percent of Washingtonians live in a community that is a child care desert. This bill requires cities to modify their zoning codes to allow for child care facilities in all zones except industrial zones, but it also allows cities to set reasonable limitations on those uses. This is a balanced bill to help build more child care facilities while also allowing for local flexibility. Moms are being forced to leave their jobs because they cannot find child care. Lakewood rewrote their zoning rules and child care access expanded from 4 percent of the city to more than 50 percent of the city. This bill takes that success statewide and ensures every community can build the facilities they need. Providers are struggling with zoning issues that arise, making it difficult to expand and this bill will help providers so that they can thrive and grow along with their children. The bill provides local jurisdictions with the authority to regulate while also providing state direction on this issue.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Emily Alvarado, Prime Sponsor; Bryce Yadon, Futurewise ; Alex Galeana, Children's Campaign Fund Action; Alexis Cortes, Parent; Carl Schroeder, Association of Washington Cities.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.