
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1489

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representative Ormsby; by request of Office of Financial Management)

READ FIRST TIME 02/17/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to implementation dates for programs related to
2 early childhood education and child care; amending RCW 43.216.556 and
3 43.216.810; amending 2024 c 225 s 7 (uncodified); reenacting and
4 amending RCW 43.216.505 and 43.216.802; providing an effective date;
5 and declaring an emergency.

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

7 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.216.505 and 2021 c 199 s 204 are each reenacted
8 and amended to read as follows:

9 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in
10 this section apply throughout RCW 43.216.500 through 43.216.559,
11 43.216.900, and 43.216.901.

12 (1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW
13 43.216.520.

14 (2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and
15 special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as
16 meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to
17 qualify under RCW 43.216.500 through 43.216.550, 43.216.900, and
18 43.216.901 and are designated as eligible for funding by the
19 department under RCW 43.216.530 and 43.216.540.

1 (3) "Comprehensive" means an assistance program that focuses on
2 the needs of the child and includes education, health, and family
3 support services.

4 (4) "Eligible child" means a three to five-year old child who is
5 not age-eligible for kindergarten, is not a participant in a federal
6 or state program providing comprehensive services, and who:

7 (a) Has a family with financial need;

8 (b) Is experiencing homelessness;

9 (c) Has participated in early head start or a successor federal
10 program providing comprehensive services for children from birth
11 through two years of age, the early support for infants and toddlers
12 program or received class C developmental services, the birth to
13 three early childhood education and assistance program, or the early
14 childhood intervention and prevention services program;

15 (d) Is eligible for special education due to disability under RCW
16 28A.155.020;

17 (e) Is Indian as defined in rule by the department after
18 consultation and agreement with Washington state's federally
19 recognized tribes pursuant to RCW 43.216.5052 and is at or below 100
20 percent of the state median income adjusted for family size; or

21 (f) Meets criteria under rules adopted by the department if the
22 number of such children equals not more than ten percent of the total
23 enrollment in the early childhood program. Preference for enrollment
24 in this group shall be given to children from families with the
25 lowest income, children in foster care, or to eligible children from
26 families with multiple needs.

27 (5) "Experiencing homelessness" means a child without a fixed,
28 regular, and adequate nighttime residence as described in the federal
29 McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act (Title 42 U.S.C., chapter 119,
30 subchapter VI, part B) as it existed on January 1, 2021.

31 (6) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for
32 parents to:

33 (a) Actively participate in their child's early childhood
34 program;

35 (b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting
36 skills;

37 (c) Further their education and training;

38 (d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the
39 community;

40 (e) Increase their self-reliance; and

1 (f) Connect with culturally competent, disability positive
2 therapists and supports where appropriate.

3 (7) "Family with financial need" means families with incomes at
4 or below 36 percent of the state median income adjusted for family
5 size until the ((2030-31)) 2034-35 school year. Beginning in the
6 ((2030-31)) 2034-35 school year, "family with financial need" means
7 families with incomes at or below 50 percent of the state median
8 income adjusted for family size.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.216.556 and 2021 c 199 s 208 are each amended to
10 read as follows:

11 (1) Funding for the program of early learning established under
12 this chapter must be appropriated to the department. The department
13 shall distribute funding to approved early childhood education and
14 assistance program contractors on the basis of eligible children
15 enrolled.

16 (2) The program shall be implemented in phases, so that full
17 implementation is achieved in the ((2026-27)) 2030-31 school year.

18 (3) Funding shall continue to be phased in each year until full
19 statewide implementation of the early learning program is achieved in
20 the ((2026-27)) 2030-31 school year, at which time any eligible child
21 is entitled to be enrolled in the program. Entitlement under this
22 section is voluntary enrollment.

23 (4) School districts and approved community-based early learning
24 providers may contract with the department to provide services under
25 the program. The department shall collaborate with school districts,
26 community-based providers, and educational service districts to
27 promote an adequate supply of approved providers.

28 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.216.802 and 2024 c 225 s 1 and 2024 c 67 s 2 are
29 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

30 (1) It is the intent of the legislature to increase working
31 families' access to affordable, high quality child care and to
32 support the expansion of the workforce to support businesses and the
33 statewide economy.

34 (2) A family is eligible for working connections child care when
35 the household's annual income is at or below 60 percent of the state
36 median income adjusted for family size and:

1 (a) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age;
2 or (ii) less than 19 years of age and has a verified special need
3 according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

4 (b) The household meets all other program eligibility
5 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
6 as authorized by RCW 43.216.055 or 43.216.065 or any other authority
7 granted by this chapter.

8 (3) Beginning July 1, (~~2025~~) 2029, a family is eligible for
9 working connections child care when the household's annual income is
10 above 60 percent and at or below 75 percent of the state median
11 income adjusted for family size and:

12 (a) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age;
13 or (ii) less than 19 years of age and has a verified special need
14 according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

15 (b) The household meets all other program eligibility
16 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
17 as authorized by RCW 43.216.055 or 43.216.065 or any other authority
18 granted by this chapter.

19 (4) Beginning July 1, (~~2027~~) 2031, and subject to the
20 availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, a
21 family is eligible for working connections child care when the
22 household's annual income is above 75 percent of the state median
23 income and is at or below 85 percent of the state median income
24 adjusted for family size and:

25 (a) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age;
26 or (ii) less than 19 years of age and has a verified special need
27 according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

28 (b) The household meets all other program eligibility
29 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
30 as authorized by RCW 43.216.055 or 43.216.065 or any other authority
31 granted by this chapter.

32 (5) Beginning November 1, 2024, when an applicant or consumer is
33 a member of an assistance unit that is eligible for or receiving
34 basic food benefits under the federal supplemental nutrition
35 assistance program or the state food assistance program the
36 department must determine that the household income eligibility
37 requirements in this section are met.

38 (6) The department must adopt rules to implement this section,
39 including an income phase-out eligibility period.

1 (7) The department may not consider the citizenship status of an
2 applicant or consumer's child when determining eligibility for
3 working connections child care benefits.

4 (8) The income eligibility requirements in subsections (2)
5 through (4) of this section do not apply to households eligible for
6 the working connections child care program under RCW 43.216.808,
7 43.216.810, 43.216.812, and 43.216.814.

8 **Sec. 4.** RCW 43.216.810 and 2024 c 67 s 6 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 (1) An applicant or consumer is eligible to receive working
11 connections child care benefits for the care of one or more eligible
12 children for the first 12 months of the applicant's or consumer's
13 enrollment in a state registered apprenticeship program under chapter
14 49.04 RCW when:

15 (a) The applicant or consumer's household annual income adjusted
16 for family size does not exceed 75 percent of the state median income
17 at the time of application, or, beginning July 1, (~~(2027)~~) 2031, does
18 not exceed 85 percent of the state median income if funds are
19 appropriated for the purpose of RCW 43.216.802(4);

20 (b) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age;
21 or (ii) less than 19 years of age and either has a verified special
22 need according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

23 (c) The household meets all other program eligibility
24 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
25 in accordance with RCW 43.216.055, 43.216.065, and 43.216.800.

26 (2) The department must adopt a copayment model for benefits
27 granted under this (~~subsection~~[~~section~~]) section, which must align
28 with any copayment identified or adopted for households with the same
29 income level under RCW 43.216.804.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act is necessary for the immediate
31 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
32 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
33 effect July 1, 2025.

34 **Sec. 6.** 2024 c 225 s 7 (uncodified) is amended to read as
35 follows:

36 Section 2 of this act takes effect August 1, (~~(2030)~~) 2034.

1 Sections 4 and 6 of this act take effect July 1, 2026.

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