
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1648

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Dent, Eslick, Burnett, Penner, Jacobsen, and Graham)

READ FIRST TIME 02/20/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to child care provider qualifications; amending
2 RCW 43.216.755; creating new sections; and providing an expiration
3 date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the
6 COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic impact on all people, but had a
7 particularly dramatic impact on child care and the child care
8 industry. Many child care facilities closed during the COVID-19
9 pandemic and providers left the child care field. It became clear
10 during the COVID-19 pandemic how critical child care is to the
11 success of every industry as parents need child care to work.

12 (2) The legislature further finds that because of the
13 unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child care
14 industry, the plans of many child care providers to receive education
15 were put on hold as efforts were focused on addressing the immediate
16 needs of child care providers and families. Additionally, the current
17 market-based funding model results in wages so low that affording
18 college tuition is often impossible for child care providers. The
19 limited availability of college courses in multiple languages and the
20 scarcity of early childhood education college programs further
21 hinders access to required training and certification.

1 (3) For those reasons, the legislature intends to delay the
2 requirement for child care providers to meet certification and
3 training qualification conditions. Additionally, to recognize the
4 professionalism and experience of individuals currently in the child
5 care field, the legislature intends to add a work equivalency option
6 as an alternative to certification requirements. This work
7 equivalency alternative should take into account the years of service
8 child care providers have committed to educating children, while
9 allowing for upward mobility within the field. Without this
10 alternative, there is an education cliff that discourages child care
11 professionals to remain in the field.

12 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.216.755 and 2020 c 342 s 2 are each amended to
13 read as follows:

14 (1) By July 1, 2021, the department shall implement a noncredit-
15 bearing, community-based training pathway for licensed child care
16 providers to meet professional education requirements associated with
17 child care licensure. The community-based training pathway must be
18 offered as an alternative to existing credit-bearing pathways
19 available to providers.

20 (2) ~~((The department shall consult with the following~~
21 ~~stakeholders in the development and implementation of the community-~~
22 ~~based training pathway: The statewide child care resource and~~
23 ~~referral network, a community-based training organization that~~
24 ~~provides training to licensed family day care providers, a statewide~~
25 ~~organization that represents the interests of family day care~~
26 ~~providers, a statewide organization that represents the interests of~~
27 ~~licensed child day care centers, an organization that represents the~~
28 ~~interests of refugee and immigrant communities, a bilingual child~~
29 ~~care provider whose first language is not English, an organization~~
30 ~~that advocates for early learning, an organization representing~~
31 ~~private and independent schools, and the state board for community~~
32 ~~and technical colleges.~~

33 ~~(3))~~) The community-based training pathway must:

34 (a) Align with adopted core competencies for early learning
35 professionals;

36 (b) Be made available to providers in multiple languages;

37 (c) Include culturally relevant practices; ~~((and))~~

1 (d) Be made available at low cost to providers and at prices
2 comparable to the cost of similar community-based trainings, not to
3 exceed (~~two hundred and fifty dollars~~) \$250 per person; and

4 (e) Be accessible to providers in rural and urban settings.

5 (~~(4)~~) (3) The department shall allow licensed child care
6 providers until at least August 1, (~~(2026)~~) 2032, or five years from
7 the date of hire if hired on or after the effective date of this
8 section, whichever is later, to:

9 (a) Comply with child care licensing rules that require a
10 provider to hold an early childhood education initial certificate
11 (~~(or)~~), an early childhood education short certificate, or an early
12 childhood education state certificate; (~~or~~)

13 (b) Complete community-based pathway trainings; or

14 (c) Demonstrate to the department experience-based competency
15 after having worked in a licensed child care setting without a break
16 in service for at least five years. The department must adopt
17 policies to allow temporary breaks related to parental leave,
18 personal illness, attending to family illness or emergency, or
19 similar circumstances, to not be considered a break in service.

20 (4) The department may not require licensed child care providers
21 to complete annual in-service training requirements in order to
22 demonstrate experience-based competency described under subsection
23 (3)(c) of this section.

24 (~~(5) For the purposes of this section, "demonstrated competence"~~
25 ~~means an individual has shown that he or she has the skills to~~
26 ~~complete the required work independently.))~~

27 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. (1) The department of children, youth, and
28 families shall convene a stakeholder group to assist the department
29 in identifying strategies to improve early learning and school-age
30 staff qualification requirements and verification processes
31 including, but not limited to:

32 (a) Identifying measures to streamline and clarify relevant
33 administrative rules and department policies;

34 (b) Defining criteria and methods by which to honor equivalent
35 out-of-state education and training; and

36 (c) Identifying options for offering the community-based training
37 pathway in an online format.

38 (2) At a minimum, the stakeholder group must include:

1 (a) Family home and child care center providers, including at
2 least one provider from a child care center that is part of a
3 national chain or has 10 or more sites; and
4 (b) Representation from the following organizations:
5 (i) The statewide child care resource and referral network;
6 (ii) A community-based training organization that provides
7 training to licensed family day care providers;
8 (iii) A statewide organization that represents the interests of
9 family day care providers;
10 (iv) A statewide organization that represents the interests of
11 licensed child day care centers;
12 (v) The statewide out-of-school time intermediary organization;
13 (vi) An organization that represents the interests of refugee and
14 immigrant communities;
15 (vii) A bilingual child care provider whose first language is not
16 English;
17 (viii) An organization that advocates for early learning;
18 (ix) An organization representing private and independent
19 schools; and
20 (x) The state board for community and technical colleges.
21 (3) The department of children, youth, and families shall report
22 to the legislature by December 1, 2026, in compliance with RCW
23 43.01.036, on strategies identified by the stakeholder group and the
24 department's plans and timelines under which to carry out those
25 strategies.
26 (4) The department of children, youth, and families must make
27 efforts to minimize the cost of convening the stakeholder group and
28 completing the requirements of this section, such as holding meetings
29 in a virtual format if possible.
30 (5) This section expires July 1, 2028.

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