
HOUSE BILL 1873

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Zahn, Parshley, Berry, Reed, Fosse, Mena, Scott, Nance, Cortes, Thai, Simmons, Salahuddin, Obras, Pollet, Hill, Timmons, and Duerr

Read first time 02/06/25. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to increasing access to the working connections
2 child care program for graduate and professional students; amending
3 RCW 43.216.804; reenacting and amending RCW 43.216.802; and adding a
4 new section to chapter 43.216 RCW.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.216
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) An applicant or consumer is eligible for working connections
9 child care when the applicant or consumer is enrolled full-time in a
10 graduate or professional program at an institution of higher
11 education and:

12 (a) The applicant or consumer's household annual income is at or
13 below 85 percent of the state median income adjusted for family size;

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

17 (c) The applicant or consumer's household meets all other program
18 eligibility requirements established in this chapter or in rule by
19 the department as authorized by RCW 43.216.055 or 43.216.065 or any
20 other authority granted by this chapter.

1 (2) An applicant or consumer is enrolled full-time for the
2 purposes of this section if the applicant or consumer meets the
3 institution of higher education's definition of a full-time student.

4 (3) Applicants and consumers qualifying for working connections
5 child care under this section qualify for full-time care. The
6 department must consider an applicant or consumer's enrollment as a
7 full-time student in a graduate or professional program at an
8 institution of higher education as an approved activity when
9 determining eligibility for working connections child care benefits
10 under this section.

11 (4) In two-parent households, the availability of the other
12 parent may not be considered when authorizing care.

13 (5) The department must waive the copayment to the extent
14 allowable under federal law; otherwise, a maximum of \$15 may be
15 imposed for any applicant or consumer that meets the requirements
16 under this section.

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

19 (1) It is the intent of the legislature to increase working
20 families' access to affordable, high quality child care and to
21 support the expansion of the workforce to support businesses and the
22 statewide economy.

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

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

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

33 (3) Beginning July 1, 2025, a family is eligible for working
34 connections child care when the household's annual income is above 60
35 percent and at or below 75 percent of the state median income
36 adjusted for family size and:

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

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

5 (4) Beginning July 1, 2027, and subject to the availability of
6 amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, a family is eligible
7 for working connections child care when the household's annual income
8 is above 75 percent of the state median income and is at or below 85
9 percent of the state median income adjusted for family size and:

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

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

17 (5) Beginning November 1, 2024, when an applicant or consumer is
18 a member of an assistance unit that is eligible for or receiving
19 basic food benefits under the federal supplemental nutrition
20 assistance program or the state food assistance program the
21 department must determine that the household income eligibility
22 requirements in this section are met.

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

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

28 (8) The income eligibility requirements in subsections (2)
29 through (4) of this section do not apply to households eligible for
30 the working connections child care program under RCW 43.216.808,
31 43.216.810, 43.216.812, ~~((and))~~ 43.216.814, and section 1 of this
32 act.

33 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.216.804 and 2024 c 67 s 3 are each amended to
34 read as follows:

35 (1) Effective until July 1, 2025, the department must calculate a
36 monthly copayment according to the following schedule:

37 If the household's income is:	Then the household's maximum monthly copayment is:
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1	At or below 20 percent of the state median income	Waived to the extent allowable under federal law;
2		otherwise, a maximum of \$15
3	Above 20 percent and at or below 36 percent of the state	\$65
4	median income	
5	Above 36 percent and at or below 50 percent of the state	\$90
6	median income	
7	Above 50 percent and at or below 60 percent of the state	\$165
8	median income	

9 (2) Beginning July 1, 2025, the department must calculate a
10 monthly copayment according to the following schedule:

11	If the household's income is:	Then the household's maximum monthly copayment is:
12	At or below 20 percent of the state median income	Waived to the extent allowable under federal law;
13		otherwise, a maximum of \$15
14	Above 20 percent and at or below 36 percent of the state	\$65
15	median income	
16	Above 36 percent and at or below 50 percent of the state	\$90
17	median income	
18	Above 50 percent and at or below 60 percent of the state	\$165
19	median income	
20	Above 60 percent and at or below 75 percent of the state	\$215
21	median income	

22 (3) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
23 specific purpose, the department shall adopt a copayment model for
24 households with annual incomes above 75 percent of the state median
25 income and at or below 85 percent of the state median income. The
26 model must calculate a copayment for each household that is no
27 greater than seven percent of the household's countable income within
28 this income range.

29 (4) The department may adjust the copayment schedule to comply
30 with federal law.

31 (5) The department must adopt rules to implement this section.

32 (6) This section does not apply to households eligible for the
33 working connections child care program under RCW 43.216.808,
34 43.216.812, ~~((and))~~ 43.216.814, and section 1 of this act.

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