
HOUSE BILL 1303

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Representatives Shewmake, Eslick, Pollet, Griffey, Riccelli, and Senn

Read first time 01/18/19. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Early Learning.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving access and completion for students
2 at institutions of higher education, especially at community and
3 technical colleges, by removing restrictions on subsidized child
4 care; amending RCW 43.216.135; and creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes the
7 following:

8 (a) In Washington, over forty-six thousand community and
9 technical college (CTC) students, which represents twenty-three
10 percent of all CTC students in the state, are parents of dependent
11 children. Student parents represent more than one-quarter of CTC
12 students in Washington who receive financial aid. Financial
13 assistance however, does not sufficiently cover many student parents'
14 college expenses.

15 (b) Caregiving demands affect student parents' ability to devote
16 the time needed to succeed in school. Nearly three-quarters of women
17 community college students living with dependents report spending
18 over twenty hours per week caring for dependents. Many of these
19 students report that care demands are likely to lead them to drop
20 out: Forty-three percent of women and thirty-seven percent of men at

1 two-year institutions who live with children say they are likely or
2 very likely to withdraw from college to care for dependents.

3 (c) In addition, child care costs represent a large financial
4 burden for parents who are in college. The annual cost of full-time,
5 center-based infant care averages over thirteen thousand dollars in
6 Washington. Given the financial pressures experienced by student
7 parents, both married and single, assistance with paying for quality
8 child care services could dramatically improve their ability to make
9 ends meet and complete their higher education programs.

10 (d) Work requirements imposed on student parents as a condition
11 for receiving child care assistance can have negative consequences
12 for parents in education or job training. Students working more than
13 fifteen hours per week achieve significantly lower college attainment
14 compared with those who work fewer hours. Nationally, fifty-eight
15 percent of community college student parents who work fifteen or more
16 hours per week leave school without earning a credential within six
17 years of enrollment, compared with forty-eight percent who work less
18 than fifteen hours per week.

19 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to improve access and
20 completion rates of student parents enrolled in community and
21 technical colleges by reducing existing restrictions to subsidized
22 child care.

23 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.216.135 and 2018 c 52 s 6 are each amended to
24 read as follows:

25 (1) The department shall establish and implement policies in the
26 working connections child care program to promote stability and
27 quality of care for children from low-income households. These
28 policies shall focus on supporting school readiness for young
29 learners. Policies for the expenditure of funds constituting the
30 working connections child care program must be consistent with the
31 outcome measures established by the department and the standards
32 established in this section intended to promote stability, quality,
33 and continuity of early care and education programming.

34 (2) As recommended by Public Law 113-186, authorizations for the
35 working connections child care subsidy shall be effective for twelve
36 months beginning July 1, 2016, unless an earlier date is provided in
37 the omnibus appropriations act.

1 (3) Existing child care providers serving nonschool-age children
2 and receiving state subsidy payments must complete the following
3 requirements to be eligible for a state subsidy under this section:

4 (a) Enroll in the early achievers program by August 1, 2016;

5 (b) Complete level 2 activities in the early achievers program by
6 August 1, 2017; and

7 (c) Rate at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program by
8 December 31, 2019. If a child care provider rates below a level 3 by
9 December 31, 2019, the provider must complete remedial activities
10 with the department, and rate at a level 3 or higher no later than
11 June 30, 2020.

12 (4) Effective July 1, 2016, a new child care provider serving
13 nonschool-age children and receiving state subsidy payments must
14 complete the following activities to be eligible to receive a state
15 subsidy under this section:

16 (a) Enroll in the early achievers program within thirty days of
17 receiving the initial state subsidy payment;

18 (b) Complete level 2 activities in the early achievers program
19 within twelve months of enrollment; and

20 (c) Rate at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program
21 within thirty months of enrollment. If a child care provider rates
22 below a level 3 within thirty months from enrollment into the early
23 achievers program, the provider must complete remedial activities
24 with the department, and rate at a level 3 or higher within six
25 months of beginning remedial activities.

26 (5) If a child care provider does not rate at a level 3 or higher
27 following the remedial period, the provider is no longer eligible to
28 receive state subsidy under this section.

29 (6) If a child care provider serving nonschool-age children and
30 receiving state subsidy payments has successfully completed all level
31 2 activities and is waiting to be rated by the deadline provided in
32 this section, the provider may continue to receive a state subsidy
33 pending the successful completion of the level 3 rating activity.

34 (7) The department shall implement tiered reimbursement for early
35 achievers program participants in the working connections child care
36 program rating at level 3, 4, or 5.

37 (8) The department shall account for a child care copayment
38 collected by the provider from the family for each contracted slot
39 and establish the copayment fee by rule.

1 (9) (a) The department shall establish and implement policies in
2 the working connections child care program to allow eligibility for
3 families with children who:

4 (i) In the last six months have:

5 (A) Received child protective services as defined and used by
6 chapters 26.44 and 74.13 RCW;

7 (B) Received child welfare services as defined and used by
8 chapter 74.13 RCW; or

9 (C) Received services through a family assessment response as
10 defined and used by chapter 26.44 RCW;

11 (ii) Have been referred for child care as part of the family's
12 case management as defined by RCW 74.13.020; and

13 (iii) Are residing with a biological parent or guardian.

14 (b) Children who are eligible for working connections child care
15 pursuant to this subsection do not have to keep receiving services
16 identified in this subsection to maintain twelve-month authorization.
17 The department of social and health services' involvement with the
18 family referred for working connections child care ends when the
19 family's child protective services, child welfare services, or family
20 assessment response case is closed.

21 (10) (a) By January 1, 2020, the department shall, in consultation
22 with the state board for community and technical colleges and the
23 student achievement council, revise any rules that require applicants
24 or consumers who are full-time community or technical college
25 students and who are not WorkFirst participants to work at least an
26 average of twenty or more hours per week, or at least an average of
27 sixteen hours or more per week in a federal or state work-study
28 program, as a condition of receiving working connections child care
29 program benefits. The rules applicable to full-time students enrolled
30 in community or technical or tribal colleges must be revised to
31 eliminate the work requirement as a condition of receiving working
32 connections child care program benefits. An applicant or consumer is
33 participating in a higher education program full-time if he or she
34 meets the educational institution's definition of full-time student.

35 (b) Nothing in this subsection is intended to change how
36 applicants or consumers are prioritized when applicants or consumers
37 are placed on a waitlist for working connections child care program
38 benefits.

1 (c) If feasible, community and technical colleges shall work to
2 meet the demands, if any, created by this subsection. However,
3 nothing in this subsection creates an entitlement.

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