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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6538**

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**State of Washington**

**63rd Legislature**

**2014 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rivers, Cleveland, Brown, Litzow, Billig, and McAuliffe)

READ FIRST TIME 02/11/14.

1       AN ACT Relating to connecting children involved in the child  
2 welfare system to quality early care and education programming;  
3 amending RCW 43.215.405; and adding a new section to chapter 26.44 RCW.

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

5       NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 26.44 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7       (1) The family assessment response worker shall assess for child  
8 safety and child well-being when collaborating with a family to  
9 determine the need for child care, preschool, or home visiting  
10 services.

11       (2) Effective July 1, 2015, the family assessment response worker  
12 may only refer children to preschool programs that are enrolled in the  
13 early achievers program and rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 unless one of  
14 the following conditions applies:

15       (a) The family lives in an area with no local preschool programs  
16 that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 in the early achievers program;

17       (b) The local preschool programs that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 in  
18 the early achievers program are not able to meet the needs of the  
19 child; or

1 (c) The child is attending a preschool program prior to the family  
2 assessment response case and the parent or caregiver does not want the  
3 child to change preschool programs.

4 (3) Effective July 1, 2019, the family assessment response worker  
5 shall only make child care referrals for nonschool-aged children to  
6 licensed child care programs that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5 in the  
7 early achievers program described in RCW 43.215.100 unless one of the  
8 following conditions applies:

9 (a) The family lives in an area with no local programs that rate at  
10 level 3, 4, or 5 in the early achievers program;

11 (b) The local child care programs that rate at a level 3, 4, or 5  
12 in the early achievers program are not able to meet the needs of the  
13 child; or

14 (c) The child is attending a child care program prior to the family  
15 assessment response case and the parent or caregiver does not want the  
16 child to change child care programs.

17 (4) The family assessment response worker shall make every effort  
18 to provide referrals to high quality child care and early learning  
19 programs.

20 (5) The family assessment response worker shall make every effort  
21 to provide referrals to state and federally subsidized programs such  
22 as, but not limited to, licensed child care programs that receive state  
23 subsidy pursuant to RCW 43.215.135; early childhood education and  
24 assistance programs; head start programs; and early head start  
25 programs.

26 (6)(a) At least fifteen days prior to closing the family assessment  
27 response case, the family assessment worker shall meet with the child's  
28 parent or caregiver to discuss child care and early learning services.  
29 If the family plans to use child care or early learning services, the  
30 family assessment worker shall work with the family to facilitate  
31 successful enrollment.

32 (b) The family assessment worker shall document if the family  
33 elects to use child care and early learning services.

34 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.215.405 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 16 s 4 are each  
35 amended to read as follows:

36 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in

1 this section apply throughout RCW 43.215.400 through ((43.215.450,  
2 43.215.455, 43.215.456,)) 43.215.457((7)) and 43.215.900 through  
3 43.215.903.

4 (1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW  
5 43.215.420.

6 (2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and  
7 special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as  
8 meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to qualify  
9 under RCW 43.215.400 through 43.215.450 and 43.215.900 through  
10 43.215.903 and are designated as eligible for funding by the department  
11 under RCW 43.215.430 and 43.215.440.

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

15 (4) "Department" means the department of early learning.

16 (5)(a) "Eligible child" means a child not eligible for kindergarten  
17 whose family income is at or below one hundred ten percent of the  
18 federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal department  
19 of health and human services, and includes a child whose family is  
20 eligible for public assistance, and who is not a participant in a  
21 federal or state program providing comprehensive services; a child  
22 eligible for special education due to disability under RCW 28A.155.020;  
23 and may include children who are eligible under rules adopted by the  
24 department if the number of such children equals not more than ten  
25 percent of the total enrollment in the early childhood program.  
26 Priority for enrollment shall be given to children from families with  
27 the lowest income, children in foster care, or to eligible children  
28 from families with multiple needs.

29 (b) Subject to the availability of appropriations specifically for  
30 this purpose, the department may include as an eligible child, a child  
31 who is not otherwise receiving services under (a) of this subsection,  
32 but is receiving child protective services under RCW 26.44.020(3), or  
33 family assessment response services under RCW 26.44.260. If included  
34 as an eligible child, these children shall receive priority services  
35 under (a) of this subsection.

36 (6) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for  
37 parents to:

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

- 1           (b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting
- 2 skills;
- 3           (c) Further their education and training;
- 4           (d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the community;
- 5           (e) Increase their self-reliance.

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