

Weekly Legislative Update: **Early Care and Education**

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Bills Needing Action This Week

Remember, only authorized members can speak for the League; the Issue Chairs will do that, so please leave the "Organization" box blank. A more powerful influence is many voices speaking for themselves rather than many voices speaking for the League.

The bill listed below has a public hearing this week. We encourage you (as an individual) to sign in PRO on this bill at least one hour prior to the scheduled hearing.

SB 5774 Increasing the capacity to conduct timely fingerprint-based background checks for prospective child care employees and other programs. To increase timeliness in processing background checks, this bill requires the department to maintain the capacity to roll, print or scan fingerprints in its early learning and child welfare offices for purposes of State Patrol and FBI background checks (subject to the availability of appropriations for this specific purpose).

*Executive action taken in Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 17; **scheduled for public hearing in Senate Ways & Means on Jan. 29 at 4:00 pm.***

⚠ Sign in PRO here by Monday, January 29 at 3:00 PM.

Additional Bills We Support

HB 1716 Supporting employers providing child care assistance to employees by establishing a business and occupation tax credit for business and requiring the department of revenue to provide a report to the legislature addressing costs as well as an implementation plan. A business would be allowed a credit against the B&O tax equal to all costs related to providing child care assistance to employees. *Public hearing held in House Finance on Jan. 23 at 8:00 am.*

HB 1916 Concerning funding for the early support for the infants and toddlers program. Child is counted as receiving early intervention services if services are provided within the month. *Executive action taken in the House Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning on Jan. 12. Referred to Appropriations Committee on Jan. 17.*

HB 1945 Streamlining and enhancing program access for persons eligible for food assistance.

Those eligible for or receiving basic food benefits also meet the income eligibility requirements for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and are categorically eligible for ECEAP (state pre-K). *Public hearing held on Jan. 9 in House Human Services, Youth and Early Learning. Executive action taken on Jan. 26.*

HB 1991 Relating to paid sick leave. Companion to SB 5793. *Executive action taken in House Labor & Workplace Standard on Fri. Jan. 26.*

HB 2101 Eliminating child care licensing fees. The Secretary, Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) may not charge fees to licensees for obtaining a child care license. *Executive action taken in House Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning on Jan. 12. Referred to Appropriations Committee on Jan. 17.*

HB 2111 Clarifying requirements for subsidized child care. Companion to SB 5941. *Executive action taken in House Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning on Jan. 12. Referred for Rules 2 Review on Jan. 17. Rules Committee relieved of further consideration; placed on second reading Jan. 23.*

HB 2124 Supporting and expanding access to child care and early learning programs.

Participation in ECEAP, Birth-to-Three ECEAP, Head Start or Early Head Start is an approved activity when determining eligibility for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) benefits. Rates paid for WCCC must be adjusted every two years according to inflationary increase. *Executive action taken in House Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning Jan. 12. Referred to Appropriations Committee on Jan. 17.*

HB 2195 Strengthening the early learning facilities grant and loan program by revising criteria and providing resources to the early learning facilities development account. *Public hearing in House Capital Budget Thurs., Jan. 18.*

SB 5793 Relating to paid sick leave. Companion to HB 1991. Expands paid sick leave to include health-related workplace closures and school and child care closures due to health-related, weather or public emergency reasons. *Executive session in Senate Labor & Commerce on Jan. 22 at 10:30 am. Passed to Rules for 2nd reading on Jan. 24.*

SB 5870 Expanding and streamlining eligibility for early learning programs including Working Connections Child Care (WCCC), the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and Birth to Three ECEAP. *Public hearing held in Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 18.*

SB 5933 Concerning funding for the early support for infants and toddlers program. Companion to HB 1916. *Public hearing held in Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 18.*

SB 5941 Clarifying requirements for subsidized child care. Companion HB 2111. Clean-up of statute to reflect changes made in recent years. *Public hearing held in Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 18. Executive action taken on Jan. 25.*

SB 6018 Early learning coordinators at ESDs. Each Educational Service District (ESD) must designate an early learning coordinator to support increased collaboration, recruitment, enrollment, and service delivery across Washington's pre-k through third grade continuum. *Executive action taken in Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 25. Passed to Rules for second reading on Jan. 26.*

SB 6038 Reducing costs associated with providing child care. Eliminates child care licensing fees and includes a tax performance statement to extend the B&O tax exemption to include income from the care and education of children up to age 12. *Public hearing held in Senate Ways & Means on Jan. 25 at 4:00 pm.*

Bills We Are Watching

Many of these bills have not been scheduled for hearing. If scheduled, they may move into the support or oppose category.

HB 1451 Relating to expanding the child care workforce. OSPI to establish a child care worker pilot program. DCYF must contract for the development of a model program manual to assist youth who routinely care for younger relatives; provide recommendations to expand the substitute pool for providers; and contract to expand the child care workforce and establish new affordable high quality child care and early learning programs.

HB 1537 Relating to licensing requirements for child care centers and indoor early learning programs. Proposes increased group sizes for preschool and school-age classrooms and reduces square feet per child from 35 to 34.

HB 1697 Making the early achievers quality rating and improvement system voluntary.

HB 1739 Relating to instruction for child care providers. The department must create an instructional handbook for providers. Providers are exempt from obtaining an early childhood education certificate if they have read the handbook and submitted a signed attestation that they have read it (or if their center attests that the provider has read the handbook and implemented the instructional material).

HB 2046 Establishing alternative requirements for child care providers in under-resourced areas. Defines child care deserts, and directs DCYF to annually publish list of rural counties that are child care deserts, allowing increased group sizes for preschool and school-age classrooms and reduced square feet per child. In child care deserts, DCYF must provide 24 hours' notice prior to entering an agency's facility for purposes of inspection. *Public hearing scheduled in House Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning on Jan. 30 at 1:30 pm.*

HB 2092 Concerning school construction assistance program funding for preschool and before- and after-school programs. Changes formula to account for services to preschool-age students as well as students in before-and-after school care. *Public hearing held in House Committee on Capital Budget on Jan. 18.*

HB 2179 Local licensing and regulation of child care programs. Provides that counties with populations of less than 100,000 may adopt and maintain ordinances for the licensing and regulation of child care centers and family home providers. *Public hearing scheduled in House Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning on Jan. 30 at 1:30 pm.*

HB 2243 Creating the children's social equity land trust to deliver revenue for child care programs, with priority given to funding rural areas that lack sufficient child care (child care deserts). Requested by the Dept. of Natural Resources. *Public hearing held in House Agriculture & Natural Resources on Jan. 19. Scheduled for Executive Session Jan. 31 at 8:00 am.*

HB 2264 Excluding certain family home-based child care providers from the list of agencies subject to licensure and regulation by DCYF. Exempts from licensing providers who regularly provide child care services in the provider's home in family living quarters for not more than three children at any given time.

HB 2300 Relating to child care provider qualifications. Establishes work equivalency as an alternative to certification requirements for all child care positions and requires DCYF to implement a noncredit-bearing, community-based pathway for providers to meet professional education requirements associated with licensing.

HB 2322 Creating a tax preference child care requirement; intends to encourage employers to assist employees with child care costs. *Scheduled for public hearing in House Committee on Finance on Jan. 23 at 8:00 am. Scheduled for executive session Feb. 1 at 8:00 am.*

HB 2468 Relating to siting of child care facilities. Requires cities and counties to allow child care facilities to be sited near elementary schools. *Public hearing scheduled in House Local Government on Jan. 30 at 10:30 am. Scheduled for executive session on Jan. 31 at 8:00 am.*

SB 6171 Relating to studying child care for criminal justice personnel. DCYF to conduct a feasibility study and cost estimates for providing child care for the children of peace officers and criminal justice personnel during shift work and abnormal work hours that precludes them from using community child care services. *Public hearing scheduled in Senate Human Services on Jan. 29 at 10:30 am. Scheduled for executive session on Jan. 30 at 10:30 am.*

Bills We Oppose

Bills we are watching may move into this category if they are scheduled for public hearing.

How You Can Be Involved

- If you are interested in a particular bill, use the links above to go to the webpage for that bill. These pages include staff summaries and reports including who testified PRO versus CON on the bill. There is also information about how to access videos of hearings that have been held.
- Read and take action through the [LWVWA Legislative Action Newsletter](#), distributed each Sunday during the legislative session.
- You may also express your opinion on legislation with the LWVWA issue chairs. We will take your perspectives under consideration as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Please direct questions or comments to [Karen Tvedt](#), Early Care and Education Issue Chair.