

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

Issue Team Chair: Karen Tvedt

Contact: ktvedt@lwwa.org

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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 bills listed below have public hearings this week. We encourage you (as an individual) to sign-in PRO on these bills at least one hour prior to the scheduled hearing.

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. 16 at 10:30 am.**

 **Sign in PRO here.**

HB 1991 Relating to paid sick leave. Companion to SB 5793. Public hearing in the House Labor & Workplace Standards Committee **at 8:00 am on Wed., Jan. 17.**

 **Sign in PRO here.**

HB 2195 Strengthening the early learning facilities grant and loan program by revising criteria and providing resources to the early learning facilities development account. House Committee on Capital Budget **at 1:30 pm on Thurs., Jan. 18.**

 **Sign in PRO here.**

The following bills will be heard in Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on Thurs., Jan. 18 at 1:30 pm:

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.

 [Sign in PRO here.](#)

SB 5933 Concerning funding for the early support for infants and toddlers program. Companion to HB 1916.

 [Sign in PRO here.](#)

SB 5941 Clarifying requirements for subsidized child care. Companion HB 2111. Clean-up of statute to reflect changes made in recent years.

 [Sign in PRO here.](#)

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. Public Hearing in Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on Thurs., Jan. 18 at 1:30 pm.

 [Sign in PRO here.](#)

Additional Bills We Support

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.*

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 WCCC and are categorically eligible for ECEAP. *Public Hearing held on Jan. 9 in House Human Services, Youth and Early Learning.*

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 the House Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning on Jan.12.*

HB 2111 Clarifying requirements for subsidized child care. Companion to SB 5941. *Executive action taken in the House Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning on Jan. 12.*

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 the House Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning on Jan. 12.

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). *Public Hearing held in Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 11.*

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.

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 in House Committee on Capital Budget at 1:30 pm on Thurs., 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.

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. Scheduled for Public Hearing in House Agriculture & Natural Resources **on Jan. 19 at 10:30 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.

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.

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.

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.