

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

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This week we began to see bills and action on bills to increase access to quality early care and education consistent with the 2021 Fair Start for Kids Act (ESSS Bill 5237). HB 1199 passed out of the House Housing Committee with a do pass recommendation. This bill would prevent unreasonable restrictions on licensed child care in common interest communities such as condos. SB 5225 and SB 5423 to increase child care assistance for families and SB 5316 to eliminate background check and licensing fees are set for hearing in the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Committee on [January 25 at 1:30 pm](#). Watch for hearings to be set on other early care and education bills described below.

A Senate Early Learning and K-12 Committee work session on January 18 included updates from the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), reports from the Washington Child Care Collaborative Task Force and the Campaign to Address Child Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention. Presentations from that session are available [here](#).

Bills We Support

SB 5225 Increase access to the Working Connections Child Care Program (WCCC). Proposes to expand eligibility for WCCC assistance to include a parent or guardian participating in a specialty court or therapeutic court and prevents the state from considered immigration status when determining eligibility for WCCC for full-time students enrolled in higher education.

SB 5316 Background check and licensing fees for programs administered by DCYF. Proposes reducing barriers by waiving background check fees and increasing the period of background checks from three to five years. Continues a provision prohibiting licensing fees.

SB 5423 Eligibility for Working Connections Child Care. Provides eligibility for WCCC for the first 12 months of enrollment in a state registered apprenticeship program.

HB 1199 Licensed childcare in common interest communities. Prohibits an association of unit owners in a common interest community, e.g., condominiums or plat communities, from prohibiting, unreasonably restricting or limiting the use of a unit as a licensed family home child care or center.

HB 1451 Expand the childcare workforce. Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a child care worker pilot program for students. DCYF must develop and publish a model program manual for a program to assist middle and high school-age youth who

routinely care for younger relatives, continue expanding a substitute pool for child care and early learning providers, and provide grants to organizations supporting child care workers and providers.

HB 1511 Calculation of income for certain early learning and child care programs. Provides that for purposes of determining eligibility and copayments for certain programs, e.g., Working Connections Child Care and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, income does not include payments received through child support, social security benefits, or supplemental security income.

How You Can Be Involved

- Using the links provided, weigh-in as an individual on bills supported by the LWVWA. This includes SB 5225 and SB 5316 which are set for committee hearing on January 25 (see links above).
- [Read updates](#) about state early care and education programs as well as recommendations about child care workforce recruitment and retention and the cost of quality care that were presented during the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Committee work session on January 18.
- Contact Karen Tvedt, ktvedt@lwvwa.org if you have questions.