

DRAFT: Child Care Workforce Development Stakeholder Group

INTENT

- The Legislature finds that wages for child care workers have been at or near minimum wage for decades, despite efforts to increase standards, credentialing, and direct supports.
 - The median hourly wage for a child care worker in 2015 was \$9.77. Kindergarten teachers made \$24.83, and the average of all occupations was \$17.40.
 - Child care workers were in the 2nd percentile of occupations ranked by annual earnings in 2015.
 - 46% of child care workers participated in public assistance programs between 2009 and 2013. 26% of all workers, regardless of occupation, participated in public assistance programs during that time.
- The Legislature finds that abysmal wages undermines the child care industry's ability to recruit qualified teachers and provide quality care for children and families.
 - Low wages result in a 40% turnover rate in child care throughout the state. That level of turnover disrupts a program's ability to improve quality, and undermines continuity of care for young children, a key component of early childhood development.
 - Bachelor degrees in early childhood education provide the lowest projected lifetime earnings of any major.
 - WA State was the only state in the NW and on the West Coast who experienced a decrease in preschool median wages between 2010 and 2015.
 - WA State is one of the 10 least affordable states for child care in the country. Currently a year of child care costs young families more out of pocket than a year of tuition at state universities. The cost of care for one infant in a child care center accounts for over 50% of the state median income for single mothers. Young families in WA State are already paying more than they can afford on child care.
- The Legislature finds that early learning is a critical part of every child's education, and the quality of that early education impacts long term performance.
 - 95% of a person's brain develops by the age of 5. 85% of a person's brain develops by age 3.
 - Children that benefit from HIGH QUALITY early childhood education will earn on average 33% more than those who did not, are 29% more likely to graduate, 50% less likely to require special education, 50% less likely to be teen parents, and 70% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime before the age of 18.
 - Public investments in high quality early learning yield a 7-10% return per year.

THE ACT

- The Legislature requires the Department of Early Learning to convene and staff a work group of stakeholders that will be tasked with developing recommendations for the Legislature and the early childhood education field that will address the issues of poverty wages, high turnover, and the loss of highly qualified members of the early learning workforce. These recommendations should indicate how to improve the stability of the early learning workforce in order to sustain and expand access to high-quality care throughout the state.
- While the work group will be staffed by DEL, co-chairs will be elected from the group.

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- The report will be written by the members of the work group, with staffed support from DEL. Membership should include:
 - ECEAP
 - Military child care provider
 - Family child care provider
 - For-profit child care center
 - Private schools
 - Child Care Aware of WA
 - Economic Opportunity Institute
 - DEL
 - Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
 - Economic Development Councils
 - State university ECE degree
 - Small business expertise
 - Economics expertise
 - Head Start
 - Tribal child care provider
 - Non-profit child care center
 - Child care classroom teacher
 - K-12
 - SEIU
 - Thrive WA
 - OSPI
 - Workforce Development Councils
 - ELAA
 - State Board for Community & Technical Colleges
 - Parents/MomsRising
 - Labor & Industries
- Policy recommendations should address, but not be limited to, the Career and Wage Ladder, tax breaks/incentives, facility acquisition, streamlined regulations, public reimbursement rates, private rates, and public investment.
- The work group must address how these recommendations would work alongside state licensing, Early Achievers, and ECEAP.
- Recommendations must address maintaining and increasing racial/ethnic equity and diversity in the workforce, and address cultural competency and multilingualism as forms of qualification.
- The work group will meet monthly.
- DEL, in partnership with stakeholders, must conduct regional outreach as part of this effort in order to solicit feedback from providers and families in various communities. This outreach must include focus groups with providers.
- An interim progress report must be submitted to the Legislature by December 1, 2017.
- The final report, with recommendations, must be submitted to the Legislature and public by June 31, 2018. This report must be structured as a plan.