

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 1525

---

---

### As Passed Legislature

**Title:** An act relating to eligibility for working connections child care benefits for persons participating in state registered apprenticeships.

**Brief Description:** Concerning eligibility for working connections child care benefits for persons participating in state registered apprenticeships.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Fosse, Lekanoff, Farivar, Shavers, Thai, Taylor, Hansen, Alvarado, Senn, Hackney, Wylie, Duerr, Leavitt, Berg, Stearns, Peterson, Macri, Berry, Cortes, Low, Schmidt, Stonier, Kloba, Robertson, Gregerson, Riccelli, Doglio, Waters, Cheney, Orwall, Connors, Ybarra, Bronoske, Dent, Morgan, Ramel, Donaghy, Goodman, Ryu, Fey, Reed, Davis, Timmons, Street, Simmons, Fitzgibbon, Christian, Santos, Rule, Abbarno, Sandlin, Chopp, Bateman, Rude, Eslick, Ormsby, Reeves, Barkis, Graham, Pollet, Ortiz-Self, Callan and Bergquist).

### Brief History:

#### Committee Activity:

Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning: 1/31/23, 2/7/23 [DPS];  
Appropriations: 2/22/23, 2/24/23 [DP2S(w/o sub HSEL)].

#### Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/1/23, 96-0.  
Senate Amended.  
Passed Senate: 4/8/23, 36-12.  
House Concurred.  
Passed House: 4/17/23, 96-0.  
Passed Legislature.

### Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Waives the work requirements for the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program for those participating in a state-registered apprenticeship regardless of whether or not the apprentice is a full-time

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

student of a community, technical, or tribal college.

- Expands eligibility for WCCC program benefits to apply to persons in the first 12 months of a state registered apprenticeship when certain criteria are met.

---

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, YOUTH, & EARLY LEARNING

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Cortes, Vice Chair; Taylor, Vice Chair; Eslick, Ranking Minority Member; Couture, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Callan, Dent, Goodman, Ortiz-Self, Rule and Walsh.

**Staff:** Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

---

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass and do not pass the substitute bill by Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Chandler, Chopp, Connors, Couture, Davis, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Harris, Lekanoff, Pollet, Riccelli, Rude, Ryu, Sandlin, Schmick, Senn, Simmons, Slatter, Springer, Steele, Stonier and Tharinger.

**Staff:** Jordan Clarke (786-7123).

### **Background:**

#### Working Connections Child Care.

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) is a federally and state-funded program administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) that provides subsidies for child care while a parent is working or participating in approved work-related activities. The WCCC program is available to families with incomes at or below 60 percent of the state median income (SMI), adjusted for family size, and when the household meets other eligibility requirements. Beginning July 1, 2025, a family is eligible for WCCC program benefits when the household's annual income is above 60 percent and at or below 75 percent of the SMI, adjusted for family size, and beginning July 1, 2027, if funds are appropriated, when the household's annual income is up to 85 percent of the SMI, adjusted for family size.

Depending on income, families may be required to pay a monthly copayment to their provider. Copayments are currently calculated as follows:

Household income:	Maximum copayment:
At or below 20 percent of the SMI	Waived to the extent allowable under federal law; otherwise, a maximum of \$15
Above 20 percent and at or below 36 percent of the SMI	\$65
Above 36 percent and at or below 50 percent of SMI	\$90
Above 50 percent and at or below 60 percent of SMI	\$115 (\$165 beginning July 1, 2023)

Beginning July 1, 2025, the DCYF must calculate a maximum monthly copayment of \$215 for households with incomes above 60 percent and at or below 75 percent of the SMI. Subject to appropriations, the DCYF must adopt a copayment model for households with annual incomes above 75 percent of the SMI and at or below 85 percent of the SMI. The model must calculate a copayment for each household that is no greater than 7 percent of the household's countable income within this income range.

The DCYF may not require an applicant or consumer to meet work requirements as a condition of receiving the WCCC program benefits when the recipient is a full-time student of a community, technical, or tribal college; and enrolled in a vocational education program that leads to a degree or certificate in a specific occupation, an associate degree program, or a registered apprenticeship program. Subject to appropriations, the DCYF may waive work requirements for full-time students who are enrolled in a bachelor's degree or applied baccalaureate degree program.

Registered Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship programs enable individuals to learn trades and occupations through on-the-job training and related supplemental instruction. Apprentices earn wages while learning their trade or occupation. Journey-level craft persons or trade professionals generally supervise on-the-job training. Employer- or union-sponsored schools or community or technical colleges offer the technical instruction.

Upon completing an apprenticeship program, apprentices receive completion certificates issued by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council, which is the entity that establishes standards and registers apprenticeship programs.

**Summary of Second Substitute Bill:**

The work requirements for the WCCC program are waived for those participating in a state-registered apprenticeship regardless of whether or not the apprentice is a full-time student of a community, technical, or tribal college.

A person is eligible to receive WCCC program benefits for the first 12 months of the person's enrollment in a state registered apprenticeship when:

- the person has a household income that does not exceed 75 percent of the SMI at the time of application, or, beginning July 1, 2027, does not exceed 85 percent of the SMI at the time of application if funds are appropriated to increase the generally applicable income eligibility threshold for the WCCC program to 85 percent of the SMI;
- the child receiving care is less than 13 years old, or is less than 19 years old and has a verified special need or is under court supervision; and
- the household meets all other program eligibility requirements.

The DCYF must adopt a copayment model for benefits granted to apprentices that aligns with the copayments identified or adopted for other households at the same income levels.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning):**

(In support) The lack of affordable child care affects many families, especially those trying to build their lives through apprenticeships. Child care is a barrier to recruiting and retaining apprentices. Pay is inconsistent throughout apprenticeship programs and can jeopardize assistance eligibility and lead to economic insecurity. The unaffordability of daycare hinders many from completing apprenticeships, as they include mandatory unpaid trainings. This bill would make it possible for a trained family member to care for an apprentice's child and gain an income, or for children to be in safe and licensed care. Having children in safe and stable care will allow their parents to focus on their own safety when bridges and high rises are being built. It will also aid the effort to diversify those participating in the construction trades. More women are now participating in the trades. The state supports other people in postsecondary education on their way to a career, but apprentices are not supported the same way. Apprenticeship is a faster path to economic stability, so it makes sense to support this policy.

(Opposed) None.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Appropriations):**

(In support) Washington already provides access to child care subsidies for vocational training for students in college, but the state is penalizing apprentices for choosing a vocational program that includes paid training. This is a training pathway that gets students

to economic self-sufficiency quicker than other pathways. Students at vocational colleges could be using childcare subsidies for two years, but this bill only requires the state to support apprentices with children for a single year. This bill would increase an apprentice's ability to be successful in their training program and reduce the number of apprentices that exit programs due to financial burden, many of whom end up on other public assistance programs. These costs can be avoided with the passage of this bill.

Access to child care is one of the most critical barriers to developing the workforce needed to meet the state's clean energy, transportation, and other infrastructure goals. Building trades apprenticeship programs are funded by employers and workers, so unlike other vocational training in the state, this training is privately funded. We are asking the state to help increase equitable access and retention for apprentices with children for the first year of an apprenticeship. Apprentices are postsecondary students who are not using state resources like tuition assistance, so relative to the investments in other postsecondary areas, helping apprentices access child care is a small cost to the state.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying (Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning):** Representative Mary Fosse, prime sponsor; Tara Davis, Heather Kurtenbach, and Michael Swanson, Iron Workers Local Union 86; Maya Gillett; and Erin Frasier, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council.

**Persons Testifying (Appropriations):** Heather Kurtenbach, Ironworkers Local 86; and Erin Frasier, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning):** None.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Appropriations):** None.