

**RCW 43.216.1364 Working connections child care program—**

**Eligibility—Employees of licensed child care center or family home provider.**

(1) Beginning October 1, 2023, a family is eligible for working connections child care when the household's annual income is at or below 85 percent of the state median income adjusted for family size and:

(a) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age; or (ii) less than 19 years of age and has a verified special need according to department rule or is under court supervision;

(b) The applicant or consumer is employed in a licensed child care center or family home provider, as verified in the agency's electronic workforce registry; and

(c) The household meets all other program eligibility requirements.

(2) The department must waive the copayment to the extent allowable under federal law; otherwise, a maximum of \$15 for any applicant or consumer that meets the requirements under this section. [2023 c 222 § 2.]

**Findings—Intent—2023 c 222:** "(1) The legislature acknowledges that the working connections child care program provides quality child care for families. The legislature intends to increase access to this program for certain families.

(2) The legislature recognizes that child care providers are struggling to hire and retain child care employees. As stated in RCW 43.216.749, the legislature intends to systemically increase child care subsidy rates over time until rates are equal to the full cost of providing high quality child care to help address these workforce issues. The legislature intends to provide child care employees with access to the working connections child care program as a more immediate benefit while acknowledging that this benefit may not be needed as child care subsidy rates increase.

(3) As stated in RCW 2.30.010, the legislature recognizes that therapeutic courts provide an opportunity for defendants or respondents to obtain treatment services to address particular issues that may have contributed to the conduct that led to their issue before the court. The legislature intends to provide those participating in these courts with access to the working connections child care program to help support their success in these courts and to provide stable and high quality child care for their families.

(4) The legislature acknowledges that the working connections child care program requires children to have a certain immigration status to be eligible. The legislature intends to expand the working connections child care program to provide access to child care for these families." [2023 c 222 § 1.]