

RCW 43.216.136 Working connections child care program—

Eligibility. (1) The department shall establish and implement policies in the working connections child care program to promote stability and quality of care for children from low-income households. These policies shall focus on supporting school readiness for young learners. Policies for the expenditure of funds constituting the working connections child care program must be consistent with the outcome measures established by the department and the standards established in this section intended to promote stability, quality, and continuity of early care and education programming.

(2) As recommended by P.L. 113-186, authorizations for the working connections child care subsidy are effective for twelve months beginning July 1, 2016.

(a) A household's 12-month authorization begins on the date that child care is expected to begin.

(b) If a newly eligible household does not begin care within 12 months of being determined eligible by the department, the household must reapply in order to qualify for subsidy.

(3)(a) The department shall establish and implement policies in the working connections child care program to allow eligibility for families with children who:

(i) In the last six months have:

(A) Received child protective services as defined and used by chapters 26.44 and 74.13 RCW;

(B) Received child welfare services as defined and used by chapter 74.13 RCW; or

(C) Received services through a family assessment response as defined and used by chapter 26.44 RCW;

(ii) Have been referred for child care as part of the family's case management as defined by RCW 74.13.020; and

(iii) Are residing with a biological parent or guardian.

(b) Families who are eligible for working connections child care pursuant to this subsection do not have to keep receiving services identified in this subsection to maintain twelve-month authorization.

(4)(a) Beginning July 1, 2021, and subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department may not require an applicant or consumer to meet work requirements as a condition of receiving working connections child care benefits when the applicant or consumer is a full-time student of a community, technical, or tribal college and is enrolled in:

(i) A vocational education program that leads to a degree or certificate in a specific occupation;

(ii) An associate degree program; or

(iii) A registered apprenticeship program.

(b) An applicant or consumer is a full-time student for the purposes of this subsection if he or she meets the college's definition of a full-time student.

(c) Nothing in this subsection is intended to change how applicants or consumers are prioritized when applicants or consumers are placed on a waitlist for working connections child care benefits.

(d) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department may extend the provisions of this subsection (4) to full-time students who are enrolled in a bachelor's degree program or applied baccalaureate degree program.

(5) (a) The department must extend the homeless grace period, as adopted in department rule as of January 1, 2020, from a four-month grace period to a twelve-month grace period.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "homeless" means being without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as described in the federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a) as it existed on January 1, 2020.

(6) For purposes of this section, "authorization" means a transaction created by the department that allows a child care provider to claim payment for care. The department may adjust an authorization based on a household's eligibility status. [2021 c 199 § 202; 2020 c 279 § 2.]

Effective date—2021 c 199 §§ 201, 202, 301, 309, and 504: See note following RCW 43.216.1368.

Short title—Findings—Intent—Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 199: See notes following RCW 43.216.770.

Effective date—2020 c 279: "This act takes effect July 1, 2020." [2020 c 279 § 4.]