

SUBJECT: Increasing training hours for early childcare workers

COMMITTEE: Human Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Raymond, Rose, Keough, Naishtat, Peña, Price
2 nays — Klick, Spitzer
1 absent — S. King

WITNESSES: For — Christina Triantaphyllis, Collaborative for Children; Kim Kofron, Texas Association for the Education of Young Children; Kay Albrecht;
(*Registered, but did not testify:* Mandi Kimball, Children at Risk; Barbara Frandsen, League of Women Voters of Texas; Alice Bufkin, Texans Care for Children; Melody Chatelle, United Ways of Texas)

Against — None

On — Joan Altobelli, Texas Licensed Child Care Association;
(*Registered, but did not testify:* Paul Morris, Department of Family and Protective Services)

BACKGROUND: Human Resources Code, sec. 42.0421 establishes minimum training standards for employees, directors, and operators of facilities, homes, and agencies that provide early childhood care and certain school-age programs.

These minimum requirements include 24 hours of initial training for an employee who has no previous training or less than two years of employment experience in a child-care facility. Eight of these initial training hours must be completed before the employee is given responsibility for a group of children. In addition, employees must complete 24 hours of annual training, which must include at least six hours in certain areas.

DIGEST: CSHB 2903 would require day-care center employees with no previous

training or less than two years of employment in a regulated child-care facility to complete 48 hours of initial training within the first year of employment. Employees could be responsible for a group of children after 16 hours of training. They would need to complete 32 hours of training within 90 days of employment.

CSHB 2903 would require that the 24 hours of annual training be completed by any employee who had completed the initial training hours. This training would have to include six hours of teacher-child interaction courses, in addition to training in other areas required under current law.

Training could be completed online or in person. Thirty hours of the initial training and 12 hours of the annual training would have to be provided by a person who:

- was a training provider registered with the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System's Texas Trainer Registry;
- was an early childhood development instructor from an accredited public or private secondary school or institution of higher education;
- was a state employee with relevant expertise;
- was a physician, psychologist, licensed professional counselor, social worker, or registered nurse; or
- had at least two years of experience working in child development and (1) had been awarded a Child Development Associate credential or (2) held at least an associate degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related field.

CSHB 2903 no longer would permit individuals who only possess relevant documented knowledge of child care to train employees, directors, or operators of a day-care center, group day-care home, or registered family home.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

SUPPORTERS	CSHB 2903 would help provide young children with a strong educational
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SAY:

and social foundation for future success by modifying the training requirements for day-care employees. Starting at birth, children begin to learn, making their early years critical for brain and social skill development. Proper training of day-care workers is necessary to ensure that they have quality interactions with young children at this critical stage. Children who were taught by inadequately trained day-care instructors show delays in language and social development. Providing quality instructor interaction lays the foundation for academic and social success for school-age children as they enter kindergarten and beyond.

The bill would better prepare employees for the responsibilities associated with the care of young children. Teaching day-care workers best practices for caring for infants and toddlers and for creating safe environments is essential for these workers to learn how to optimize child development while minimizing risks. An increase in training in certain areas could significantly increase child safety. For instance, child-care providers could be trained to identify potential cases of child abuse.

CSHB 2903 also would result in minimal cost to providers. While training would increase, providers would not be significantly burdened with costs. Several non-profits and government agencies, such as the Department of Family and Protective Services, already offer free and low-cost training resources in person and online. Moreover, allowing online training would ensure that more people could participate in training without worrying about transportation or scheduling.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 2903 would provide an unnecessary requirement for increased training of day-care workers that would not necessarily improve student success. While adequate training is important to young child development, more training does not equal high-quality training. To provide adequate training, day-care centers should focus on continuous training, which would equip workers with the necessary skills and knowledge while they were in the classroom.

The additional training required by the bill would increase costs for child-care providers due to the high costs of investing in training and the risk of

turnover. Day-care centers have high turnover rates because of low salaries and job dissatisfaction. In response to this issue, day-care centers prefer to limit the minimum training hours required before allowing an employee in the classroom, which limits centers' initial investment costs. Increasing the required training from eight hours to 16 hours before placing an employee in the classroom would require the center to sink more money into training an employee who might leave before the center could recoup its investment.

NOTES: CSHB 2903 would differ from the bill as filed in that it would require 48 hours of initial training, compared to 60 in the filed bill, and 16 hours of training prior to receiving responsibility of a group of children, compared to 24 hours in the filed bill. For the initial training, the substitute would require that 32 hours be completed in the first 90 days of employment, compared to 36 hours in the filed bill.

The Senate companion bill, SB 886 by Garcia, was referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee on March 4.

The 84th Legislature's enactment of SB 219 by Schwertner, effective April 2, 2015, amended sections of the current Human Resources Code that HB 2903 would further amend, if enacted.