



Early Learning Fellows Legislative Corner

October 2014

The new Early Learning Fellows Legislative Corner is here to keep you up to date on what the Fellows are up to. The Legislative Corner will keep you connected with one another and will draw attention to the work being done by Fellows. In this issue, we highlight two enacted bills sponsored by Fellows in 2014.

NCSL staff is here to highlight any work of the Early Learning Fellows. For example, if you are pre-filing a bill or recently attended a meeting with other stakeholders in your state, please feel free to share with NCSL staff and we will post it to the Legislative Corner.

Nebraska is supporting working families



Senator Tanya Cook, Nebraska sponsored an enacted bill – [Nebraska LB 359](#) – which now requires when the state determines child care eligibility to disregard 10 percent of gross earned income after 12 months of participation in the state's child care subsidy program. The law also disregards certain income from state determination of child care eligibility, including income from educational savings accounts, scholarships or grants related to post-secondary education, and post-secondary work-study programs. The law will help support working families. Other states that have enacted similar child care bills include Colorado and Washington state.

Senator Cook says, "No one should have to choose between affordable, high-quality childcare and advancement at work. LB 359 allows parents to accept the financial rewards of excellence at their jobs, without worrying that the small increase will make childcare suddenly unaffordable."

Washington helps kids in child welfare access high-quality early learning



Tana Senn from Washington proposed a bill that was signed into law that helps young children in the child welfare system access high-quality early learning programs. Washington House 2519 ([Act No. 160](#)) specifies that a child referred by the Family Assessment Response (FAR) program (child welfare services) and needing child care services must be enrolled in the state quality rating and improvement program at level 3 or higher and that meet the development needs of children. The new law also requires the state to authorize continuous, 12-month child care eligibility for families participating in FAR, regardless of changes in family circumstance. The bill also mandates a study on the child care and early learning needs of children in the child welfare system and reporting to the legislature in 2015.

Representative Senn says that the new law makes sense for Washington state. “Investing in quality early learning is just plain smart. It gives all children a strong footing with payoffs throughout their lives and saves money in K-12 education as well,” Rep. Senn explained.