

What You Need to Know about 2SSB 5331

2SSB 5331 creates a statewide standard of practice for Early Childhood Court Programs, putting racial equity, parent voice, relationships, and safe reunification at the forefront of practice and service delivery.



2SSB 5331 Enacted as State Legislation

On May 12, 2021 Governor Inslee signed [2SSB 5331](#) into law. Effective 7/25/21, this bill creates a statewide standard of practice for Early Childhood Court Programs (ECCPs), putting racial equity, parent voice, relationships, and safe reunification at the forefront of practice and service delivery.



What is an Early Childhood Court Program (ECCP)?

An Early Childhood Court Program (ECCP) takes a team approach to addressing child welfare cases involving families with children under the age of three. It is a therapeutic problem-solving court – where legal, societal, and individual problems intersect. **ECCPs across WA are now required to align with research-based core components outlined in 2SSB 5331.** These are known to provide positive outcomes for babies, toddlers, and their families.



Early experiences shape a child's brain development and have life-long impacts on their social, emotional, and physical well-being. 2SSB 5331 is a direct response to the impact of parent-child separation and COVID-19, providing more comprehensive and effective services to support babies and their families.



2SSB 5331 focuses on supporting the connections between babies and their families; ensuring that they access needed services; problem-solving alongside parents; and prioritizing safe reunification as the primary outcome goal.



2SSB 5331 centers racial equity as a core standard for ECCPs, requiring antiracism training, data collection, and reporting to address racial disproportionality and promote more equitable outcomes for families.



Core Components of 2SSB 5331: A Dedicated, Local Community Coordinator

Hiring a dedicated, local Community Coordinator to coordinate and facilitate key ECCP activities is a critical component for ECCPs. Community Coordinators:

- Coordinate and/or facilitate key ECCP activities, such as Family Team Meetings and frequent status review hearings
- Identify and connect families to community-based resources and services
- Build cross-sector collaboration among local community partners
- Identify local training and facilitate the provision of training



Additional Core Components of 2SSB 5331

2SSB 5331 also outlines the following standards for ECCPs:

- Establish more frequent engagement with families intended to provide additional support and problem-solving opportunities, including increased status review hearings and Family Team Meetings
- Work and problem-solve alongside parents in a respectful, strength-based, and compassionate way throughout the case
- Ensure that families receive early, consistent and frequent visitation that is developmentally appropriate for infants and toddlers
- Continuously collect and review the program's data, including data related to race and ethnicity of program participants, to assess equity and improve practice
- Participate in required trainings related to early childhood development, cultural ant bias and antiracism
- Respond to community needs and adopt best practices related to family reunification and serving all families

Interested in Learning More?

To learn more about 2SSB 5331, and how your local community can get involved, contact Michelle Williams at mwilliams@ccyj.org.