



**This Bill Analysis
reflects the contents
of the bill as it was
presented in
committee.**

SENATE BILL 528: Child Care Regulatory Reforms & Flexibilities.

2025-2026 General Assembly

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| Committee: | Senate Health Care. If favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of the Senate | Date: | April 8, 2025 |
| Introduced by: | Sens. Burgin, Galey, Corbin | Prepared by: | Debbie Griffiths |
| Analysis of: | First Edition | | Staff Attorney |

OVERVIEW: Senate Bill 528 would do the following:

- *Permit five years or more of documented work experience teaching in a licensed child care facility in North Carolina to serve as the equivalent to the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential and unsure this work experience is treated the same as if it were earned in other ways when awarding star-ratings.*
- *Increase the group size for infants and toddlers for child care centers meeting certain requirements.*
- *Clarify the mandatory licensing standards regarding out-of-school child care provided at operational elementary and middle public and private schools for school-aged children.*
- *Add the Weikart Youth Program Quality Assessment as an assessment tool for out-of-school child care programs and award of star-ratings.*
- *Allow administrators to have the School-Age Administration Credential when providing school-age child care.*
- *Allow a child care center licensed prior to a state of emergency to be deemed licensed during a state of emergency and would allow the center to expand its capacity to services to more children so long as it maintains the staff to child ratio for licensure.*

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1.1(a) would amend G.S. 110-90(4) to allow staff granted the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential through work experience to be included in considering the education level of staff for determination of the licensure rating.

Section 1.1(b) would amend S.L. 2024-34 to require the Division of Early Childhood Development and Early Education to ensure the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential based on work experience is treated the same as credentials earned through other pathways when awarding star-ratings.

Section 1.2 would amend G.S. 110-91(8) to allow five years of documented work experience teaching in a licensed child care facility in North Carolina to serve as an equivalent to the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential required for lead teachers.

Section 1.3 would amend G.S. 110-91(7)a. to increase maximum group sizes as follows:

- The 0-12 months old group would increase from 10 to 15 children and the 12 to 24 months old group would increase from 12 to 18 children.

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- If a center is operating under voluntary enhanced requirements, the 2-3 years old group may be increased from 18 to 20 children if the center maintains a 1/9 staff-child ratio.
- If a center is operating under the highest voluntary enhanced requirements:
 - 0-12 months old groups may have 12 children if the staff-child ratio is 1/4.
 - 12-24 months old groups may have 15 children if the staff-child ratio is 1/5.
 - 2-3 years old groups may have 20 children if the staff-child ratio is 1/8.

Additionally, for groups of children 1 year of age or older, the staff-child ratio during nap time would be required to comply with rules adopted by the Child Care Commission (the Commission) if the following requirements are met:

- At least one person must remain in the room.
- All children must be visible to that person.
- The total number of required staff are on the premises and within calling distance of the rooms occupied by children.

Section 1.4 would require the Division, in coordination with the Commission, to work to clarify rules governing multiuse child care centers to ensure the following:

- The use of existing buildings to house multiunit child care centers would be allowed and mixed-age centers would be included if they meet requirements outlined in the rules for multiunit child care centers.
- Access is granted to applicants who meet pre-licensing guidelines and are awarded a license by the Division.
- Individual licenses within a multiunit childcare center are granted based on the square footage by each owner.

Section 2.1 would amend G.S. 110-91(6) to allow child-care centers serving school-aged children to operate in elementary and middle public and private schools and those buildings and grounds would be deemed to meet the sanitation, fire, and building code requirements for a licensed child care facility.

Section 2.2 would require the Commission adopt or amend any rules necessary to ensure uniformity and consistency in application of the exemption provided by this section.

Section 2.3 would amend G.S. 110-91(8) to allow an administrator to have the School-Age Administration Credential when providing school-age child care.

Section 2.4 would amend G.S. 110-98.5 to allow a child care facility licensed prior to a state of emergency to be deemed licensed during a state of emergency whether it expands its capacity to provide services to more children as long as it maintains the required staff-child ratio.

Section 2.5 would add the Weikart Youth Program Quality Assessment as an assessment tool for evaluating out-of-school child care programs and awarding star-ratings. The Division would be required to complete the crosswalk evaluation of the Weikart Program and have it available for use no later than six months after this act becomes law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act would become effective when it becomes law.