



Support Family Care Providers: Keep Continuing Education Voluntary

Washington State faces a critical caregiver shortage. Families often struggle to find qualified care providers and to retain them. To address this, legislation was enacted in July 2023 that simplified training for Family Providers—cutting initial training requirements in half and removing mandatory continuing education. The goal was clear: increase the number of available care providers.

Family Providers bring unique strengths. They know their loved one's needs intimately and have a lifetime of experience caring for them. This legislation recognized that expertise and reduced unnecessary barriers.

However, less than six months later, new legislation was introduced to phase back in annual continuing education requirements—despite ongoing requests to keep these requirements voluntary.

Family Providers value access to relevant, practical training as their client's needs evolve. But requiring **12 hours of continuing education annually—the same as licensed Home Care Aides who serve multiple clients—places an undue burden on families already deeply knowledgeable about their loved one's care.**

Further concerns:

- Training must be “directly relevant,” yet many providers report a lack of depth in available courses to meet client-specific needs and would be unable to find 12 relevant credits per year.
- Unnecessary training is costly. It requires paying caregivers for course time, administrative tracking through CDWA, and reporting through SEIU.

Our request:

Provide Family Providers access to up to 12 continuing education credits per year through SEIU's Learning Center—**with no mandatory requirement.**

Mandating training for those who already receive timely guidance directly from their client's medical and support team wastes resources that could be better invested in the developmental disabilities system.

Questions?

De Anna Winterrose, Benton Franklin Parent Coalition, 6winter@msn.com