OVERVIEW

WHAT’S NEW
The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families was awarded a federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five award in 2018 for $5.27 million to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment, in-depth strategic planning, and other key activities to advance the agency’s work to support families and providers caring for Washington’s youngest children.

In 2018, the Washington Department of Early Learning merged into the new Department of Children, Youth and Families which oversees early learning programs along with child protective services and foster care. On July 1, 2019, juvenile rehabilitation services will join the department. Washington continues to expand access to preschool toward the state’s goal of enrolling all eligible children by 2022-2023, while also increasing the funded rate per slot. New performance standards were released in 2018 and additional releases aligned with child care licensing requirements and quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) standards will be released in 2019 and 2020.

Statewide implementation of EMPath’s Mobility Mentoring® as a family engagement approach occurred in 2018-2019 after three years of piloting. This approach uses coaching methods rooted in brain science to improve focus, planning, and decision-making. Participants set and achieve future-oriented goals and increase family well-being and economic mobility despite the immediate challenges of poverty. Pilot data demonstrates statistically significant growth for families.

BACKGROUND
The Washington Department of Children, Youth, and Families has a goal to ensure 90% of children in the state are ready for kindergarten by 2020 with race and income eliminated as predictors of their readiness. The state Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), created in 1985 to prepare 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families for success in school and in life, is a big part of the state’s strategy to accomplish this goal. In recent years, both funding and enrollment for ECEAP have been growing. ECEAP funding comes from the state general fund, the Education Legacy Trust Account funded by estate taxes, and the “opportunity pathways account” financed by lottery proceeds. In 2010, the state Legislature established the ECEAP as a statutory entitlement for all eligible children, not funded by Head Start, by the 2018-2019 school year—a deadline recently extended to 2022-2023.

ECEAP focuses on the whole child and provides comprehensive nutrition, health, education and family support services to Washington’s most at-risk young children. To be eligible for ECEAP, children must be 3- or 4-years-old and live in households with an income at or below 110% of FPL, or have an IEP (regardless of income). Up to 10% of ECEAP enrollment may include children whose families do not meet the poverty requirement but experience other risk factors that could jeopardize learning, development, or school success.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ECEAP)

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ................................................... 12,491
School districts that offer state program .......................... 92% (counties)
Income requirement ........................................................... 110% FPL
Minimum hours of operation ....................................... 2.5 hours/day
Operating schedule ........................................ School year (part- & school-day)
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ................. 9,468
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .... 10,291
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ................. 0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY | WA PRE-K REQUIREMENT | BENCHMARK | REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
--- | --- | --- | ---
Early learning & development standards | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | ☑
Curriculum supports | Approval process & supports | Approval process & supports | ☑
Teacher degree | AA | BA | ☐
Teacher specialized training | ECE, CD, ECE SpEd | Specializing in pre-K | ☑
Assistant teacher degree | CDA, 12 ECE credits, WA State ECE Certificate | CDA or equivalent | ☑
Staff professional development | 15 hours/year (teachers only); Coaching | For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching | ☐
Maximum class size | 20 (3- & 4-year-olds) | 20 or lower | ☑
Staff-child ratio | 1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds) | 1:10 or better | ☑
Screening & referral | Vision, hearing, health & more | Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral | ☑
Continuous quality improvement system | Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement | Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement | ☑

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ........................................ $110,594,841
Local match required? ......................................................... No
State Head Start spending .................................................... $0
State spending per child enrolled ...................................... $8,854
All reported spending per child enrolled* ...................................... $8,854

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

**  Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
***  K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

PRE-K* $8,854
HDST** $12,312
K-12*** $15,911

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