OVERVIEW

WHAT’S NEW
Washington was one of 23 states awarded a three-year PDG B-5 renewal grant for $11.18 million annually designed to implement the strategic plan developed with the 2018 PDG B-5 planning grant. The renewal grant also provides the Washington Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) the opportunity to implement the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) for 144 infants and toddlers and their families in 10 Washington communities.

In 2019-2020, the new ECEAP Performance Standards were released, which increase alignment with child care licensing requirements and QRIS standards. The ECEAP Tribal Pathway was created to support tribes in caring for and providing quality early learning experiences. Transitional Kindergarten was also piloted in select districts for children who are not yet five years old and have not had access to high quality preschool. ECEAP also continued participation in the Partnership for Preschool Improvement initiative. Through this work the ECEAP team set quality strategies, outcomes, metrics and goals. The funding for this work sunsets in June of 2021. Additionally, DCYF continued its efforts to revise systems, policies and practices to eliminate disparities and implement anti-racist practices in ECEAP programming.

In Spring 2020, ECEAP sites were designated essential services and many remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any program that did close physically was required to provide comprehensive services remotely. There was a mix of in-person and remote instruction when the 2020-21 school year began. To learn more about ECEAP during COVID-19, you can find stories here.

BACKGROUND
In 2018, the Washington Department of Early Learning merged into the new DCYF which oversees early learning programs along with child protective services and foster care. DCYF 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 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 ................................................... 14,000
School districts that offer state program ..................... 95% (counties)
Income requirement ........................................................... 110% FPL
Minimum hours of operation .......................................... 3 hours/day
Operating schedule .................................................. School year (part- & school day); Calendar year (working-day)

Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .................. 10,461
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ...... 10,841
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 | 20 hours/year (teachers); 15 hours/year (assistants); 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 ................................................... $132,197,514
Local match required? ................................................... No
State Head Start spending ................................................... $0
State spending per child enrolled ............................................. $9,443
All reported spending per child enrolled* ......................... $9,443

For Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

HEAD START SPENDING

State contributions | Federal contributions | Local contributions | TANF spending

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

Data are for the 2019-2020 school year, unless otherwise noted.