OVERVIEW

During the 2020-2021 school year, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, Washington’s Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) enrolled 14,649 children in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), an increase of 649 children from the prior year. State funding for ECEAP totaled $141,535,000, up $6,854,861 (5%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child on ECEAP equaled $9,662 in 2020-2021, up $42 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation. Washington ECEAP met 9 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

Washington’s Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) also served 856 children in a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program. State spending for TK was $8,910,678 and state spending per child was $10,410. TK met 6 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT’S NEW

ECEAP programs operated through a mix of in-person and remote instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. All programs planned to be open in Fall 2021 but some programs switched to remote learning due to COVID-19 cases and exposures. The state used CARES funding to provide a summer program during summer 2020 and received funding from a private donor for a summer program in 2021. Priority for the summer program was for children transitioning out of ECEAP into kindergarten.

ECEAP added 649 more slots during the 2020-2021 school year and another 428 for 2021-2022. The newly released 2020 ECEAP Performance Standards addressed requirements for both in-person and remote services. 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 ended in June 2021. The Tribal Pathway Workgroup provided recommendations to the legislature on meeting the needs of Tribal Sovereign Nations who provide ECEAP. In 2021-2022, the state’s Fair Start for Kids Act (FSFKA) legislation funded 34 Early ECEAP slots, in addition to the 144 slots funded through the Preschool Development Grant (PDG). This legislation also moved ECEAP entitlement to 2026-2027. Income eligibility was expanded to include children in families at or below 36% SMI beginning in the 2022-2023 school year. Other expanded eligibility categories include children currently experiencing homelessness, children who participated in high quality birth to three state or federally funded early learning programming, and tribal children at or below 100% SMI. Income eligibility categories will increase again in 2030-31. Additionally, FSFKA continued and expanded Complex Needs funding to support ECEAP and Early ECEAP contractors. This additional funding supports contractors in providing least restrictive and inclusive environments to children with developmental delays, disabilities behavioral needs or other unique needs.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is included in this report for the first time.

BACKGROUND

In 2018, the Washington Department of Early Learning merged into the new Department of Children, Youth, and Families (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 2026-2027.

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 currently, 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.

(continued)
WASHINGTON STATE OVERVIEW

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ........................................ 15,505
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .................... 8,808
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ...... 9,894
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......... 0

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending .................................. $150,445,678
State Head Start spending ........................................ $0
State spending per child enrolled ............................... $9,703
All reported spending per child enrolled* ................. $9,938

**K–12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

OSPI’s Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a kindergarten program for children who have not yet turned 5 and who do not otherwise have access to high-quality early learning experiences. Districts may offer TK programs, but they are not required to do so. The requirements for TK are the same as those for regular kindergarten established by RCW 28A.150.315. While school districts in Washington have always had the ability to enroll children into kindergarten early, TK has gained momentum in recent years, as a strategy for closing opportunity gaps.

Washington’s overall support for state-funded preschool is depicted in the first two pages of this state profile. The third page focuses on ECEAP and the fourth page on TK.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ECEAP)

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ............................................................... 14,649
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)

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

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

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

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ........................................................................... $141,535,000
Local match required? .................................................................................... No
State spending per child enrolled ................................................................. $9,662
All reported spending per child enrolled* .................................................. $9,662

* 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

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

Data are for the 2020-2021 school year, unless otherwise noted.
### TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN (TK)

#### ACCESS
- Total state pre-K enrollment: 856
- School districts that offer state program: 11%
- Income requirement: No income requirement
- Minimum hours of operation: 27 hours, 45 minutes/week, 5 days/week
- Operating schedule: School or academic year

#### QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

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<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
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<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>100 hours/5 years; PD plans; Coaching</td>
<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>No limit (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>No limit (4-year-olds)</td>
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For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

#### RESOURCES

- Total state pre-K spending: $8,910,678
- Local match required: No
- State spending per child enrolled: $10,410
- All reported spending per child enrolled*: $14,660

* 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.

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**PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE**

![Pie chart showing percentages of children enrolled in different programs for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds]

**SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED**

![Bar chart showing spending per child enrolled by category]