READY NATION
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA
WASHINGTON

FACTSHEET

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) Supports Washington's Current and Future Workforce

A skilled, productive workforce is essential for a strong Washington economy

High-quality early childhood education (ECE) supports the workforce now and into the future. Parents need ECE so that they can go to work, remain productive, and build successful careers to support their families. Employers need engaged, productive employees who are not distracted by concerns about their children's well-being during the work day. Children need high-quality, nurturing, stimulating ECE environments for healthy brain development during the first five years of life, and to build the cognitive, social, and executive-functioning skills needed for success in school and future jobs.

Workforce preparation starts early

Today's economy requires proficiency in reading, writing, and math, as well as "executive function" skills like communication and problem solving. The foundation for these skills is developed in preschool when children learn how to form positive relationships with peers, stay on task, and organize project materials, as well as gain early literacy and early numeracy skills.

Early childhood educators are the foundation of high-quality ECE

Research indicates that a well-qualified workforce is an essential, fundamental component of high-quality ECE.[1] Qualified teachers engage in warm, nurturing interactions with the children to support their development in all areas. Excellent teachers also provide developmentally-appropriate instruction in pre-literacy, pre-math and other early academic skills,[2] setting children on the path to success in school, work and life. To offer this high-quality experience, early childhood educators must be well-trained, both before they start teaching and once they are on the job through ongoing professional development.[3] Adequate compensation is also key to attracting and retaining top talent, so it is essential that rates cover the cost for quality staff.

ECEAP helps our most vulnerable children

Children are eligible for ECEAP if their family income is at or below 36 percent of the State Median Income ($33,161 for a family of three)[5], they have special needs, or are experiencing homelessness.[6] ECEAP focuses on the whole child, providing comprehensive services, as well as family support.[7]

ECEAP Serves the Most Vulnerable Children

73%
Live in homes with incomes less than 110% below the poverty level

9.5%
were involved with Child Protective Services

11%
have Individualized Education Plans

31.5%
have a parent who does not have a diploma or GED

10%
were from a household with a substance abuse issue

8%
were homeless during the school year

2023 priorities for ECEAP

We seek continued legislative support for increasing access to ECEAP by ensuring the per child rate covers the cost of quality, expanding slots so the program can serve more children across the state, and enough learning space to meet the demand.

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1 https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1233517 http://www.srcd.org/sites/default/files/documents/washington/mb_2013_10_16_investing_in_children.pdf
2 https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/cdep.12260
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6 https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/EL_0048.pdf
7 https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/eceap

ReadyNation | Business. Kids. Workforce.
Business executives building a skilled workforce by promoting solutions that prepare children to succeed in education, work, and life.

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites membership organizations, including law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, and business executives, that promote solutions ensuring that our next generation of Americans will be successful, productive members of society.

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