

Access to Quality Early Learning Can Reduce Crime

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Washington's voluntary, high-quality preschool program, serves the most vulnerable three- and four-year olds. Children are eligible for ECEAP if their family income is **below 110% of the federal poverty level** (\$27,610 for a family of four), they have special needs or their family has risk factors such as homelessness or domestic violence. ECEAP is offered as part-day (2.5 hours), full-day (5.5 to 6.5 hours) or extended day (at least 10 hours).

We must increase ECEAP access, fund quality and address infrastructure

Increase access. Current law calls for all eligible children to be served in ECEAP by the 2022-23 school year. Estimates indicate this need will total 19,400 children. ECEAP currently serves 13,500 children, leaving a **gap of 5900 children**.¹

2019-21 Budget Priorities:

- Expand ECEAP Access
- Increase Reimbursement Rate
- Address Facility Shortage



Fund Quality by Increasing Reimbursement Rate. Average reimbursement for ECEAP varies from \$7771 a slot for part-day, \$10,669 for full-day to \$16,657 for extended-day. These reimbursement levels do not adequately fund quality or reflect the true cost of doing business.

Facility Needs. There is also a need for more facilities to house ECEAP and other early learning programs. For example, full-day kindergarten and class size reduction have led to facility shortages on K-12 school sites. The 2018 Capital Budget included more than \$10 million for the Early Learning Facilities Fund. The Department of Commerce received more than \$50 million in requests for projects.

ECEAP helps insure school readiness and can even help cut crime

A 2014 Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) report found ECEAP students had significantly higher math and reading scores in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades compared to peers who did not attend ECEAP.²

Two longitudinal studies of other high-quality preschool programs have followed children for nearly 40 years. In one study children who did not attend a high quality preschool were **five times more likely to be chronic offenders by age 27.**³ In the other study, those who did not attend were **70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.**⁴ Last, a recent study of Oklahoma's universal Pre-K program found the program decreases the likelihood that black children are later charged with a crime at age 18 or 19 for both misdemeanors and felonies.⁵

¹ <https://erfc.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/forecasts/ec20181106.pdf>

² http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1576/Wsipp_Outcome-Evaluation-of-Washington-States-Early-Childhood-Education-and-Assistance-Program_Report.pdf

³ http://www.highscope.org/file/research/perryproject/specialsummary_rev2011_02_2.pdf

⁴ <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/icd/research/cls/cbaexecsum4.html>

⁵ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2685507

ECEAP Serves the Most Vulnerable Children

59%
live in homes with incomes less than 80% of the federal poverty level

43%
live in single parent homes

9%
were homeless at some point in the year

9%
have chronic health conditions

11%
have Individualized Education Plans

32%
primary home language other than English

Source: Department of Children, Youth and Families ECEAP Program, September 2018

For additional information contact Washington State Fight Crime Invest in Kids Director Erica Hallock at (509) 991-2390 or ehallock@fightcrime.org

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

Thousands of police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and violence survivors protecting public safety by promoting solutions that steer kids away from crime

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