

Research clearly demonstrates that children who participate in high-quality preschool programs are more prepared for success in school. This is particularly true for children who are growing up in or near poverty. Over the past several years, the available body of research has grown and shown that there are several quality elements of preschool that are necessary to garner the strongest growth and development for participating children. These include:

- **Program Intensity:** Children do best when they have access to enough time in a program to benefit fully from the instructional support. Research indicates that preschool programs should be 5-6 hours/day during a school year. The most vulnerable children also benefit from two years of program enrollment.
- **Curriculum:** Research shows some curriculum significantly increase school readiness rates, particularly when implemented with fidelity and supported with professional development.
- **Highly Trained and Supported Teachers:** Outcomes are strongest for children when their preschool teachers are well-trained and appropriately compensated.

Washington has been operating ECEAP, our state-funded preschool program, since 1985. The Legislature has committed to expand ECEAP to serve all eligible children by the 2018-19 school year as a statutory entitlement. Washington has worked diligently to use the best available information to continue to refine our preschool program and make sure that we are doing our best for young children.

As Washington expands its preschool program, we will continue to use the latest research and data available to ensure we are supporting our preschool providers to offer the best programs possible.

### Washington's Preschool

A High-Quality Preschool program for 3-4 year olds in WA

#### Essential Quality Elements

- Dosage to ensure outcomes
- Research based curriculum
- Comprehensive services based on need
- Well trained and supported teachers
- Shared Data

#### Structural Supports

- Quality assurance through participation in Early Achievers
- Connected to Schools through WaKIDS
- Professional Development, coaching, training and support through a state Training and Technical Assistance Network

#### Sustainable

- Braided state and federal funding (ECEAP, Federal Expansion, CCDF)
- Mixed-delivery, mixed-income that, in time, includes tuition-based services

### Key feature of Washington's Preschool

- **A Single High-Quality Preschool Program:** Clear quality elements that are supported by research and are apparent in every preschool classroom. **Rationale:** Ensure that all public resources are being used to support a level of quality that is associated with improved child outcomes; ensure leverage between early learning systems elements.
- **Increased Intensity:** Provide more hours of high quality preschool, through longer day and up to two years of participation. **Rationale:** Duration matters. Even students who are far behind at kindergarten entry can develop vocabulary, math and literacy skills that approach national norms if provided with extended duration preschool that maintains reasonable quality standards.
- **Mixed Income:** Public funds are targeted toward free preschool for the lowest income children, but available to additional children on a sliding tuition scale. **Rationale:** Research shows that children of all abilities and family incomes benefit from high-quality preschool. In addition, children benefit from being with peers from diverse backgrounds.
- **Mixed Delivery:** Available through multiple program types including child care centers and family child care homes, stand alone preschool, school districts, nonprofits, etc. **Rationale:** Reach children where they are and with community programs, partner to ensure that all children have access to a high-quality program.

## Goals of ECEAP expansion: Build upon and enhance the existing ECEAP program

- Serve more children
- Add more full-day opportunities
- Support training and implementation of evidence-based curricula
- Provide ongoing instructional supports and professional development opportunities, including tuition to help attain BAs
- Provide a professional development track for practice-based coaching through Early Achievers
- Increase access to comprehensive services for more children
- Increase opportunities to provide preschool services in mixed income/mixed delivery settings
- Promote professional (K-12) salaries

### Expansion opportunities

There are several key opportunities that can support the expansion of preschool in Washington.

- **Entitlement statute:** Voluntary preschool will be a statutory entitlement for eligible children (110% or below of FPL) by school year 2018-19.
- **Federal preschool expansion grant:** Washington is eligible to apply for a competitive federal preschool grant of \$70 million over four years. This grant intends to support efforts to build, develop, and expand voluntary, high-quality preschool programs for children from families at or below 200% FPL for states that implement key quality elements.
- **Washington Preschool:** Build upon the Washington Preschool vision that was developed in 2011 by stakeholders and advocates to create a framework for expanded preschool opportunities (a result of Senate Bill 6759)
- **Maximizing existing resources:** Ensure that Early Achievers, the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), ECEAP, Working Connections Child Care, and other state and federal resources are used to promote consistent elements of quality

### Combining ECEAP and federal funding

One way to ensure that ECEAP expansion increases access to quality is by combining state resources with potential resources available to the state with the recently released competitive Preschool Expansion Grant ([www.del.wa.gov/care/find-hs-eceap/federalgrant.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/care/find-hs-eceap/federalgrant.aspx)). As demonstrated below, combining the federal funding with planned ECEAP expansion enables Washington to offer preschool to more children with higher quality and intensity of services. No additional state dollars would be required to achieve this beyond what the state has already committed with entitlement.

	Current ECEAP	ECEAP expansion plan with state entitlement funding	Potential combining state and federal pre-k funding
<b>Expansion slots</b>	N/A	12,716 new part-day slots in 4 years	13,000 new full-day slots in 4 years
<b>Total slots</b>	<b>10,091 slots</b> 8,165 part-day 1,926 full-day	<b>22,807 total slots</b> 20,881 part-day 1,926 full-day	<b>25,091 total slots*</b> 4,165 part day 20,926 full-day
<b>Full-day</b>	Currently no strategy to provide additional full-day slots	Currently no strategy to provide additional full-day slots	6,000 part-day HS & ECEAP slots converted to full-day
<b>Eligibility</b>	Program limited to children from families 110% of FPL	Program limited to children from families up to 110% of FPL	Up to 22% of children from families up to 200% FPL (state funds restricted to only 110% FPL)
<b>Quality enhancement plans</b>	Existing quality improvement efforts; no additional funding	Existing quality improvement efforts; no additional funding	Federal start-up funding for quality enhancements (curriculum, tuition support, PD, etc.)

\*Includes up to 2,000 children in "enhanced" Head Start (note that numbers may be subject to change)