

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP—pronounced *e-cap*) is Washington’s pre-kindergarten program that prepares children from low income families for success in school and in life.

Since 1985, ECEAP has focused on the well-being of the whole child by providing comprehensive nutrition, health, education and family support services. ECEAP reaches 3- and 4-year-old children most in need of these foundations for learning. The program design is aligned with the nationally researched programs that have shown exceptional returns on investment.

Eligibility

Children are eligible for ECEAP in their two years before kindergarten, if they:

- Are from families with annual income at or below 110 percent of federal poverty level (\$25,905 for a family of four),
- Qualify for school district special education services,
- Have developmental or environmental risk factors that could affect school success, or
- Are involved in the child welfare system.

ECEAP prioritizes enrollment of children who:

- Will be in kindergarten the following year
- Are in foster care
- Are homeless
- Are from families with lowest incomes
- Have multiple risk factors

How ECEAP is provided

The Department of Early Learning currently provides ECEAP through contracts with educational service districts, school districts, community colleges, local governments and non-profits. During school year 2014-15, ECEAP is available in 36 of 39 Washington counties at 337 sites.

Fast facts

- 10,091 slots for children
- 65% of children are in families with incomes below 80% of federal poverty level (\$18,840 per year for a family of four)
- 35% speak a home language other than English
- 32% had a parent who did not graduate high school, and 12% had a parent with sixth-grade education or less
- At enrollment 49% of children were up-to-date with well-child exams. At exit, 94% were up-to-date.
- At enrollment 28% of children were up-to-date with dental screening. At exit, 95% were up-to-date.

Read a summary of gains made by ECEAP children in the 2013-14 school year: www.del.wa.gov/publications/eceap/docs/ECEAP_outcomes_2013-14.pdf

Funding and enrollment

The Legislature invested in 350 additional enrollment slots in school year 2013- 14, 1,350 additional enrollment slots for school year 2014-15 and increased the per-slot funding to \$7,579. Of this, about 97 percent goes directly to communities to benefit children and families, at an average of \$7,331 per slot. In school year 2014-15, the state will offer preschool to more than 10,000 children.

DEL is using the expansion slots to support innovation, such as offering Full School Day (about 6 hours) and Extended Day (10+ hours for working families) classroom programming, using researched-based curriculum, and offering family support services tailored to each family's individual strengths and needs. DEL is layering ECEAP funding with Working Connections Child Care subsidy dollars to support this full-day learning experience.

ECEAP is slated to become a statutory entitlement in school year 2018-19, at which time any eligible child may enroll. DEL has proposed adding about 6,400 enrollment slots over the next two school years to move toward entitlement.