

December 2013

Report to the Legislature

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) caseload forecast

Washington State Department of Early Learning
Office of Financial Management



**Early
Childhood
Education &
Assistance
Program**

Washington State Department of Early Learning

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Introduction

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) are required by RCW 43.215.456 (6) to annually review the caseload forecasts for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and submit recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature for phasing in additional funding to achieve statewide implementation. ECEAP becomes a statutory entitlement in school year 2018-19, per House Bill 2731, which passed in the 2010 legislative session.

The Legislature added 1,700 ECEAP enrollment slots in the 2013-15 biennium: 350 slots in school year 2013-14 and 1,350 slots in school year 2014-15. By the end of the biennium, that totals 10,091 enrollment slots. The Legislature also invested in improving quality by enhancing per-slot funding.

Currently, 29,128 children are eligible for ECEAP who are not served by ECEAP or Head Start. For the 2013-14 school year, we are serving 39 percent of the eligible population and 57 percent of the estimated caseload of children whose families would choose to participate if space was available. In the 2014-15 school year, we will serve 42 percent of eligible children and 61 percent of the estimated caseload.

Description of ECEAP

ECEAP is Washington's state-funded prekindergarten program that prepares some of the state's most vulnerable 3- and 4-year-old children for success in school and in life. DEL oversees the program, which since 1985 has focused on the well-being of the whole child by providing comprehensive nutrition, health, education and family support services to Washington's most at-risk children.

To be eligible for ECEAP, children must be 3 or 4 years old on August 31 of the school year and not simultaneously enrolled in Head Start, and meet one of these requirements:

- Qualified by their school district for special education services under RCW 28A.155.020.
- From a family with income at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In 2013, this is \$25,905 for a family of four. This category includes all children in foster care and all families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash grants.
- From a family that exceeds income requirements but is impacted by specific risk factors that are linked by research to school performance (for example, family involvement with Child Protective Services or imprisonment of a parent). No more than 10 percent of ECEAP children can be in this "over-income" category, and most children enrolled under this provision are from families under 130 percent of federal poverty guidelines.

Once eligibility is established, children are prioritized for enrollment in the available ECEAP slots using a weighted statewide priority point system.

Methodology

DEL and OFM use the following methodology to estimate the population of children eligible for ECEAP who are not served by ECEAP or Head Start:

- The base count of 3- and 4-year-old children in Washington for each year is from the OFM state population base forecast, issued November 2013.
- The percentages of 3- and 4-year-olds in families under 110 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) is from the American Community Survey 2009-2011 data set, the most recent available.
- The number of children qualifying for special education services and from families with income greater than 110 percent FPL is estimated based on current ECEAP participation of children with these characteristics and the previous year’s actual number of children on Individualized Education Plans according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).
- The number of 3- and 4- year-old children from families over 110 percent FPL and impacted by risk factors associated with educational outcomes to equal 10 percent of the estimated eligible children for each year.
- ECEAP slots are determined by the Legislature. There are 8,741 slots in school year 2013-14 and 10,091 slots in school year 2014-15. The proportions of 3-year-olds (1,198) and 4-year-olds (7,543) are from DEL’s ECEAP data system for 2012-13.
- Head Start slot counts and age distributions are retrieved from the 2012-13 Program Information Reports from Head Start grantees to the federal Office of Head Start for Region X Head Start, American Indian/Alaska Native-Head Start or Migrant/Seasonal Head Start. This caseload estimate assumes that 88 percent of the 4,133 3-year-olds and 7,674 4-year-olds are eligible. The remaining 12 percent have incomes above 110 percent of FPL.
- Based on participation data, it is assumed that children would participate at these rates:
 - 57 percent of families with eligible 3-year-olds would choose to enroll their children.
 - 80 percent of families with eligible 4-year-olds would choose to enroll their children.

Caseload estimates

It is estimated that 12,716 additional enrollment slots beyond the 2013-15 level of 10,091 are needed by state fiscal year 2019 to serve the eligible children whose families it is assumed would choose to participate. This means 3,179 enrollment slots will need to be added per year beginning in state fiscal year 2016. At full expansion, we would serve 57 percent of eligible 3-year-olds and 80 percent of eligible 4-year-olds (per our participation estimates).

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Estimated new enrollment slots needed per school year	350*	1,350*	3,179	3,179	3,179	3,179
Total slots	8,741*	10,091*	13,270	16,449	19,628	22,807

* Included in 2013-15 state operating budget

Caseload estimates (state fiscal year 2015)

Total 3- and 4-year olds in Washington in SFY15	176,668
ECEAP Eligible 3- and 4-year olds	48,715
ECEAP Slots	10,091
Head Start Slots filled by 3- and 4-year olds ≤110% FPL	10,390
Number of ECEAP-eligible served	20,481
Percent of ECEAP-eligible served	42%
Unservd, eligible	28,234
Unservd, assumed would participate (to attain 57% eligible 3-year-olds, 80% eligible 4-year-olds)	12,893

3-year-olds in Washington	88,546
ECEAP Eligible 3-year- olds	24,339
ECEAP Slots filled by 3-year-olds	1,383
Head Start Slots filled by 3-year-olds ≤110% FPL	3,637
Number of ECEAP-eligible served	5,020
Percent of ECEAP-eligible served	21%
Unservd, eligible	19,319
Unservd, assumed would participate (57% of eligible)	8,853

4-year-olds in Washington	88,122
ECEAP Eligible 4-year- olds	24,377
ECEAP Slots filled by 4-year-old	8,708
Head Start Slots filled by 4-year-olds ≤110% FPL	6,753
Number of ECEAP-eligible served	15,461
Percent of ECEAP-eligible served	63%
Unservd, eligible	8,916
Unservd, assumed would participate (80% of eligible)	4,040

Caseload forecast (state fiscal year 2019)

Total 3- and 4-year olds in Washington in SFY19	182,735
ECEAP Eligible 3- and 4-year olds	50,389
Assumed total ECEAP Slots needed	22,807
Assumed Head Start filled by 3- and 4-year olds ≤110% FPL	10,390
Total ECEAP-eligible served	33,197
Percent of ECEAP-eligible served	66%
Percent of estimated caseload served	100%

Recommendations for ECEAP expansion

DEL recommends the following guiding principles for ECEAP expansion:

- Add 3,179 enrollment slots per year for state fiscal years 2016-19 to help ensure adequate access.
- Continue to consider quality, as well as access.
- Expand in a zoned approach, phasing in areas where there is state-funded full-day kindergarten and low access to Head Start or ECEAP.
- Conduct a competitive bid process to award new ECEAP slots.
- Require a mixed-delivery system that includes school districts, educational service districts, licensed child care providers, private providers, and nonprofit and for-profit organizations who can meet ECEAP program requirements.
- Work with communities and OSPI to determine the availability and condition of classrooms/ community sites for expansion.