

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program Expansion Plan 2017-2018 School Year

I. Executive Summary

Introduction to the ECEAP Expansion Plan

ECEAP is Washington’s voluntary pre-kindergarten program that prepares vulnerable 3- and 4-year-old children who are furthest from opportunity for success in school and in life. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is implementing [Early Start Act](#) requirements while expanding ECEAP to be available for all eligible children statewide by the 2022-2023 school year. (See [RCW 43.215.456](#).) (Note: As of July 1, 2018, DEL and its services will become part of the new Department of Children, Youth and Families [DCYF].)

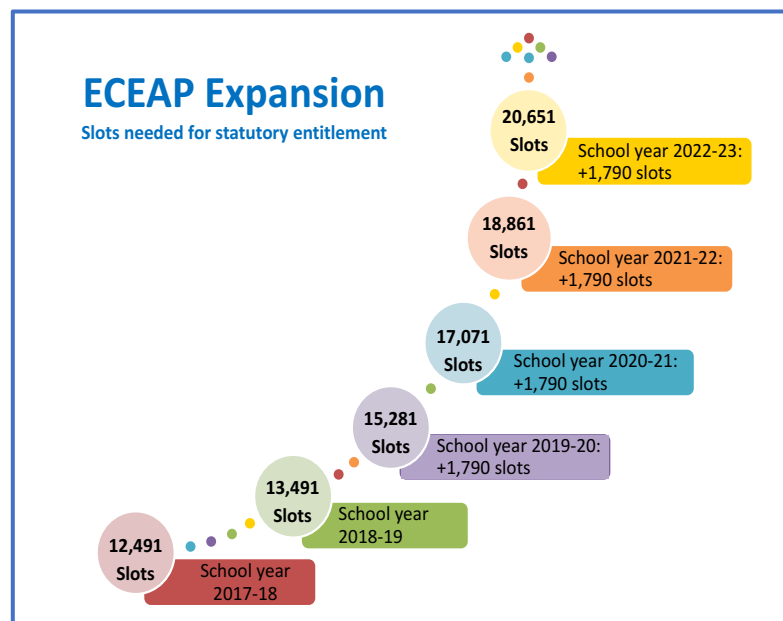
This *Expansion Plan*, which will be updated annually, is designed to maximize ECEAP’s contribution to DEL’s goal of “90 percent of Washington children being ready for kindergarten by 2020, with race and income no longer predictors of success.” DEL extends its appreciation to the ECEAP Expansion Think Tank and other partners who helped develop this plan.

ECEAP

Eligibility and services: ECEAP serves 3- and 4-year-old children whose families have very low incomes or who are vulnerable due to developmental needs or environmental risk factors. ECEAP focuses on the well-being of the whole child by providing comprehensive education, nutrition, health, and family support services. ECEAP uses Part Day, Full Day, and Extended Day models to promote child outcomes and meet family needs.

Quality and effectiveness: The impact of high-quality prekindergarten programs is demonstrated by the intensely evaluated New Jersey Abbott pre-kindergarten program which has seen long-term effects equivalent to a 10-percentile boost in state test scores. By 5th grade, the achievement advantage from attending two years of Abbott pre-kindergarten equals about three quarters of a year of growth in math and two-thirds of a year of growth in language arts. According to a study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, ECEAP generates similarly substantial gains in academic achievement in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades.

Children in ECEAP make dramatic gains of 30-50 points in the percentage who are at or above expectations for their age over the ECEAP year in domains of development and learning (measured by GOLD®). ECEAP also closes achievement gaps for the majority of children of color, and dual language learners.



Meeting or exceeding age-level expectations translates into improved school readiness and success. Children with two years of ECEAP are the most ready for school. 87 percent of children with two years of ECEAP were ready for kindergarten in literacy development as they left ECEAP in the spring compared to 79 percent of children with one year of ECEAP. Fall kindergarten entry WaKIDS scores demonstrate the need to address summer learning loss and strengthen transitions into K-12 settings. However, the value of ECEAP is demonstrated by WaKIDS scores that are 7.3 percentage points higher for very poor children (family incomes < 110 percent of the federal poverty level [FPL]) compared to children with higher family incomes (\geq 185% FPL).

Where We Are Going

To expand ECEAP so that all eligible children can enroll by 2022-2023 will require adding a total of 7,160 additional “slots” (spaces for children), according to the State Caseload Forecast Council, to reach a total of 20,651 slots.

Desired characteristics and guiding principles: DEL confirmed a set of desired characteristics and guiding principles for expanded ECEAP. These focus on: (1) racial equity; (2) the 90 percent readiness goal and outcomes; (3) access to ECEAP; and, (4) partnership and collaboration among families, stakeholders and those with the needed expertise.

Actions to improve ECEAP outcomes and support expansion: DEL will undertake the following key actions. (1) Continue to improve ECEAP program **quality**, guided by the *2017 Assessment of Pre-K Quality*. (2) Strengthen **cultural and linguistic responsiveness**. (3) Engage and prepare new **providers**, and sustain current providers, through multiple pathways: tribal, K-12, child care centers, family child care homes, and rural and remote providers. (4) **Implement the “local pathways”** required in SB5107 to expand access, especially for children whose families are just above the current eligibility guidelines, and for rural communities. (5) Address **eligibility issues** that limit ECEAP’s impact. (6) Build and sustain the **workforce**. (7) Fill the gap in **facilities**, estimated to be more than 400 classrooms. (8) Strengthen DEL-ECEAP’s **administrative capacity** to support the expansion. (9) Coordinate **monitoring and coaching** with those elements for child care licensing and Early Achievers.

How We Will Get There

ECEAP Expansion Theory of Change: The *ECEAP Theory of Change* describes the resources and strategies needed to achieve ECEAP’s ultimate outcome: High-quality, effective, efficient early learning services are available to all eligible children, with 90 percent of Washington children kindergarten-ready in all domains. ECEAP and its partners will achieve this by: (1) providing high-quality, culturally competent services; (2) making ECEAP available to all eligible children; (3) building an ample supply of qualified early learning professionals; and, (4) continuing to build effective, aligned and integrated early learning programs.

2017-2018 actions: The *Expansion Plan* includes a five-year action plan tied to the *ECEAP Expansion Theory of Change*. Key 2017-2018 actions include the following:

- Assess family interest in each ECEAP model to identify the best balance of model types.
- Develop a methodology to project needed slots and ready providers more precisely.
- Develop a method and plan to fill geographic gaps and provide ECEAP services statewide. Determine local workforce needs, analyze shortages, and identify methods to increase supply.
- Build expansion infrastructure (coordinated monitoring, administrative capacity, etc.)
- Continue to strengthen program quality guided by findings from the *Pre-K Quality Self-Assessment*.

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