



Working Connections Child Care Subsidy Program

What is the Working Connections Child Care subsidy program?

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) helps families with low incomes pay for child care while they work or meet WorkFirst participation requirements.

When a family qualifies for child care subsidy benefits and chooses an eligible provider, the state pays a portion of the cost of child care. The parent is also responsible to pay a copayment to the provider each month.

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) sets policy for the program. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) determines family eligibility and makes subsidy payments to child care providers.

What are the WCCC eligibility requirements for families?

Basic WCCC eligibility requirements include:

- The child who needs subsidized care must be a United States citizen or legal resident.
- The family must live in Washington.
- Family income must be at or below 200% federal poverty level.
- The parent must be employed or self-employed in legal, income-generating, taxable activities; or the parent must meet all TANF/WorkFirst requirements if participating in that program. **Note:** Child care subsidy benefits can only be approved for work or other approved activities outside of the family's home.
- The parent must complete the WCCC application and verification process through DSHS.

Enrollment is on a "first-come, first-served" basis, and the program is capped at 33,000 households. If the program reaches the cap, DEL and DSHS maintain a wait list of eligible families who apply. Families are notified when a space becomes available.

How do families apply for WCCC?

Families can either contact the DSHS Customer Service Call Center at 1.877.501.2233 or apply online through **Washington Connection**. Families need to provide the following information for any parents living in the home with the child:

- Name and phone number of employer
- Days and hours worked
- Hourly wage
- Gross income for the last three months or tax return for the previous calendar year
- Amount of any unearned income, such as child support or SSI benefits
- Current child support order for the child who needs care, if any
- Proof of child's citizenship or legal residency
- The name and phone number of the child care provider
- Phone number

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Which child care providers are able to offer care subsidized by WCCC?

Families authorized for WCCC may choose from the following types of child care providers:

- Licensed or certified child care centers.
- Licensed or certified family child care homes.
- Relatives who provide care in their own homes.
- Adults who come to the family's home to provide care.

If families choose license-exempt care (either relative care or care provided in the child's home), the provider must:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Be a citizen or a legal resident of the United States.
- Pass the DSHS background check. If care is provided in the provider's home, then anyone older than 16 who lives in the home must also pass a background check.
- Be physically and mentally healthy enough to meet all the needs of the child in care.
- Not be the child's biological parent, step-parent, adoptive parent, legal guardian, in-loco parentis, or the spouse of any of these individuals.

Note: In-home or relative providers who are paid child care subsidies to care for children receiving WCCC benefits may not receive those benefits for their own children during the hours in which they provide subsidized child care.

What are the family co-pay requirements?

Families are required to pay a portion of their child care costs. This co-pay goes directly to the provider.

COPAY CALCULATION TABLE for 200% FPL – EFFECTIVE September 1, 2013									
	COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3		COLUMN 4		COLUMN 5		COLUMN 6
If Countable Income is:									
If Family size is	100% FPL	Above 200% FPL	0 to 82% FPL		More than 82 to 137.5%		More than 137.5 to 200%		137.5% FPL
1	\$958	\$1916	\$0	\$786	\$787	\$1317	\$1318	\$1916	\$1317
2	\$1293	\$2586	\$0	\$1060	\$1061	\$1778	\$1779	\$2586	\$1778
3	\$1628	\$3256	\$0	\$1335	\$1336	\$2239	\$2240	\$3256	\$2239
4	\$1963	\$3926	\$0	\$1610	\$1611	\$2699	\$2700	\$3926	\$2699
5	\$2298	\$4596	\$0	\$1884	\$1885	\$3160	\$3161	\$4596	\$3160
6	\$2633	\$5266	\$0	\$2159	\$2160	\$3620	\$3621	\$5266	\$3620
7	\$2968	\$5936	\$0	\$2434	\$2435	\$4081	\$4082	\$5936	\$4081
8	\$3303	\$6606	\$0	\$2708	\$2709	\$4542	\$4543	\$6606	\$4542
9	\$3638	\$7276	\$0	\$2983	\$2984	\$5002	\$5003	\$7276	\$5002
10	\$3973	\$7946	\$0	\$3258	\$3259	\$5463	\$5464	\$7946	\$5463
		Not Eligible	\$15 COPAY		\$65 COPAY		Subtract 137.5% FPL From Countable Income, then Multiply by .50 and Add \$65		
STEPS TO CALCULATE WCCC ELIGIBILITY AND COPAYMENT:									
1. Determine TOTAL income. This is the sum of all gross earned and unearned income.									
2. Determine COUNTABLE income. This is TOTAL income minus any child support PAID OUT.									
3. Compare COUNTABLE income to Column 2. If amount is greater, client is not eligible. If COUNTABLE income is below column 2 then check column 3, 4 or 5 for correct income range and copayment.									

Approved activities for consumers participating in WorkFirst

Applicants and consumers who participate in WorkFirst activities may be eligible for WCCC benefits for the following approved activities in their individual responsibility plans (IRPs), for up to 16 hours per day:

- An approved WorkFirst activity under WAC 388-310-0200, with the following exception: In-home/relative providers who are paid child care subsidies to care for children receiving WCCC benefits may not receive those benefits for their own children during the hours in which they provide subsidized child care. These consumers may be eligible for other approved activities in their IRPs;
- Employment;
- Self-employment as described in the consumer's current WorkFirst IRP;
- Transportation time between the location of child care and the consumer's place of employment or approved activity;
- Up to 10 hours per week of study time for approved classes; and
- Up to eight hours of sleep time before or after a night shift.

Approved activities for consumers not participating in WorkFirst

Consumers may be eligible for WCCC benefits for up to 16 hours per day, including travel, study, and sleep time before or after a night shift, when they are:

- Employed;
- Self-employed; or
- Participating in the Basic Food Work Requirements program under chapter 388-444 WAC.

Special requirements for education:

- An applicant or consumer who is under 22 years of age may be eligible for WCCC benefits for high school or GED program without a minimum number of employment hours.
- An applicant or consumer who is 22 or older:
 - May be eligible to receive WCCC as an education and training benefit only once during his or her lifetime. To qualify for the general education and training benefits, he or she must work either:
 - 20 or more hours per week of unsubsidized employment; or
 - 16 or more hours per week in a paid federal or state work study program.
 - Is limited to up to 24 consecutive months of WCCC benefits for participation in:
 - Adult basic education (ABE);
 - English as a second language (ESL); or
 - High school/general educational development (GED) completion; and
 - Is limited to up to 36 consecutive months of WCCC benefits for participation in vocational education. The vocational education program must lead to a degree or certificate in a specific occupation and be offered by the following accredited entities only:
 - Public and private technical college or school;
 - Community college; or
 - Tribal college.

Recent Changes in the Working Connections Child Care Subsidy Program

What is Working Connections Child Care?

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy program helps families with low incomes pay for child care while they work or meet WorkFirst participation requirements. The state pays part of the cost of child care. The family is responsible to make a copayment to the child care provider.

DEL, as the lead agency for the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grant, sets child care subsidy policy and provides program oversight for child care licensing and early learning services. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) helps families apply for WCCC, determines eligibility and consumer copayments, authorizes child care, and pays providers.

Who is eligible for Working Connections Child Care?

Families that may be eligible:

- Live in Washington, and have one or more children who are U.S. citizens or legal residents; and,
- Meet income eligibility requirements and work in legal, income-generating taxable activities, or meet WorkFirst requirements.

What child care options do families have?

Eligible families choose licensed or certified child care centers, family child care homes, or license-exempt in-home or relative providers.

Recent WCCC eligibility and copayment changes

The Legislature has lowered eligibility limits, raised copayments and made other policy changes to help address the WorkFirst program budget shortfall and increased caseloads:

- **Prior to October 1, 2010:** Eligible families could have countable income of up to 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG).
- **October 1, 2010:** Countable income was reduced to 175% FPG. The change affected about 2,500 families when they applied or re-applied for benefits.
- **January 1, 2011:** Anyone with countable income

above 175% FPG was no longer eligible to receive WCCC, affecting an additional 1,112 families.

- **February 1, 2011:** Child care co-payments increased \$10 per month for families who pay \$50 or more per month.
- **March 1, 2011:** WCCC enrollment capped at 35,200 families per month except for specific prioritized groups: families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, and income-eligible families with a special needs child. All other families placed on a waiting list.* Child care co-payments increased \$5 per month for families who pay \$60 or more a month.
- **July 1, 2011:** WCCC enrollment capped at 33,000 families per month. Families that apply for or receive child care subsidies are required to cooperate with DSHS Division of Child Support unless they have "good cause" to not do so; child support is passed to the custodial parent or guardian. Teen parents who live independently from a parent or guardian, attend high school full-time, and enroll their child in on-site child care at the high school have WCCC priority.
- **June 8, 2012:** DEL adopted rules eliminating the requirement for WCCC applicants to cooperate with DSHS Division of Child Support in order to receive WCCC benefits. These rules also increase health and safety requirements for unlicensed providers of state-subsidized child care, allow subsidized child care providers to use electronic attendance records, and improve accountability and reduce potential fraud and abuse in child care subsidy programs.
- **August 22, 2012:** DEL filed proposed rules to permanently implement emergency rules raising the cutoff eligibility for WCCC from 175% FPG to 200% FPG. DEL also filed proposed rules to increase the authorization period for WCCC from six to 12 months.

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The WCCC wait list

On March 1, 2011, WCCC enrollment was capped for the first time in nearly 20 years, to help balance the program budget for state fiscal year 2011. The cap at that time was set at 35,200 families per month. Any families above the cap were placed on a wait list. On July 1, 2011, WCCC enrollment was further capped at 33,000 families per month due to ongoing budget issues.

When a wait list is in effect for WCCC, the following families receive priority without being placed on the wait list:

- TANF recipient families, including families who are working to cure their WorkFirst sanction and child-only TANF cases.
- Income-eligible non-TANF families with a special needs child.
- Teen parents living independently from their parent or guardian, attending high school full-time, and who enroll their child in on-site child care at their high school.
- All other income-eligible families above the enrollment cap are placed on the wait list and served on a first-come, first-serve basis until the program is at capacity.

DSHS sends families on the waiting list a letter when space is available. The family must contact DSHS within 10 days to complete the application process.

Managing the WCCC wait list

When there is a wait list, DEL staff do a daily review of active enrollment using the DSHS Working Connections Assistance Program (WCAP) system. DEL staff check the DSHS Social Service Payment System (SSPS) each month to compare the number of child care authorizations to the authorizations actually used by parents, billed for by providers, and paid for by the state. Additionally, DEL staff conduct bimonthly expenditures check using the Office of Financial Management's Agency Financial Reporting System (AFRS).

WCCC wait list

Average number of households on the wait list per month during fiscal year 2012:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • July 2011: 4,461 | • September 2011: 1,455 |
| • August 2011: 4,186 | • Since October 2011: 0 |

For more information: www.del.wa.gov/care/help and www.workfirst.wa.gov

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) Caseload Tracking
Total Caseload

July 2013

Month	Lag Adjusted Actual	% Change Last Month	% Change Year Ago	Variance of Actual from Projected		
				June Forecast	Case Difference	Cases %
Mar-13	26,244	2.8%	12.9%	26,821	(577)	-2.2%
Apr-13	27,411	4.4%	18.2%	27,620	(209)	-0.8%
May-13	27,961	2.0%	18.7%	28,272	(311)	-1.1%
Jun-13	28,221	0.9%	19.1%	29,408	(1,187)	-4.0%
Jul-13	27,293	-3.3%	20.3%	28,075	(782)	-2.8%
Aug-13	-	0.0%	0.0%	28,509	0	0.0%
Sep-13	-	0.0%	0.0%	29,504	0	0.0%

Variance of Actual from Case Limit		
Caseload Limit	Case Difference	Cases %
33,000	(6,756)	-20.5%
33,000	(5,589)	-16.9%
33,000	(5,039)	-15.3%
33,000	(4,779)	-14.5%
33,000	(5,707)	-17.3%
33,000	-	0.0%
33,000	-	0.0%

Source: DEL household files, ACES Data Warehouse, and OFM Projection. Caseload figures are Lag Adjusted

Non TANF Cases

July 2013

Month	Lag Adjusted Actual	% Change Last Month	% Change Year Ago	Variance of Actual from Projected		
				June Forecast	Case Difference	Cases %
Mar-13	19,876	3.0%	17.2%	20,222	(346)	-1.7%
Apr-13	20,721	4.3%	23.1%	20,737	(16)	-0.1%
May-13	21,295	2.8%	25.1%	21,255	40	0.2%
Jun-13	21,794	2.3%	26.0%	22,174	(380)	-1.7%
Jul-13	21,659	-0.6%	29.1%	21,261	398	1.9%
Aug-13	-	0.0%	0.0%	21,660	0	0.0%
Sep-13	-	0.0%	0.0%	22,460	0	0.0%

NOTE: August 2013 files (which contained July 2013 data) were delivered 5 days late which could affect lag adjustments. Data delivery was also delayed in May, April, February, and December.

The July file had roughly 1,500 cases with the same ID. This has been corrected. Months without ACES IDs have also been corrected.

TANF Related Cases

July 2013

Month	Lag Adjusted Actual	% Change Last Month	% Change Year Ago	Variance of Actual from Projected		
				June Forecast	Case Difference	Cases %
Mar-13	6,368	2.2%	1.3%	6,599	(231)	-3.5%
Apr-13	6,690	5.1%	5.3%	6,883	(193)	-2.8%
May-13	6,666	-0.4%	2.2%	7,017	(351)	-5.0%
Jun-13	6,427	-3.6%	0.4%	7,234	(807)	-11.2%
Jul-13	5,634	-12.3%	-4.5%	6,815	(1,181)	-17.3%
Aug-13	-	0.0%	0.0%	6,849	0	0.0%
Sep-13	-	0.0%	0.0%	7,044	0	0.0%

Authorizations shown on the chart are from the first day of each month, as reported from Bar Code. A step adjustment, beginning in January 2013, has been added to the total forecast and the Non-TANF forecast to reflect the expected impact of 12 month WCCC authorizations.

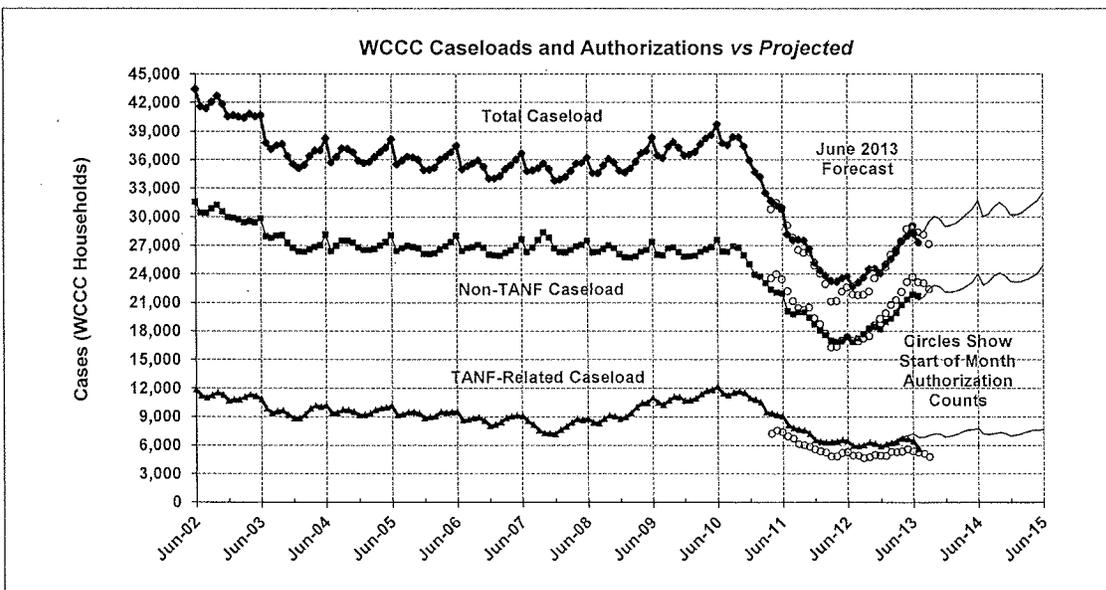


Table 1. Comparison of ECEAP, Head Start and Early Head Start

	ECEAP	Head Start	Early Head Start
Date Founded	1985	1965	1995
Funding Source	State	Federal	Federal
Average Funds per Slot to Grantees/Contractors	\$6,658 per slot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region X Head Start: \$9,311 per slot • AI/AN Head Start: \$8,573 per slot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region X Early Head Start: \$14,689 per slot • AI/AN Early Head Start: \$11,634 per slot
<i>Per slot allocations vary by contractor/grantee.</i>		These amounts include the dedicated staff training and development funds.	These amounts include the dedicated staff training and development funds.
Local Match	No required match, but many contractors receive local contributions.	20% local match required (can be in-kind).	Same as Head Start.
Administration	Washington State Department of Early Learning: Eight staff design, contract, provide oversight, monitor, and provide training and technical assistance.	US Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families. Larger staff than ECEAP in relation to program size, including federal staff for design and distribution of funds; regional staff for oversight and monitoring; and contracted staff for training and technical assistance.	Same as Head Start.
Grantees/Contractors	The state contracts with local organizations to operate ECEAP sites. Contractors may be public or private nonsectarian organizations, including school districts, educational service districts, community and technical colleges, local governments, or nonprofit organizations.	The federal Office of Head Start provides grants to operate Head Start and Early Head Start sites. Grantees may be any local public or nonprofit agency, including community-based and faith-based organizations, government agencies, tribal governments or for-profit agencies.	Same as Head Start.

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	ECEAP	Head Start	Early Head Start
Available Slots for Children 2011-12	8,391 slots	9,834 in Region X Head Start 1,074 in AI/AN Head Start	2,511 in Region X Early Head Start 341 in AI/AN Early Head Start
Ages of Children Served	3 and 4 years old by August 31 of the school year, with a priority for 4-year-olds In 2010-11, 83% of ECEAP children were 4 years old at the beginning of the school year; 17% were 3 years old.	3 years – 5 years In 2010-11, 64% of Region X Head Start and AI/AN Head Start children were 4 years old; 36% were under 4 years old. Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (birth through 5 years): In 2010-11, 21% of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start children were 4 years old; 19% were 3 years old, 38% were 1 or 2 years old and 21% were under 1 year old.	Birth – 3 years In 2010-11, 34% of the children served in Region X Early Head Start and AI/AN Early Head Start were under 1 year old; 66% were 1 year or older.
Eligible Populations <i>Of eligible children and families, the most vulnerable are prioritized for enrollment in the limited slots</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families up to 110% of federal poverty level – see Income Eligibility Guidelines table below Families not income-eligible but impacted by development risk factors (e.g., delays) or environmental risk factors (e.g., child protective services involvement,) up to 10% of enrolled children statewide. Children who qualify for the special education, regardless of income Children in foster care or receiving TANF qualify based on income. Children from families with the lowest incomes, homeless, in foster care or with multiple risk factors are prioritized for the limited slots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families up to 130% of federal poverty level (prioritizing those below 100%) – see Income Eligibility Guidelines table below Families not income-eligible but impacted by development risk factors (e.g., delays) or environmental risk factors (e.g., child protective services involvement) (up to 10% per grantee) Children with special needs (required to be 10% of enrolled children) Children who are homeless, in foster care or child welfare, or receiving TANF, regardless of income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Head Start. <p><i>plus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnant women up to 130% federal poverty level (prioritizing those below 100%) -- see Table 2 for Income Eligibility Guidelines

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	ECEAP	Head Start	Early Head Start
Children with Risk Factors – 2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Foster Care</i>: 3% • <i>Homeless</i>: 7% • <i>Individualized Education Program (IEP) for children with disabilities</i>: 9% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Foster Care</i>: Head Start 3%; AI/AN Head Start 8% • <i>Homeless</i>: Head Start 7%; AI/AN Head Start 4% • <i>Individual Education Program (IEP) for children with disabilities</i>: Head Start 12%; AI/AN Head Start 17% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Foster Care</i>: Early Head Start 4%; AI/AN Early Head Start 11% • <i>Homeless</i>: Early Head Start 9%; AI/AN Early Head Start 7% • <i>Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for children with disabilities</i>: Early Head Start 15%; AI/AN Early Head Start 7%
		Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (Birth through 5 years)	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Foster Care</i>: less than 1% • <i>Homeless</i>: 1% • <i>Individual Education Program (IEP) for children with Disabilities</i>: 9% 	
Program Design	Classroom-based	Center-based (classroom), home-based, or a combination of the two, depending on community need.	Same as Head Start.
Minimum Hours per Year	Minimum of 320 preschool classroom hours per year.	Minimum of 448 preschool classroom hours per year for center-based programs.	Same as Head Start for center-based programs. Home-based option includes weekly 90-minute visits and bi-monthly group socialization opportunities.
Family Partnership	3 hours of family support <i>and</i> 3 hours of parent-teacher conferences per child per year.	At least 3 home visits per child per year for center-based programs.	Same as Head Start.
Health Screening and Exam	Child receives a health and developmental screening, a well-child exam and a dental screening within 90 days.	Child receives a health and developmental screening within the first 45 days of enrolling in the program, and a well-child exam and a dental screening within 90 days.	Same as Head Start.

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ECEAP**Head Start****Early Head Start****Teacher Qualifications**

Lead teachers must have one of the following:

- Associate degree or higher with 30 quarter credits in early childhood education; or
- A Washington state teaching certificate with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education (PreK-3) or in Early Childhood Special Education.

Assistant teachers must have one of the following:

- 12 quarter credits in early childhood education; or
- A CDA credential.

As of 10/1/2011, a teacher in each classroom must have one of the following:

- Associate, bachelor's or advanced degree in early childhood education; or
- Associate, bachelor's or advanced degree in a related field and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool; or
- Bachelor's degree, admission to the Teach for America program, success in an early childhood content exam, and attendance at a Teach for America summer training institute that includes teaching preschool children.

Starting in 2013, 50% of the lead teachers in center-based Head Start agencies nationwide must have at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, or in a related field with coursework equivalent to a major in early childhood education.

Assistant teachers: Starting in 2013, all teaching assistants in center-based Head Start agencies must:

- Have a child development associate (CDA) credential; or
- Be enrolled in a CDA program to be completed in two years; or
- Have an associate or bachelor's degree in any area, or be enrolled in a program leading to this degree.

Currently center-based Early Head Start teachers must have at least:

- A CDA credential;

And

- Training or equivalent coursework in early childhood development.

As of 09/30/2012, all Early Head Start teachers must have:

- A CDA credential;

And

- Training or equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

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ECEAP**Head Start****Early Head Start****Staff Training and Development**

ECEAP lead teachers and family support specialists must attend at least 15 hours of professional development workshops or classes per year.

All staff who work with children must have training in first aid and infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation; disaster planning; and preventing, identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

DEL provides training and technical assistance to ECEAP. Contractors support additional training with their regular per slot funds.

Teachers must attend at least 15 hours of professional development workshops or classes per year.

All staff who work with children must have training in first aid and infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation; disease prevention; disaster planning; and preventing, identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

Fifty percent of federal Head Start training and technical assistance funds are distributed directly to grantees for staff training and development.

Same as Head Start.

Early Learning Framework (Outcomes)

ECEAP contractors must use an early learning framework to plan developmentally appropriate early childhood education. This framework informs the environment, daily routine, curriculum, adult-child interactions, guidance, screening and referral, assessment and individualization, and parent-teacher conferences. The curriculum must be aligned with the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks*.

Head Start's Child Development and Early Learning Framework guides staff and parents in selecting curricula and assessment tools to support each child in making progress. The framework uses 11 areas of knowledge and development, or "domains" that are comparable to the areas of development in the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines*.

There is not yet an early learning framework for Early Head Start, but there are specific Early Head Start performance standards that address learning and development expectations for infants and toddlers.

The income guidelines for ECEAP, Head Start and Early Head Start are keyed to the federal poverty guidelines, also called federal poverty level. See the table below.

Table 2. Income Eligibility Guidelines (2012)

Number of people in family	Poverty Guidelines	110% of Poverty (maximum for ECEAP)	130% of Poverty (maximum for Head Start)
1	\$11,170	\$12,287	\$14,521
2	\$15,130	\$16,643	\$19,669
3	\$19,090	\$20,999	\$24,817
4	\$23,050	\$25,355	\$29,965
5	\$27,010	\$29,711	\$35,113
6	\$30,970	\$34,067	\$40,261
7	\$34,930	\$38,423	\$45,409
8	\$38,890	\$42,779	\$50,557

Source: Federal Register, Vol. 77, No. 17, January 26, 2012, pp. 4034-4035