

ECEAP Highlights

Scope of Services

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is Washington's comprehensive 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 education, nutrition, health, and family support services.

- A minimum of 320 preschool classroom hours per year, in no less than 30 weeks and a minimum of 2.5 hours per class session.
- Maximum class size is 20, though ECEAP contractors may integrate individual funded "slots" in settings other than traditional classrooms. A minimum 1:9 adult/child ratio.
- Lead teachers must have an associate degree or higher with 30 quarter credits in early childhood education. Lead teachers and family support specialists must attend at least 15 hours of professional development workshops or classes per year.
- Families receive three formal parent- teacher conferences and three family support visits per year
- Children receive developmental, vision and hearing screening, immunization verification, and nutrition support services
- Family engagement in program governance and leadership skill development such as advocating for their child.

Availability of Services

ECEAP is operated across the state in 37 of 39 counties at 269 sites. Many communities also have similar Head Start programs available to families. The 39 contracted service providers comprise a mix of organizations, including educational service districts, school districts, community colleges, local governments, and nonprofit organizations, some of whom run ECEAP and Head Start.

Eligibility

Children are eligible for ECEAP if they are at least three-years-old, but not yet five-years-old, by August 31 of the school year, and meet one of the following criteria:

- Have family income at or below 110% of federal poverty level (\$25,905 per year for a family of four). [Notably, 2/3 of participating families are below 80% FPL, \$18,840 per year for a family of four]
- Qualify for school district special education services
- Experience developmental or environmental risk factors that could affect school success

ECEAP prioritizes enrollment of children who will be eligible for kindergarten the following year and children who are in foster care, are homeless, are from families with lowest incomes or have multiple risk factors.

Funding and Access

The ECEAP budget is \$136,703,000 for the 2013-15 biennium.

- Of this, 96.6 percent goes directly to communities to benefit children and families, at an average of \$6,660 per slot. This amount does not include DEL monitoring and quality assurance dollars.
- In FY14, ECEAP has 8,741 slots. In FY15, this will increase to 10,091 slots and the average slot rate will increase by 10%.
- Washington is serving 37 percent of children who are eligible for ECEAP with 32,422 more children eligible but not served by ECEAP or the federal Head Start program. In May 2013, there were 1,186 four-year-olds and 1,281 three-year-olds on ECEAP waiting lists.

Information about Programs and Participants

Contractors enter their program and child data in DEL's Early Learning Management System (ELMS). Data collected include:

- Child characteristics & demographics
- Information about family members
- Program eligibility information
- Enrollment
- Services/programs provided to child
- Organization/site information & demographics

Program Monitoring and Quality

DEL monitors contract compliance and adherence to program performance standards through:

- Contract monitoring and monthly calls with ECEAP contractors
- Intensive on-site reviews every four-years
- Site visits
- ELMS data analysis
- Action plan development and follow-up

Contractors use a "continuous improvement system" which includes:

- Staff training regarding *ECEAP Performance Standards*
- Monitoring of service delivery
- Recordkeeping of needed program improvements
- Timely technical support and improvements
- In 2014 -2015, all ECEAP contractors will join Early Achievers

Child Outcomes

ECEAP increases children's social-emotional, physical and pre-academic skills, and strengthens families to help them support their children's success. ECEAP ensures that each child receives up-to-date immunizations, medical exams and dental screenings so they start school with optimal health. ECEAP contractors assess children's social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development a minimum of two times each year using the Teaching Strategies GOLD® the same whole-child assessment tool used in the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS). This allows statewide reporting of assessment results and strengthens P-3 alignment efforts.