

CHAPTER 174

[Substitute Senate Bill No. 6181]

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM—
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

AN ACT Relating to the early childhood education and assistance program; amending RCW 28A.34A.020, 28A.34A.030, 28A.34A.040, 28A.34A.050, 28A.34A.060, 28A.34A.070, 28A.34A.080, and 28A.34A.110; creating a new section; and declaring an emergency.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that the early childhood education and assistance program provides for the educational, social, health, nutritional, and cultural development of children at risk of failure when they reach school age. The long-term benefits to society in the form of greater educational attainment, employment, and projected lifetime earnings as well as the savings to be realized, from lower crime rates, welfare support, and reduced teenage pregnancy, have been demonstrated through lifelong research of at-risk children and preschool programs.

The legislature further finds that existing federal head start programs and state-supported early childhood education programs provide services for less than one-third of the eligible children in Washington.

The legislature intends to encourage development of community partnerships for children at risk by authorizing a program of voluntary grants and contributions from business and community organizations to increase opportunities for children to participate in early childhood education.

Sec. 2. Section 2, chapter 418, Laws of 1985 and RCW 28A.34A.020 are each amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW 28A.34A.050.

(2) "At risk" means a child (~~at least four years of age and~~) not eligible for kindergarten whose family circumstances would qualify that child for eligibility under the federal head start program.

(3) "Department" means the department of community development.

(4) "Eligible child" means an at-risk child as defined in this section who is not a participant in a federal or state program providing like educational services and may include children who are eligible under rules adopted by the department if the number of such children equals not more than ten percent of the total enrollment in the preschool program.

(5) "Approved preschool programs" means those state-supported education and special assistance programs which are recognized by the department of community development as meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to qualify under this chapter and are designated

as eligible for funding by the department under RCW 28A.34A.070 and 28A.34A.090.

Sec. 3. Section 3, chapter 418, Laws of 1985 and RCW 28A.34A.030 are each amended to read as follows:

The department of community development shall administer a state-supported preschool education and assistance program to assist eligible children with educational, social, health, nutritional, and cultural development to enhance their opportunity for success in the common school system. Eligible children shall be admitted to approved preschool programs to the extent that the legislature provides funds, and additional eligible children may be admitted to the extent that grants and contributions from community sources provide sufficient funds for a program equivalent to that supported by state funds.

Sec. 4. Section 4, chapter 418, Laws of 1985 and RCW 28A.34A.040 are each amended to read as follows:

Approved preschool programs shall receive state-funded support through the department. School districts, and existing head start grantees in cooperation with school districts, are eligible to participate as providers of the state preschool program. School districts may contract with other governmental or nongovernmental nonsectarian organizations to conduct a portion of the state program. Funds appropriated for the state program shall be used to establish new or expanded preschool programs, and shall not be used to supplant federally supported head start programs. Funds obtained by providers through voluntary grants or contributions from individuals, agencies, corporations, or organizations may be used to expand or enhance preschool programs so long as program standards established by the department are maintained, but shall not be used to supplant federally supported head start programs or state supported preschool programs. Persons applying to conduct the preschool program shall identify targeted groups and the number of children to be served, program components, the qualifications of instructional and special staff, the source and amount of grants or contributions from sources other than state funds, facilities and equipment support, and transportation and personal care arrangements.

Sec. 5. Section 5, chapter 418, Laws of 1985 and RCW 28A.34A.050 are each amended to read as follows:

The department shall establish an advisory committee composed of interested parents and representatives from the state board of education, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the division of children and family services within the department of social and health services, early childhood education and development staff preparation programs, the head start programs, school districts, and such other community and business organizations as deemed necessary by the department to assist with the

establishment of the preschool program and advise the department on matters regarding the on-going promotion and operation of the program.

Sec. 6. Section 6, chapter 418, Laws of 1985 as amended by section 101, chapter 518, Laws of 1987 and RCW 28A.34A.060 are each amended to read as follows:

The department shall adopt rules under chapter 34.04 RCW for the ~~((establishment))~~ administration of the preschool program ~~((, not later than six months after the effective date of this act))~~. Federal head start program criteria, including set aside provisions for the children of seasonal and migrant farmworkers and native American populations living either on or off reservation, to the extent practicable, shall be considered as guidelines for the state preschool early childhood assistance program.

The department in developing rules for the preschool program shall consult with the advisory committee, and shall consider such factors as coordination with existing head start and other preschool programs, the preparation necessary for instructors, qualifications of instructors, adequate space and equipment, and special transportation needs. The rules shall specifically require the preschool programs to provide for parental involvement at a level not less than that provided under the federal head start program criteria.

Sec. 7. Section 7, chapter 418, Laws of 1985 and RCW 28A.34A.070 are each amended to read as follows:

The department shall review applications ~~((received within nine months after the effective date of this act, and designate those programs eligible to commence operation within two months of such date))~~ from public or private nonsectarian organizations for state funding of early childhood education and assistance programs and award funds on a competitive basis as determined by department rules.

Sec. 8. Section 8, chapter 418, Laws of 1985 and RCW 28A.34A.080 are each amended to read as follows:

The governor shall report to the legislature before ~~((the convening of the))~~ each regular session of the legislature ~~((which commences after at least a year from the effective date of this act))~~ convening in an odd-numbered year, on the merits of continuing and expanding the preschool program or instituting other means of providing early childhood development assistance. The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall assist the governor in the preparation of the biennial report and shall be consulted on all issues addressed in said report. ~~((This report shall consider the experiences of federal and state preschool programs and address the preschool education recommendations submitted to the legislature during 1985.))~~

If the governor recommends the continuation of a state-funded preschool program, then the governor's report shall include specific recommendations on at least the following issues:

- (1) The desired relationships of a state-funded preschool education and assistance program with the common school system;
- (2) The types of children and their needs that the program should serve;
- (3) The appropriate level of state support for implementing a comprehensive preschool education and assistance program for all eligible children, including related programs to prepare instructors and provide facilities, equipment, and transportation;
- (4) The state administrative structure necessary to implement the program; and
- (5) The establishment of a system to examine and monitor the effectiveness of preschool educational and assistance services for disadvantaged children to measure, among other elements, if possible, how the children completing this program compare to the average level of performance of all state students in their grade level, and to those at-risk students who do not have access to this program. The evaluation system shall examine how the percentage of these children needing access to special education or remedial programs compares to the overall percentage of children needing such services and compares to the percentage of at-risk students who do not have access to this program needing such services.

Sec. 9. Section 11, chapter 418, Laws of 1985 and RCW 28A.34A.110 are each amended to read as follows:

The department may solicit gifts, grants, conveyances, bequests and devises for the use or benefit of the preschool state education and assistance program established by this ((act)) chapter. The department shall actively solicit support from business and industry and from the federal government for the preschool state education and assistance program and shall assist local programs in developing partnerships with the community for children-at-risk.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 10. This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 11. If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

Passed the Senate February 12, 1988.

Passed the House March 3, 1988.

Approved by the Governor March 22, 1988.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 22, 1988.