



WSPTA recognizes that the path to a good education and successful career starts early. High-quality early learning helps children enter kindergarten ready to learn, prepared to thrive in school and beyond. Positive early childhood experiences also build the foundation for a skilled workforce, responsible community, and a thriving economy.

Background

ECEAP is Washington's pre-kindergarten program, serving at-risk three- and four-year olds and their families, providing preschool education, health services, intensive family support, and parent engagement and training. ECEAP addresses the needs of the whole child to ensure that gains are sustained.¹ ECEAP has proven results in getting children ready for kindergarten²:

- 47.4% of children are 'kindergarten ready' in 6 out of 6 developmental domains.
- For low income children, however (185% of federal poverty level (FPL)) this drops to 32.6 percent of children ready.
- For other categories measured, the numbers are even lower (Homeless 25.6%, Migrant 18.8%, Limited English 31.1%, American Indian 32.1%, Hispanic/Latino 32.3%).
- Compared to the low-income group, ECEAP participants were 11.4% more likely to be kindergarten-ready in all domains.
- Hispanic children who attended ECEAP were 21% more likely to be kindergarten-ready than their low-income peers, American Indian children were 38% more likely, Asian children 32% more likely, and African American children 14% more likely. Dual Language ECEAP children were 33% more likely to be ready than their low income dual language counterparts, and special education students were 14% more likely to be ready.

Proposed Solutions

- Expand the number of ECEAP slots. Every year thousands of children remain on waiting lists. Research confirms that comprehensive preschool interventions work and are a strategic investment.
- Raise the income eligibility for ECEAP to enable programs to recognize risk factors and prioritize slots based on the family's and child's overall challenges rather than strictly income.
- Moving from 47.4% school-ready to Department of Early Learning's goal of 90% school-ready will require substantial expansion to ECEAP eligibility and removal of other systemic barriers such as sufficient facilities, in areas where there is need, and an ample highly-capable workforce.³



For More Information

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Citations

1. <https://del.wa.gov/eceap>
2. Washington State Department of Early Learning. 2016-17 ECEAP Outcomes Report. <https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/ECEAP/ECEAP%20Outcomes.pdf>
3. Washington State Department of Early Learning (October 2017). ECEAP Expansion Briefing. <https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/ECEAP/ECEAP%20Expansion%20Briefing%20October%202017.pdf>

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