



# Washington

## *Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program*

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a part-day pre-kindergarten program for low-income children. The state provides direct grants to 33 contractors. All types of organizations and programs are eligible, provided they meet the state standards. Program standards focus on comprehensive services, including health and family support services.

### **Eligibility**

**Income:** children from families earning below 110 percent of the federal poverty level receive priority; up to 10 percent of children may come from higher income families if they have other risk factors

**Age:** 4-year-olds who are not eligible for kindergarten receive first priority; then 3-year-olds

**Priority:** families with the lowest income or those with multiple needs; criteria for prioritizing children include: children who are not served by other federal or state programs, children from low-income families or those receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; at least 10 percent of slots must be reserved for migrant or Native American families

### **Length of Program**

A minimum of 240 hours of child direct services over 32 weeks

### **Eligible Providers**

Any public or private nonsectarian organization, including school districts, educational service districts, community and technical colleges, local governments, and nonprofit organizations

### **Number Served<sup>1</sup>**

6,882 (2003-04): 58 percent in public schools, 18 percent in child care centers, 7 percent in community organizations, 5 percent in churches, and 18 percent in other settings

### **Total Annual Budget**

\$30,526,722 (2003-04): \$5 million from state matching funds for the Child Care Development Fund, and the rest from state general revenues; programs also reported over \$9.8 million in in-kind donations

### **Monitoring**

Programs must comply with extensive program and curriculum standards. The Children's Services Unit (CSU) of the Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development is responsible for reviewing each ECEAP program every four

<sup>1</sup> For updated figures on the program budget and number served, please see the NIEER State Preschool Yearbook at: <http://nieer.org/yearbook/states/>

years. Reviews include on-site visits that generally last three to five days. The review process includes a self-assessment in addition to a review by the agency. Reviewers meet with program staff at the conclusion of the review to discuss strengths and areas for growth. Training and technical assistance is provided as necessary. Family child care homes and child care centers must also have a child care license.

## Governance

### **How are state pre-k programs integrated into community-based settings?**

The statute states that public or private nonsectarian organizations, including, but not limited to school districts, educational service districts, community and technical colleges, local governments, or nonprofit organizations, are eligible to participate. The state designated 33 contractors to administer ECEAP, such as the City of Seattle and the Puget Sound Education Service District, and each contractor makes decisions about where and how to integrate ECEAP into the community based on a needs assessment. The state ECEAP office has a limited role in the selection of sub-contractors in its review of contractor applications.

### **Are there requirements to integrate the state pre-k and subsidized child care programs at the state or local level?**

According to the statute, the Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development must 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 Washington 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. The Advisory Committee was actively involved in the implementation of ECEAP in the late 1980's and early 1990's, but then was not needed for the ongoing operation of the program. In 2004, the committee has been reconvened to provide input on the future direction of ECEAP.

Most state-level decisions about integration between ECEAP and child care are likely to occur in the Child Care Coordinating Council (CCCC). There is overlap between the ECEAP advisory committee and the CCCC. Four members of the CCCC are on the advisory committee, including the managing director of the Children's Services Unit, which oversees ECEAP.

At the local level, the 33 contractors must promote coordination in the areas they serve, and they often serve a local or regional jurisdiction. Coordination generally happens through a biennial local needs assessment of families. According to the ECEAP performance standards, the intent of the needs assessment is to align the program with Head Start, ensure community responsiveness, ensure accountability, promote quality, and integrate early care and education programs with family and health supports.

## Procedures and Supports for Community-based Providers

### **What are the rules/guidelines for notifying and selecting pre-k providers?**

Since there is no new money, there is no outreach to potential contractors. At the local level, the needs assessment should identify potential new partners. There is no standard process for selecting contractors, and there have been no new contractors in recent history.

### **What resources are available to help providers become eligible to deliver pre-k services?**

Until June 2004, some money was available to help existing teachers obtain credentials. In 2003, one contractor received a one-time award to help with start-up at a new site, but this is unusual.

### **Do teachers working in community settings earn comparable wages and benefits once they obtain the same credential as teachers in school-based settings?**

No, and ECEAP loses teachers to Head Start and public schools because of the salary difference.

## Supports for Working Families

### **Is there any explicit discussion in the legislation or regulations of extending the day, coordinating with the child care subsidy program, or helping working families?**

No. However, in 2004 there were 67 ECEAP sites that were either integrated with child care for a full service day or offer care before and after ECEAP services for enrolled children. This represents over 28 percent of the total ECEAP sites statewide.

### **What policies help working families access pre-k and other supports?**

Programs are strongly encouraged to provide full-day full-year options and to leverage federal, state, and local funds to make this possible. The local needs assessment should identify the gaps and programs that can be used to meet the needs of working families. The state has also produced a series of marketing material that include information on the need for child care and ECEAP services to work together in order to encourage the provision of full-day services.

Family support is a main tenet of the ECEAP program and several supports are incorporated into the program standards, including a requirement that programs provide family support services using an approach that builds from parent/guardian strengths and involvement, and supports parent empowerment and family advocacy. Staff and families must work together to develop reciprocal relationships. Family support practices must address family assets and needs through a variety of service strategies. Children must also be transported to and from program activities and ECEAP funds can be used for this purpose if necessary.

Programs must provide access to health services, including provision of appropriate medical, dental, mental health, nutrition and therapeutic services as indicated by the child's health status and access to an on-going source of health care; as well as referral of parents/guardians to appropriate services that address physical, mental, emotional and medical issues not covered by ECEAP services. Staff must assist parents/guardians in planning for any necessary follow-up

treatment and in accessing health resources. Evaluation of the plan's implementation must occur before the end of the program year. ECEAP funds will be used as a last resort for professional, medical, dental, nutrition and mental health services.

## Funding

### **What is the per-child payment for the pre-k program?**

The state average per-child payment was \$5,259 in FY 2004. Contractors are paid on a per-slot basis, but there is no formula. Funding ranges from \$4,800 to \$6,700 based on costs in different areas and economies of scale.

### **How does the state pre-k funding affect other potential sources of funds for a provider?**

The same child cannot receive Head Start and ECEAP, although there may be classrooms that blend Head Start and ECEAP dollars. Child care subsidies are pro-rated and only available for hours of care provided outside of the ECEAP hours.

## Sources

- Interview: 07/20/2004 with Lynne Shanafelt, Judy King and Eileen Ackerman
- Legislation: [http://www.cted.wa.gov/uploads/Appendix\\_V.htm](http://www.cted.wa.gov/uploads/Appendix_V.htm)
- Program Guidelines and Requirements: <http://www.cted.wa.gov/eceap>
- Sub-contracting requirements: <http://www.cted.wa.gov/eceap>
- Compliance Review: [http://www.cted.wa.gov/uploads/Appendix\\_XVII.doc](http://www.cted.wa.gov/uploads/Appendix_XVII.doc)
- Program Review tools: <http://www.cted.wa.gov/eceap> (scroll down halfway)
- Evaluation: <http://www.cted.wa.gov/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=232&tabindex=55>

For information about national trends, read CLASP's *All Together Now: State Experiences in Using Community-Based Child Care to Provide Pre-kindergarten* at [http://www.clasp.org/publications/all\\_together\\_now.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/publications/all_together_now.pdf).