



# WSA Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP

*Serving ECEAP, Head Start, Migrant Head Start,  
Tribal Head Start and Early Head Start Programs  
and Families*



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## **Long Term Thinking required to make Education Investments Pay Off**

Today the Education Committee Joint Task Force is meeting in Federal Way to discuss how to meet the requirements of the McCleary decision on education funding. In developing a plan that excludes early learning funding, they may be missing the forest for the trees. The committee is addressing the specific requirements of McCleary in the context of the statutory definition of 'Basic Education', but ignoring investments that would actually improve educational outcomes. High quality early learning programs, in study after study, have been shown to be the single most effective and cost-effective way to improve outcomes for children in K-12 and beyond, and reduces short-term costs (special ed, grade retention, remedial services) within the K-12 system itself.

***Joel Ryan, Executive Director,***

"Washington State has always been committed to high quality early learning – we have the ECEAP program in place serving thousands of children, but more than 32,000 children are eligible but not served by either ECEAP or Head Start. We're not going to be able to reach the kinds of outcomes we want for our children in K-12 if thousands of at-risk kids are arriving at the school door without the skills they need to succeed."

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) recently released its annual report on ECEAP. The report looked how well our state's pre-k program did in getting our most at-risk children ready for school. The report reviewed the outcomes data of the 40 contractors providing ECEAP services to 8,391 three and four year olds in 2011-2012. The report found that the ECEAP program was hugely successful and that children made incredible progress during the school year. To view the full report put together by DEL go to

[http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/eceap/docs/ECEAP\\_outcomes\\_2011-12.pdf](http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/eceap/docs/ECEAP_outcomes_2011-12.pdf)

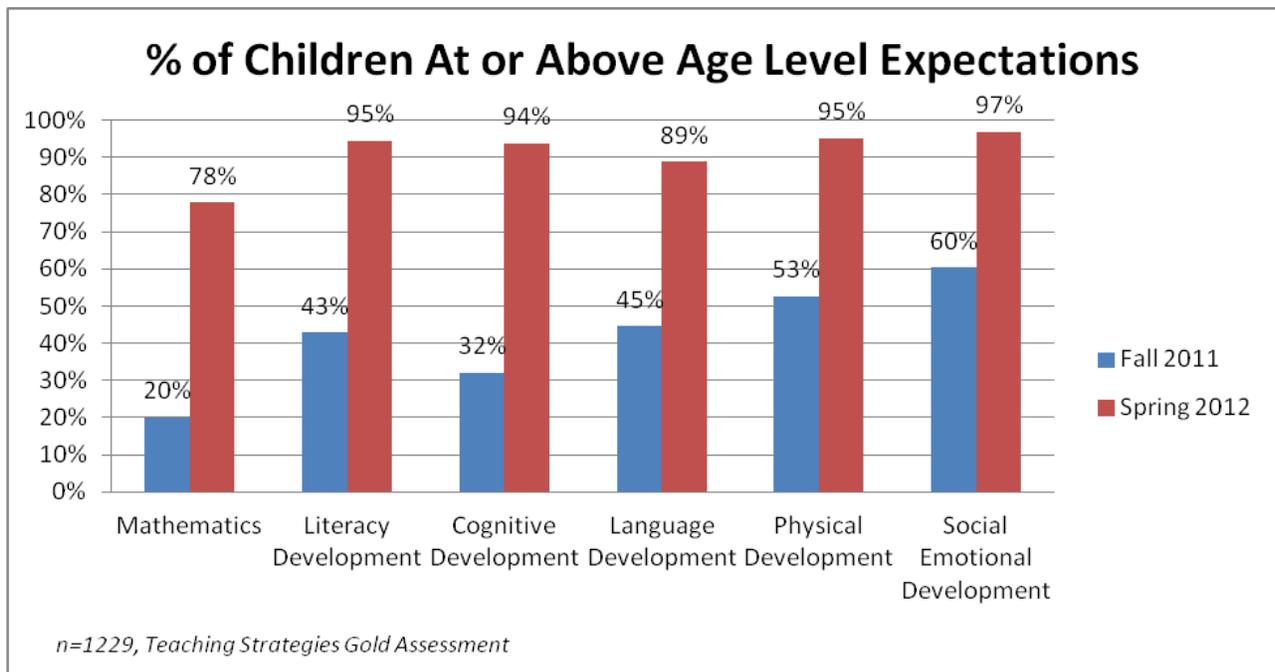
### **Key Findings**

The recent ECEAP outcomes report looked at several key areas to evaluate ECEAP programs. Here's how they did:

- **Children Met and Exceeded Goals in Language and Literacy.** In *Literacy Development*, only 43% of children entering in the fall were assessed 'at or above' expected age level. By spring 2012, **95% of children were 'at or above' age level.** [Studies](#) have shown that children who are

not reading proficiently by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are four times more likely to drop out before graduating. ECEAP gets children on track for school success.

- **Children acquired the foundational mathematics skills they needed.** In mathematics, which includes special relationships, number concepts and operations, measuring and patterns, **57.8% of children moved from below age level** in the fall to at or above age level between fall and spring. Studies show that children’s math understanding as they enter kindergarten predicts their success level throughout their education.
- **Children Developed the Social-Emotional Skills to Sit, Pay Attention, Play Well With Others, and Learn.** Studies have shown that one of the key indicators of future success in school and work is the development of self control. Sharing, cooperating, showing patience and handling frustration well allow children to interact with peers and adults in a positive manner. At the beginning of the year 24.4% of children showed ‘strength’ in self control. By the end of the year 41.5% showed ‘strength’ in this category, and only 3.1% showed ‘concerns’. It is social emotional development gains like this that make ECEAP such a strong program – these [‘soft skills’](#) are predictive of future success in school and adult life.
- **Children Received the Medical Help They Needed So They Could Learn.** At the time of enrollment 33.9% of ECEAP children were behind on their medical exams. By the end of the year, only 9.2 percent were behind schedule. 7.2% of children received medical help as a result of the ECEAP medical exams, and 13% of children received an individualized ECEAP health plan for a chronic condition. Early health intervention has both short and long term benefits. In the short term, conditions that affect learning are identified and treated so children are ready for kindergarten. In the long term, programs like ECEAP have shown significant benefits into adulthood, including a large drop in mortality rates and lower levels of heart disease, smoking, and obesity.



### **About ECEAP**

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is Washington's pre-kindergarten program serving at-risk three and four year olds and their families. ECEAP provides children with preschool education, health services, intensive family support, and parent involvement. In 2010-2011 ECEAP served 8,391 children. More than 93% of the children enrolled in ECEAP were living at or below 110% of the federal poverty level, 7.1% of the children were homeless, 3% were in foster care, and 9.1% were on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) designed for children with physical or cognitive disabilities.

### **About WSA**

The Washington State Association of Head Start/ECEAP is a statewide organization composed of representatives from ECEAP, Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start, and Native American Head Start. The association has been in existence since the late 1960's, and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1986. The organization advocates for Head Start and for ECEAP in Olympia and in Washington DC. You can visit our web site at [www.wsaheadstarteceap.com](http://www.wsaheadstarteceap.com).