



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday June 4, 2014

Contact:

Joel Ryan, Joel@wsaheadstarteceap.com, (253) 486-9077

Katy Warren, Katy@wsaheadstarteceap.com, (206) 291-2021

Washington's Model Pre-K Celebrates Dramatic Gains for the Most At-Risk Students

(Note to editors and reporters: a new take on high school graduation stories, meet the Class of 2028.)

It is high school graduation season and some of the most at-risk members of Washington's class of 2028 are taking a big step towards earning their high school diplomas. They are graduating from preschool in the state's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), [ranked among the nation's highest quality state pre-k programs](#) in 2014 by the National Institute for Early Education Research.

The ECEAP program has prepared children living in deep poverty to succeed from kindergarten through twelfth grade for more than a quarter century. Research shows a year in quality pre-k classrooms like ECEAP boosts a student's chances of graduating from high school by 10-20%, instead of dropping out or going to jail. That's one of the reasons why Washington State Institute of Public Policy [estimates](#) that programs such as ECEAP can save taxpayers \$4 for every \$1 invested.

A recent [report](#) from the Department of Early Learning shows how, reporting dramatic language, math and cognitive gains among ECEAP students during the course of the 2012-13 school year.

- By the end of the school year, nearly all ECEAP students were at or above age-level in language (90%) and cognitive development (94%), up dramatically from 52 percent and 54 percent respectively.
- In literacy development, 94 percent of children were at or above age level by spring, up from 50 percent in the fall.
- In math skills, 81 percent of ECEAP students reached age level, while only 26 percent were at that level in the fall.

Reaching Washington's Most At-Risk Children – and Their Families

Research has shown a clear link between the challenges and traumas children experience from birth to 5 and later health and education outcomes. The goal of ECEAP is to reach the most at risk children, work with the whole family, and reduce those impacts. Here is a snapshot of the 9800 children enrolled in ECEAP at some point during this year:

- 4,112 children were in families living below 50 percent of the poverty line.
- 943 children were homeless during the ECEAP program year.
- 913 children had an identified physical, cognitive or behavioral disability
- 215 children were in foster care and 845 were in families with Child Protective Services involvement.
- 1285 children have a parent experiencing mental health issues, 764 have a parent with a current or past substance abuse issue, and 936 were in a family with domestic violence.
- 394 children had a parent in jail, prison, or a detention center.
- 1,203 children had parents that never finished middle school.

School readiness for at-risk children includes the high-quality classroom experience for the child and also addresses the needs of the whole family, who will support their child's education and development after they leave ECEAP. ECEAP programs work with families on child health, nutrition, employment and educational goals, and parenting skills.

Interested In Meeting Members of the High School Class of 2028?

This month, ECEAP children are graduating around Washington, and it's an excellent opportunity to see the type of high-quality pre-kindergarten that President Barack Obama wants to recreate around the country. Many programs will hold celebrations to acknowledge all their graduates accomplished this year. If you would like to visit an ECEAP program in your community and meet the graduates and their families please contact us. You can email Katy Warren at Katy@wsaheadstarteceap.com or Joel Ryan at Joel@wsaheadstarteceap.com. We would be happy to set up a visit.

###