



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*



For Immediate Release: October 19, 2011

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“ECEAP is the single best investment we can make in the future of a child and the future of this state” – Governor Christine Gregoire

With lawmakers returning after Thanksgiving for the special session, decisions will need to be made about which state programs to cut. That is why WSA is delighted that Governor Gregoire has expressed such strong support for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), which is celebrating 25 years of providing high quality early learning services to at risk children and families in Washington. Since the program was created in 1986 more than 170,000 children have been served. At the 25th Anniversary Celebration that took place this month [Governor Chris Gregoire reiterated her commitment](#) to ECEAP and commended lawmakers on both sides of the aisle for supporting the program:

“We need to continue our investment in early childhood education and in ECEAP in particular. And this last legislative session, despite cutting \$5 billion, that’s exactly what they did. That tells you that they know what you know about the return on investment. It is the single best investment we can make in the future of a child and the future of this state... And every little bit of investment we can make in ECEAP means that that child is going to be ready for kindergarten. And when they’re ready for kindergarten, they’re going to be successful.”

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) also 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 8,024 three and four year olds in 2010-2011. 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_2010-11.pdf.

Some Key Findings

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

- **Children Met and Exceeded “Kindergarten Ready” Goals in Language and Literacy.** In *Language Development*, average scores for ECEAP children reached the “kindergarten ready” goal by spring, and in *Literacy Development* ECEAP children

exceeded the 'kindergarten ready' goal. [Studies](#) have shown that children who are not reading proficiently by 3rd grade are four times more likely to drop out before graduating. ECEAP gets children on track for school success.

- **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 24.6% 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 39% of ECEAP children were behind on their medical exams. By the end of the year, only 4.2 percent were behind schedule. 5.4% of children received medical help as a result of the ECEAP medical exams, and 11.5% 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 8,024 children, with more than 18,600 children eligible for ECEAP, but unable to attend because of a lack of space. More than 93 percent of the children enrolled in ECEAP were living at or below 110% of the federal poverty level, 7.1 percent of the children were homeless, and 3 percent were in foster care. 9.1% of children were on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) designed for children with physical or cognitive disabilities. This new data on ECEAP is on top of the National Institute of Early Education Research report in which ECEAP received 9 out of 10 quality points. [NIEER](#) ranks ECEAP as one of the very best state pre-k programs in the country.

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.