



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

Feds Commit to Quality State Pre-K Expansion – Washington Should Follow Their Lead; Legislative Response to McCleary Should Include Major Early Learning Investments

A statement from Joel Ryan, Executive Director:

The Department of Education released its [Preschool Development Grants](#) opportunity today, a major investment in high quality early learning. Washington has been making progress in expanding and improving early learning opportunities, but we have a long way to go. Washington is [32nd](#) in terms of access to pre-k for 4 year olds, and other early learning programs are equally underfunded. Analysis completed by staff in Olympia finds that **less than 1% of state dollars go to support early learning**. This is truly surprising considering what we know about its [return on investment](#), the growing knowledge we have about brain development from [I-LABS](#), and the [overwhelming support of the public](#). Early learning seems to be the one thing in Olympia that both Republicans and Democrats agree on. Just a few weeks ago, Senator John Braun (R-Centralia), Deputy Republican Whip, visited a local ECEAP program in his district and said that ‘in terms of bang for your buck, this is one of the best investments for the state.’ Governor Jay Inslee has said that early learning is the ‘single most important investment we can make in the long term future of our children.’

Next session, all eyes will be on how lawmakers meet their obligations under the McCleary court decision. Our state’s ‘paramount duty’ is to amply provide for our children’s education, and the research is clear that when children arrive unprepared, it is expensive to intervene and [many children never catch up](#). The very small financial commitment the state is currently making to early learning means that [less than half our children](#) are prepared for kindergarten. The solution to McCleary cannot rest solely on funding K-12; it must come with [real and proven reforms](#) that lead to positive educational outcomes. We should focus resources and energy on getting 100% of our children the education they need. This cannot be accomplished if we continue to spend less than 1% on getting them ready for kindergarten.

Below is the chart put together by the House Office of Program Research. If you have specific budget questions we will be happy to connect you to the staff.

2013-15 Revised Omnibus Operating Budget (2014 Supp)		
Sector	Dollars in Thousands	Percent of total
Public Schools	15,262,882	45.2%
Other Human Services	6,208,248	18.4%
DSHS	5,624,672	16.6%
Higher Education	3,098,248	9.2%
Special Appropriations	2,075,816	6.1%
Judicial, Legislative, and Gov Ops	848,962	2.5%
Early Learning	293,827	0.9%
Natural Resources	270,444	0.8%
Transportation	69,349	0.2%
Other Education	41,624	0.1%
Statewide Total	33,794,072	100.0%

*The **Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP (WSA)** is a nonprofit statewide advocacy and training organization composed of representatives from ECEAP, Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start, and Native American Head Start. In FY 2015 10,091 eligible 3- and 4-year-old children will be served in ECEAP and 10,390 in Head Start. 20,481 eligible children will not be served.*

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