



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*



MORE THAN 4200 CHILDREN ON ECEAP WAITLIST ECEAP PARENT TO TESTIFY AT HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

WSA URGES GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE TO PROTECT ECEAP FUNDING IN SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

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Joel Ryan, Executive Director of the Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP (WSA), called on the Governor and the Washington State Legislature to protect funding for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), which serves 8,023 of Washington's poorest 3 and 4 year old children and their families. On December 8th at 3:30pm the House Ways and Means Committee will hold a hearing on the impact of the Governor's across-the-board cuts. In ECEAP, this would mean 139 children cut from the program at a time when waitlists have reached a new high – more than tripling over the last three years. Thousands of eligible children will not receive the help they need both academically and in social-emotional development that they need to become 'school ready'. Taxpayers pay for this later, in the cost of remedial services, special education, dropouts and crime.

Gloria Fortune, a local ECEAP parent with two children, will testify to the committee about the importance of maintaining ECEAP funding. Her 4-year old son Mekhi, a very bright child who suffers from an autism-related disorder and epilepsy, is in his second year at ECEAP. Mekhi has the kinds of challenges that make it very difficult to succeed in school. He has made great progress as a result of the individualized learning plan and highly trained teachers at ECEAP. In other settings he has been treated as a behavior problem and made little progress, while at ECEAP he has learned and practiced key skills that he can't do without when he gets to school – how to participate in a classroom session without constant movement and disruption, how to verbalize what his needs are, how to negotiate a toy or activity with other children, and more. Many children (particularly those with special needs and English language learners) are offered a real chance to succeed in school and life as a result of two years of comprehensive ECEAP services.

Joel Ryan, Executive Director of WSA, said the following:

"The recession and the resulting budget crisis in Olympia is a direct result of three things: 1) bad choices by banks, big institutional investors, and mortgage brokers; 2) declining revenue and 4) an outdated and unfair tax system.

So if the children did not create the recession and are not the ones contributing to it, why are they the ones that must pay for it? They shouldn't. What's worse is that while the wealthiest have rebounded and are now making record profits, the

number of the children waiting to receive ECEAP services has hit a new record as well. More than 4,200 of our most at-risk children are in need of help.”

Waiting List Data from Department of Early Learning

Waiting List October 2010: 4,271 children (1,707 4 year olds and 2,564 3 year olds)
 Waiting List December 2009: 3,540 children (1,351 4-year-olds and 2,189 3-year-olds)
 Waiting List December 2008: 2,281 children
 Waiting List December 2007: 1,346 children

ECEAP Waiting List - October 30, 2010		
	3-year-olds	4-year-olds
In Foster Care	44	20
Homeless	109	62
On IEP	70	69
At or below 110% of the FPL	2142	1294
Over income - environmental risks	142	81
Over income - developmental risks	57	181
SubTotal	2564	1707
Total 3's and 4's	4271	

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 and training. In 2009-2010 ECEAP served 8,053 children, with more than 13,000 children eligible for ECEAP, but unable to attend because of a lack of space. More than 85 percent of the children enrolled in ECEAP were living at or below the poverty level, 6.6 percent of the children were homeless, and 2.4 percent were in foster care.

The recent [ECEAP outcomes report](#) found that the ECEAP program was very successful and that children made incredible progress during the school year in the key areas in which ECEAP programs are evaluated: health outcomes, social-emotional development, and learning outcomes.

Studies have shown that at-risk children without high quality preschool were 70% more likely to commit violent crimes, have lower graduation rates and higher drug use. In a 12-year longitudinal study of ECEAP (1988-2000), researchers found that ECEAP children made significantly greater academic gains, displayed more positive behaviors, enjoyed school more, and had fewer health problems than non-ECEAP children.

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.