



House Budget Protects ECEAP funding; Massive Cut to Working Connections Child Care Subsidy will affect thousands of low-income families

Kent, Washington// February 23, 2010//

Joel Ryan, Executive Director of the Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP (WSA), called on the Washington State House of Representatives to restore funding for the Working Connections Child Care Subsidy, which faces proposed \$49 million cut.

The House Ways and Means Committee put together a budget today that protects the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), but proposes a massive cut to the Working Connections Child Care Subsidy program. This cut would impact thousands of low-income working families who are barely making ends meet. Currently, working families below 200% of the federal poverty line (\$44,100 for a family of four) are eligible for the subsidy, and are responsible for a co-pay on a sliding scale based on their income. The program is mostly federally funded, and many thousands of Washington parents rely on it to keep their children in safe child care while they are at work.

Cathy Garland, President of the Board of Directors of WSA, said the following:

"Working Connections Child Care helps families pay for child care, keep their jobs and avoid welfare. The House's proposed cuts mean that a family with two children and an income as low as 130 percent of the federal poverty level might be denied services. On WCCC, this family pays \$50 towards the cost of child care. This family's child care bill would go to an average of \$1,177 per month, or 59 percent of their gross income (for a toddler and school-age child). How can a family afford this? Several families have told me they will likely need to quit their job and go back on welfare. This is moving our State in the wrong direction."

Jeanelle Reanier, Olympia parent said the following:

"WCCC makes it possible for me to avoid needing food stamps or cash assistance, as I am able to support my children with the money I earn. Even more importantly, I have a sense of purpose each day as I get up and get ready for work, knowing that I am making a positive contribution to society. I am proud to say that I work to support my family.

If I were to lose my childcare subsidy, I would have no choice but to quit my job with North Thurston Public Schools where I have worked for nearly nine years. There is no possible way that I would be able to pay for my youngest children to attend childcare and continue to meet my family's living expenses. Furthermore, without my job I would not be able to provide health insurance through my employer, which would mean that my children would need to receive medical coupons to pay for their dental and medical care.

“I work in an elementary school that has the highest percentage of free/reduced meals in our district. I know many, many parents who depend on WCCC for the very same reasons I do. If we were to have this benefit taken away, the State would not be saving money. Instead they would be transferring the financial burden to the other programs that support lower income families such as food stamps, Medicaid, and cash assistance. “

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.

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