



**WSA URGES GOVERNOR TO MAINTAIN ECEAP FUNDING IN HER BUDGET
ECONOMIC DOWNTURN MEANS RECORD WAITING LIST
3,294 THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLD CHILDREN UNSERVED**

Kent, Washington// November 30, 2009//

Joel Ryan, Executive Director of the Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP (WSA), called on the Governor to continue her strong support for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) in her supplemental budget in light of the economic downturn and the record number of children on waiting lists for ECEAP services.

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

"With the continuing economic downturn we have never had so many children and families in need of our help. Right now, there are 3,294 3- and 4-year-old low income children waiting for a chance to get into ECEAP, but they cannot enroll due to the state budget crisis. These new numbers are more than 50 percent higher than at the same point last year – a troubling all-time high in demand for these services.

We are hopeful that the Governor will continue to stand by ECEAP, especially with these staggering numbers. These children and their families are some of the poorest in our state and really have no other place to turn for help. ECEAP often serves as the only safety net for many families in need. We know that the budget situation in Olympia is difficult and tough choices will need to be made. But we remain optimistic that the Governor will not try to close the budget gap on the backs of low income children and their families."

Examples of waiting lists at local ECEAP programs across our state

Puget Sound Educational Service District (currently serving 2137 ECEAP children)

Claire Wilson, Director, of the Puget Sound ESD ECEAP Program reports the following wait list numbers:

Bates - **30** 4 year olds and **22** 3 year olds
Bethel - **37** 4 year olds and **43** 3 year olds
Chief Leschi - **2** 4 year olds and **3** 3 year olds
Clover Park - **63** 4 year olds and **104** 3 year olds
Encompass - **1** 4 year old and **4** 3 year olds
Enumclaw - **1** 4 year old and **6** 3 year olds
Federal Way - **24** 4 year olds and **47** 3 year olds
Highline - **29** 4 year olds and **64** 3 year olds
TOTALS: 315 4-year olds and 452 3-year olds

Kent - **50** 4 year olds and **52** 3 year olds
Peninsula - **9** 4 year olds and **9** 3 year olds
PCCS - **24** 4 year olds and **57** 3 year olds
Renton - **15** 4 year olds and **7** 3 year olds
Riverview - **0** 4 year olds and **5** 3 year olds
Tacoma - **20** 4 year olds and **22** 3 year olds
Tahoma - **2** 4 year olds and **1** 3 year old
Tukwila - **8** 4 year olds and **6** 3 year olds

Mid Columbia Children's Council (currently serving 18 ECEAP children)

Matthew Solomon, Executive Director, serves Stevenson, Carson, and Stabler in Skamania County. They report having 5 children on their wait list. You can reach Matthew by phone at (541) 386-2010 or by e-mail at matthewsolomon@mccheadstart.org

Omak School District (currently serving 57 ECEAP children)

Sheila Crowder runs this small rural program. She has 12 four year old children on her wait list and 17 three year old children. She says that

“The most significant impact in the increase of eligible children has been job loss. There have been two local mill closures; one in July and the other this week.”

To reach Sheila directly you can call her at (509) 826-8143.

South Bend School District (currently serving 85 ECEAP children)

Laurie May, Executive Director, reports that she has a wait list of 27 children. She serves Pacific County School District in Raymond, South Bend, and Willapa Valley. She states the following:

“Many families in our community have been impacted by the economic down turn giving us the largest number of ECEAP eligible children we have ever seen in the twenty years we have had ECEAP in north Pacific County.”

If you would like to contact Laurie directly please e-mail her at lmay@southbend.wednet.edu

Snohomish County ECEAP (currently serving 951 ECEAP children)

Joe Varano runs the ECEAP program that serves all of central, northern, and eastern Snohomish County. They also serve two sites in Skagit County. Joe reports that they have a wait list of 648 children. Joe states the following:

“We have seen our waiting list grow as unemployment has risen to more than 10.2% in our county. Local governments and businesses have made severe cuts in programs, jobs, and services due to the economy of our region. Families with young children are looking for early learning services to prepare their children for kindergarten. Unfortunately, our program does not have the funding needed to serve additional children. We are just barely making ends meet.”

Joe can be contacted by phone at (425)388-7251 or via e-mail at joe.varano@snoco.org

Dayton School District ECEAP (currently serving 18 ECEAP children)

Katie Leid, Director of the ECEAP program in Dayton—our smallest program--has four children on her wait list. Katie reports that they serve tiny Columbia County and the average income for a family is less than \$25,000 per year. Because of recent job losses there are many homeless families and people who were never before eligible for ECEAP are now finding themselves in need.

If you would like to contact Katie you can call her at (509) 382-2507.

DEL ECEAP Statistics

As of October 30, 2009:

- 1,209 four-year-olds are waiting for an ECEAP slot
- 2,085 three-year-olds are waiting for an ECEAP slot
- TOTAL 3,294

About ECEAP

ECEAP is a comprehensive “whole child”, family-focused preschool program designed to help low-income and at-risk children and families succeed in school and life. The program was established in 1985, and was modeled after the successful federal Head Start program.

ECEAP provides an intensive combination of education, health and nutrition screening and assistance, parent involvement and family support to the neediest of Washington's children. The program is available to families who earn less than 110% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$23,320/year for a family of four). In 2009 the Washington State Department of Early Learning contracted with 40 schools, child care centers, and community and faith-based facilities to provide ECEAP services to 8,053 children and families.

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, 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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