



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*



WSA Head Start/ECEAP Legislative Update September 28, 2010

We don't have good news today in our legislative update -

Across the Board Cuts

As you may already know the Governor is going to cut all government agencies by 6.3% across the board. It will impact every education and human services program. These cuts are being proposed as a means of closing the growing budget deficit. We were told that the final decision on moving ahead with the proposed cuts will be made by the Governor October 13th. We expect that the implementation of these cuts will be made shortly thereafter.

ECEAP Funding Cut

Unfortunately, ECEAP is going to be included in the across the board cut. While the vast majority of our funding is now locked up in a separate account paid for by lottery funds, about \$15 million is still exposed which means that more than \$900,000 will be cut from the program. According to DEL there are likely two viable options, neither of them very good:

1. DEL could "expel" 139 children from the program this fall or
2. DEL could end ECEAP's program year about 1 month early.

DEL of course would meet with ECEAP directors, staff, and parents to determine the best way to minimize the impact, but at the end of the day this is a pretty large cut to the program.

Working Connections Child Care

Like ECEAP, Working Connections Child Care will be cut by 6.3%. However, the Governor is also looking at making even deeper cuts by restricting eligibility for the program from the current 200 percent of the poverty level to 175 percent (a monthly income of less than \$2,670 for a family of three). This could lead to more than 2500 families losing access to the subsidy program. The Governor has also floated the idea that more cuts to the Working Connections Child Care program are possible and she may look to limit eligibility to only families on TANF. [Click here for more information, and for ways to give input on these changes.](#)

Short Term Savings equal Long Term Costs for Washington

Cutting funding for high quality early education programs like ECEAP is backwards budgeting-you actually lose more than you gain. Programs like ECEAP have been shown to reduce the need for special education services saving taxpayers money, have shown to keep kids out the juvenile justice system, and have led to families becoming more self-sufficient (See ECEAP study). ECEAP is one of the very best investments you can make. It truly helps

at risk kids get ready for school and provides them with the tools they need to take advantage of all of the opportunities life has to offer.

Cutting Working Connections Child Care is another bad idea. It will lead to many families pulling their children out of child care options that are safe and high quality. In some cases families may decide they have no other options and will need to leave their younger children with an older sibling, will send their children to inferior quality child care, or will end up back on welfare. Again, the short term savings may end up leading to higher costs down the road as more families fill up the TANF caseloads, children do not receive what they need to be prepared for school, and the long climb off of public assistance starts over.

Take Action

You can impact what gets cut and what is maintained in the short term and through the supplemental budget. We need to make sure that our priority is to protect services for the most at risk kids and families first. ***Please contact the Governor's key staff people:***

Leslie Goldstein (Early Childhood Advisor) at Leslie.Goldstein@gov.wa.gov

Marty Brown (Budget Director) at Marty.Brown@ofm.wa.gov

Jim Justin (Legislative Director) at Jim.Justin@gov.wa.gov

Tell them to protect the most at risk kids and families in the state and not cut funding for ECEAP and the working connections child care program.

State Legislative Conference Call: Thursday Sept 30th, Noon-1pm

On Thursday September 30th from 12 noon to 1pm please join the WSA conference call to learn about how the state budget crisis is impacting early learning in the state. During the call we will brief you on the impact of cuts to ECEAP and working connections child care and talk about how we can work together to protect services for kids. ***To join the call please dial (605) 477-2100, Passcode 217829#.***

Federal Legislative Conference Call: Friday Oct 1, Noon-1pm

On Friday October 1 from 12 noon to 1pm please join the WSA conference call to learn about what is happening in DC that will impact Head Start funding, regulations, and monitoring. WSA staff will discuss what they learned in DC on their latest trip including the latest information about the proposed re-competition rule now open for comment. ***To join the call please dial (605) 477-2100, Passcode 217829#.***

WSA Fall Conference Fast Approaching: October 27th-29th

The WSA Fall Conference is taking place October 27th through October 29th at Campbells Resort in Chelan, WA. This year we will have special forums on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization, Head Start reauthorization, and Senate bill 6759. Speakers include Steve Barnett, Director of the [National Institute for Early Education Research](#), Nancy Hutchins, Region X Office of Head Start, and a great keynote motivational speaker, [Paul Figueroa](#). This will also be an opportunity to help set the advocacy goals for WSA for the upcoming legislative session. **[Click here for info and registration link.](#)**

Register to Vote

This election could have very serious implications for early learning and for low income families, both on the state and federal level. **[If you haven't registered to vote, do it now!](#)**

Thanks, all - please feel free to contact us with any questions, 425.453.1227, or joel@wsaheadstarteceap.com.