

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5904

C 16 L 13 E 2
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning high quality early learning.

Sponsors: Senators Hill, Hargrove, Litzow and Billig.

Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Legislature established the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) in 1985. ECEAP is a comprehensive preschool program that provides free services and support to children ages three and four, and families whose income is under 110 percent of the federal poverty level. ECEAP includes early learning preschool, family support, and child health coordination and nutrition.

In 2010, the Legislature passed Second Substitute House Bill 2731, which established an early learning program for low-income and at-risk children ages three and four. It required the use of ECEAP as a starting point in 2011-12 school year, in terms of the number of funded slots and program standards. This legislation called for the phased implementation of an expanded program. Beginning in the 2018-19 biennium, the program must be statewide and serve any eligible child entitled to enroll.

Summary: During the 2013-15 biennium, ECEAP slots must be increased by 10 percent from 2011-13 levels and rates paid for these slots must also be increased by 10 percent from the 2011-13 levels. These increases are subject to amounts appropriated specifically for this purpose. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) must coordinate with the Office of Financial Management to develop an implementation plan for expanding the early learning program. This plan is due to the Legislature by September 30, 2013.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) will conduct a comprehensive retrospective outcome evaluation for ECEAP. This evaluation will assess short-term and long-term outcomes for the program. WSIPP will also review relevant research on components of successful early education program strategies. WSIPP will report to the Legislature by December 15, 2014.

RCWs 43.215.141 and 43.215.142, relating to expanding preschool, are recodified under the ECEAP sections within chapter 43.215.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 45 2

Second Special Session

Senate 46 2

House 80 10 (House amended)

Senate 46 2 (Senate concurred)

Effective: September 28, 2013.