

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## 2SSB 5107

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### C 178 L17

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Facilitating local funding and involvement in expanding early childhood education and assistance program eligibility.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Billig, Fain, Rolfes, Wellman, Walsh, Zeiger, Liias, Cleveland, Hunt, Conway, Saldaña, Kuderer and Mullet).

**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**  
**House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** Local Governments and the Early Start Account. Current law encourages local governments to collaborate with the Department of Early Learning (DEL) when establishing early learning programs for residents. Local governments may contribute funds to DEL through the Early Start Account, which was created in 2015. These funds may be used for initial investments to build capacity and quality in local early care and education programming and reductions in copayments charged to parents or caregivers.

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). This state-funded voluntary preschool program serves eligible three- and four-year-old children. Children are eligible if they are from a low-income household, eligible for special education due to disability, or impacted by certain risk factors identified by DEL. Children from families with an annual income at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level—\$26,730 for a family of four—are eligible for enrollment in ECEAP.

Current law requires that state funding continue to be phased in each year until full statewide implementation is achieved in the 2020-21 school year, at which time any eligible child shall be entitled to be enrolled in the program. Additional eligible children may be admitted to the extent that grants and contributions from community sources provide sufficient funds for a program equivalent to that supported by state funds.

**Summary:** Early Start Account. In addition to local governments, school districts, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations may contribute funds to the Early Start Account. These local entities may contribute funds for the additional purposes of expanding access and eligibility in ECEAP. DEL must separately track funds received from

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local entities. Expenditures from these funds may be used only for specified purposes as identified, in writing, by the local entities. The Early Start Account is put in the custody of the State Treasurer.

To the greatest extent possible, DEL must reduce barriers and increase efficiency for using local or private funds, or both, to provide more high quality early learning opportunities.

ECEAP. Additional children may be admitted to the extent that grants and contributions from community sources provide sufficient funds for a program equivalent to that supported by state funds. These children do not have to be eligible for ECEAP. Children enrolled in ECEAP with funds contributed from community sources are not considered to be eligible for, or part of, the state-funded entitlement. Grants and contributions from community sources must not supplant the funding required for the full statewide implementation of ECEAP.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	45	4
House	67	30

**Effective:** July 23, 2017