
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6419

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Zeiger, Billig, Wellman, Conway, Darneille, Kuderer, Palumbo, and Walsh)

READ FIRST TIME 02/02/18.

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting access to the Washington early
2 childhood education and assistance program; amending RCW 43.216.555;
3 adding a new section to chapter 43.216 RCW; creating a new section;
4 and providing an effective date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that research
7 continues to demonstrate the efficacy of the state's early childhood
8 education and assistance program, known as ECEAP. Studies in
9 Washington and from other states show that ECEAP prepares children
10 for kindergarten success and has significant positive impacts on
11 third, fourth, and fifth grade test scores. The legislature also
12 finds that in some areas of the state, expanding ECEAP has proven
13 challenging because there are too few eligible children to form an
14 ECEAP classroom. The result is that children who are income eligible
15 and the furthest from opportunity remain unserved. The legislature
16 finds further that in other ECEAP classrooms, funded seats remain
17 empty because providers do not have sufficient flexibility to serve
18 families in need who are slightly over income but often have similar
19 risk factors. The legislature intends, therefore, to provide more
20 flexibility in determining eligibility for ECEAP in order to maximize

1 the state's investment and assure that program funding is deployed to
2 serve the greatest number of children and families.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.216
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) The department shall adopt rules that allow the inclusion of
6 children in the early childhood education and assistance program
7 whose family income is above one hundred ten percent of the federal
8 poverty level if the number of such children equals not more than
9 twenty-five percent of total statewide enrollment.

10 (2) Children included in the early childhood education and
11 assistance program under this section must be homeless or impacted by
12 specific developmental or environmental risk factors that are linked
13 by research to school performance. "Homeless" means without a fixed,
14 regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal
15 McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act, P.L. 100-77, July 22, 1987,
16 101 Stat. 482, and runaway and homeless youth act, P.L. 93-415, Title
17 III, September 7, 1974, 88 Stat. 1129.

18 (3) Children included in the early childhood education and
19 assistance program under this section are not to be considered
20 eligible children as defined in RCW 43.216.505 and are not considered
21 to be part of the state-funded entitlement required in RCW
22 43.216.556.

23 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.216.555 and 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 s 11 are each
24 amended to read as follows:

25 (1) Beginning September 1, 2011, an early learning program to
26 provide voluntary preschool opportunities for children three and four
27 years of age shall be implemented according to the funding and
28 implementation plan in RCW (~~(43.215.456)~~) 43.216.556. The program
29 must offer a comprehensive program of early childhood education and
30 family support, including parental involvement and health
31 information, screening, and referral services, based on family need.
32 Participation in the program is voluntary. On a space available
33 basis, the program may allow enrollment of children included in the
34 early childhood education and assistance program under section 2 of
35 this act and may allow enrollment of children who are not otherwise
36 eligible by assessing a fee.

37 (2) The program shall be implemented by utilizing the program
38 standards and eligibility criteria in the early childhood education

1 and assistance program in RCW ((43.215.400)) 43.216.500 through
2 ((43.215.450)) 43.216.550.

3 (3)(a) Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, the program
4 implementation in this section shall prioritize early childhood
5 education and assistance programs located in low-income neighborhoods
6 within high-need geographical areas.

7 (b) Following the priority in (a) of this subsection, preference
8 shall be given to programs meeting at least one of the following
9 characteristics:

10 (i) Programs offering an extended day program for early care and
11 education;

12 (ii) Programs offering services to children diagnosed with a
13 special need; or

14 (iii) Programs offering services to children involved in the
15 child welfare system.

16 (4) The ((director)) secretary shall adopt rules for the
17 following program components, as appropriate and necessary during the
18 phased implementation of the program, consistent with early achievers
19 program standards established in RCW ((43.215.100)) 43.216.085:

20 (a) Minimum program standards;

21 (b) Approval of program providers; and

22 (c) Accountability and adherence to performance standards.

23 (5) The department has administrative responsibility for:

24 (a) Approving and contracting with providers according to rules
25 developed by the ((director)) secretary under this section;

26 (b) In partnership with school districts, monitoring program
27 quality and assuring the program is responsive to the needs of
28 eligible children;

29 (c) Assuring that program providers work cooperatively with
30 school districts to coordinate the transition from preschool to
31 kindergarten so that children and their families are well-prepared
32 and supported; and

33 (d) Providing technical assistance to contracted providers.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act takes effect July 1, 2018.

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