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SENATE BILL 6419

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senators Rolfes, Zeiger, Billig, Wellman, Conway, Darneille, Kuderer, Palumbo, and Walsh

Read first time 01/17/18. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting access to the Washington early  
2 childhood education and assistance program; amending RCW 43.216.505;  
3 creating a new section; and providing an effective date.

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

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

1       **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.216.505 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 210 are each  
2 amended to read as follows:

3       Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in  
4 this section apply throughout RCW 43.216.500 through 43.216.559,  
5 43.216.900, and 43.216.901.

6       (1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW  
7 43.216.520.

8       (2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and  
9 special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as  
10 meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to  
11 qualify under RCW 43.216.500 through 43.216.550, 43.216.900, and  
12 43.216.901 and are designated as eligible for funding by the  
13 department under RCW 43.216.530 and 43.216.540.

14       (3) "Comprehensive" means an assistance program that focuses on  
15 the needs of the child and includes education, health, and family  
16 support services.

17       (4) "Eligible child" means a child not eligible for kindergarten  
18 whose family income is at or below one hundred ten percent of the  
19 federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal  
20 department of health and human services, and includes a child whose  
21 family is eligible for public assistance, and who is not a  
22 participant in a federal or state program providing comprehensive  
23 services; a child who is homeless; a child eligible for special  
24 education due to disability under RCW 28A.155.020; and may include  
25 children who are eligible under rules adopted by the department if  
26 the number of such children equals not more than ~~((ten))~~ twenty-five  
27 percent of ~~((the total))~~ enrollment by individual contracted provider  
28 in the early childhood program. Priority for enrollment shall be  
29 given to children from families with the lowest income, children in  
30 foster care, or to eligible children from families with multiple  
31 needs.

32       (5) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for  
33 parents to:

34       (a) Actively participate in their child's early childhood  
35 program;

36       (b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting  
37 skills;

38       (c) Further their education and training;

39       (d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the  
40 community;

1 (e) Increase their self-reliance.

2 (6) "Homeless" means without a fixed, regular, and adequate  
3 nighttime residence as set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento  
4 homeless assistance act, P.L. 100-77, July 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 482,  
5 and runaway and homeless youth act, P.L. 93-415, Title III, September  
6 7, 1974, 88 Stat. 1129.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act takes effect July 1, 2018.

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