

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5089

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As of February 15, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to increasing early learning access for children ages thirty months and older with developmental delays or disabilities.

**Brief Description:** Increasing early learning access for children ages thirty months and older with developmental delays or disabilities.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wellman, Darneille, Palumbo, Wilson, C., Kuderer and Saldaña.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/28/19, 2/04/19 [DP-WM, w/oRec].

**Ways & Means:** 2/13/19.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Adds a new category of children eligible for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)—children who received early intervention services and are at least thirty months old by August 31st of the school year.
- Allows these children to enroll in ECEAP at any point during the school year.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Hunt, Mullet, Pedersen and Salomon.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Holy, Padden and Wagoner.

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

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*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.*

**Staff:** Maria Hovde (786-7474)

**Background:** Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) develops performance standards for this voluntary preschool program. It provides ECEAP through contracts with public and private organizations including school districts, educational service districts, community and technical colleges, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Current law provides that this state-funded preschool program will become an entitlement in the 2022-23 school year for eligible children. "Eligible children" means a child not eligible for kindergarten and:

- whose family income is at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level;
- a child eligible for special education preschool due to disability; and
- may include children who are eligible under rules adopted by DCYF if the number of such children equals not more than 10 percent of the total enrollment.

DCYF rules provide that children must be at least three years old, but not yet five years old, by August 31st of the school year to enroll in ECEAP.

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers. Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers, birth to age three, who have disabilities or developmental delays. Early intervention services include family resources coordination, developmental services, occupational or physical therapy, and speech/language therapy. Washington's program is called Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT).

**Summary of Bill:** A new category of children are eligible for ECEAP—children who received early intervention services in ESIT and are at least thirty months old by August 31st of the school year. These children may enroll in ECEAP at any point during the school year.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: When children have developmental delays or disabilities, their outcomes are much improved if they can be addressed as early as possible. Currently, there is a gap in services for children who complete the ESIT program and before they can enter ECEAP or kindergarten. This bill fills that gap and provides continuity of care, which helps children's development and improves life outcomes. The bill should be expanded to include children who are in Early Head Start.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Senator Lisa Wellman, Prime Sponsor; Katy Warren, Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP; Renee Hernandez Greenfield, Tacoma College Child Care Center; Ashley Lin, Legislative

Youth Advisory Council; Nadine Gibson, Legislative Youth Advisory Council; Emily Murphy, Children's Alliance.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** No one.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):** PRO: This bill fixes the gap in time between when a child ages out of early intervention services and their third birthday. If these children have to wait a year to enroll in ECEAP, the value of the early intervention services are lost. We would like to see this bill amended to include children who are enrolled in Early Head Start programs.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Emily Murphy, Children's Alliance; Melissa Johnson, Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means):** No one.