



Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) requests \$37,039,000 (\$37,038,000 General Fund State) and 0.50 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to prepare for Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) Entitlement as required by Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5237 passed in the 2021 Legislative Session. ECEAP will reach entitlement level in Fiscal Year 2027, and DCYF needs additional funding to be able to meet entitlement. This funding will support sustainable slot rates to cover actual provider service costs, funding to cover quality requirements related to expanding slots, and funding for additional slots in Fiscal Year 2025 that will more immediately and effectively serve the needs of children and families.

Program Recommendation Summary

030 - Early Learning

The Department of Children, Youth and Families requests \$37,030,000 General Fund-State and 0.5 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget for sustainable ECEAP slot rates, additional ECEAP expansion slots, and Quality Requirements which allow DCYF and ECEAP contractors to build infrastructure and sustain key requirements that are needed to ensure all eligible families have a place to enroll in ECEAP by 2026-27.

090 - Program Support

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) requests \$9,000 (\$8,000 General Fund-State) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to fund program support functions that scale with the additional FTEs requested in this package. This will allow the agency to scale in capacity the critical back-office business needs, such as but not limited to, Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance, etc.

Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Staffing						
FTEs	0.0	0.5	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$1,109	\$35,921	\$37,030	\$41,447	\$40,643	\$82,090
Fund 001 - 1	\$0	\$8	\$8	\$8	\$8	\$16
Fund 001 - 2	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$2
Total Expenditures	\$1,109	\$35,930	\$37,039	\$41,456	\$40,652	\$82,108
Revenue						
001 - 0393	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$2
Total Revenue	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$2

Decision Package Description

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is Washington's pre-kindergarten program that prepares 3 to 5 year-old children furthest from opportunity for success in school and in life. ECEAP serves a diverse, high priority demographic of children and families in the state, including but not limited to children and families: with very low income (81% of families are at or below 36% SMI), experiencing homelessness, with single parents, with special needs, and who experience risk factors such as domestic violence and Child Protective Services involvement. ECEAP serves more tribal families and more families of color than are represented in the general state population. The funding requested in this decision package will only increase supports to these children and families, while ensuring that ECEAP contractors can hire and sustain diverse and qualified staff.

This proposal addresses immediate needs for enabling the next phase of ECEAP expansion towards entitlement, which includes the following core elements:

Sustainable ECEAP Slot Rates: To achieve both the expansion and conversion goals needed to reach entitlement, this decision package requests sustainable slot rates for the School Day and Working Day models. DCYF is proposing a 19% increase in School Day ECEAP slot rates and a 28% increase in Working Day ECEAP slot rates to reach the full rate increase recommended in the ECEAP Cost Study, which is necessary to fully cover the cost of providing the service.

Expansion of Slots: To ensure access for children and families at entitlement, this decision package further expands the number of ECEAP slots statewide. After receiving requests for nearly 1,000 ECEAP slots for Fiscal Year 2024, DCYF requests additional School Day and Working Day slots to support statewide need and increase access towards entitlement. Of the 1,000 requested slots, applicants requested 150 Working Day slots, demonstrating continued need and interest for the Working Day model. DCYF requests 200 School Day and 50 Working Day slots in addition to the 500 School Day slots already allocated in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget. This number of slots will allow DCYF to continue expansion efforts to meet entitlement, while also utilizing a phased in approach that ensures provider capacity.

Quality Supports Funding: To ensure continued quality requirements and child outcomes, DCYF is requesting the funding needed to maintain quality supports resources for existing slots and future expansion slots. Quality supports covers current child assessment, curriculum, training and supports statewide. However, partial funding was received for quality supports was in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget.

DCYF received \$880,000 in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget to sustain curriculum and assessment requirements statewide. However, the funding needed is \$1,900,000 and therefore, DCYF requests the resources to fund the remaining \$1,046,000. This funding gap comes from: 1) a pricing increase from the vendor in FY 22 and 2) no additional quality supports funding was appropriated for increased expansion slots since 2021.

In addition to funding the need for current slots, DCYF requests that with each expansion of ECEAP slots beyond Fiscal Year 2025, funding is added at a rate of \$1,800 per every 20 PreK slots added, otherwise, DCYF will continue to see a shortfall in funding for ECEAP's quality education requirements.

Without funding for these Quality Supports resources, DCYF will need to stop requiring child assessment and curriculum or be forced to provide these resources to less than half of the existing contractors. The data that results from these required activities, provides the backbone of child outcomes (that is also used by Education Resource and Data Center, statewide impacts, and educational framework for the state. Consistent and usable data will no longer be available for current, short term, and longitudinal studies on the impacts of ECEAP until this funding is allocated.

By funding this decision package, it will aid in DCYF reaching Entitlement for ECEAP as required by law and it accomplishes the following:

Sustainable ECEAP Slot Rates, which will help stabilize the workforce crisis that has been inflamed by the pandemic.

Expansion of Slots, which increases ECEAP access for high priority children and families in the state.

Quality Supports Funding, which will maintain critical quality requirements to ensure ECEAP children are receiving the highest quality education services possible to be academically and socially ready for kindergarten. This proposal improves family access to ECEAP services and supports the ECEAP as it continues to recover from the pandemic.

Without this package, it is likely that families will continue to be unaware of the services they are entitled to and miss opportunities for their children. Without funding this proposal, 250 additional families will not have access to ECEAP in FY 25; assessment and outcomes data, quality education curriculum requirements will be lost for families statewide; and ECEAP contractors will continue to need to close classrooms due to lack of paying quality staff a livable wage. In FY 2023 three contractors returned 246 child slots due to staffing shortages.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

DCYF requests \$37,039,000 General Fund State in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to sustain and expand the program, in preparation for ECEAP Entitlement.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
Slot Rate Increase	\$ -	\$ 29,759,000	\$ 35,101,000	\$ 36,670,000
Expansion/Conversion at Proposed Rates	\$ -	\$ 4,976,000	\$ 5,075,000	\$ 2,616,000
Quality Supports Maintenance	\$ 1,046,000	\$ 1,046,000	\$ 1,046,000	\$ 1,046,000
Quality Supports Expansion	\$ 63,000	\$ 149,000	\$ 234,000	\$ 320,000
Total	\$ 1,109,000	\$ 35,930,000	\$ 41,456,000	\$ 40,652,000

Slot Rate Increase

DCYF assumes the total cost to increase the slot rate for School Day and Working Day slots will be \$29,759,000 GF-S in FY25. The current funded School Day rate is \$14,893. The School Day rate identified in the ECEAP Cost Study is \$17,659, a variance of \$2,766. The cost of the increased school day rates in FY25 is estimated at \$24,246,000 (8,766 school day slots X \$2,766).

In FY26, DCYF requests an additional inflationary increase to meet the requirements of RCW 43.216.557¹ for a proposed new rate of \$18,030. The variance between the current School Day rate and the proposed new School Day rate is \$3,137. The assumed FY26 cost to increase the School Day rate is \$29,066,000 (\$3,137 X 9,266 School Day slots).

The current funded Working Day rate is \$21,478. The Working Day rate identified in the ECEAP cost study is \$27,587, a variance of \$6,109. The cost of increased working day rates in FY25 is estimated to be \$5,513,000 (902 working day slots X \$6,109).

In FY26, DCYF requests an additional inflationary increase to meet the requirements of RCW 43.216.557¹, for a proposed new rate of \$28,166. The variance between the current Working Day rate and the proposed new Working Day rate is \$6,688. The assumed FY26 cost to increase the Working Day rate is \$6,036,000 (\$6,688 X 902 Working Day slots).

Slot Expansion/Conversion

DCYF assumes the total cost to expand school day and working day slots will be \$4,911,000 GF-S in FY25.

DCYF requests an additional 200 School Day slots in FY25. The assumed cost will be \$2,979,000 at current rates (\$14,893 X 200 School Day slots).

DCYF requests an additional 50 Working Day slots in FY25. The assumed cost will be \$1,074,000 at current rates (\$21,478 X 50 Working Day slots).

DCYF assumes additional costs for 200 School Day slots if the proposed School Day slot rate is adopted. The assumed additional cost will be \$553,000 (\$2,766 X 200 School Day slots).

DCYF assumes additional costs for 50 Working Day slots if the proposed Working Day slot rate is adopted. The assumed additional cost will be \$305,000 (\$6,109 X 50 Working Day slots).

Quality Supports Maintenance

DCYF assumes the total cost to maintain Quality Supports for existing slots is \$1,046,000 GF-S in FY24 and \$1,046,000 GF-S in FY25.

DCYF currently maintains 1,050 Teaching Strategies licenses for existing Pre-K slots, with a cost of \$1,800 per license. Additionally, DCYF maintains 30 Teaching Strategies licenses for existing Birth to Three slots, with a cost of \$1,200 per license. The current total cost of Quality Supports is \$1,926,000.

DCYF is funded \$880,000 per fiscal year for Quality Supports, and requests funding to support the additional \$1,046,000 (\$1,926,000 - \$880,000 current funding) per fiscal year needed to maintain existing licenses.

Quality Supports Expansion

DCYF assumes the total cost to expand Quality Supports for additional slots is \$63,000 in FY24 and \$149,000 in FY25.

DCYF assumes an additional 35 licenses in FY24 and 48 licenses in FY25.

DCYF assumes the cost for Teaching Strategies Pre-K licenses are \$1,800 per license.

The total assumed cost of additional licenses will be \$63,000 (35 X \$1,800) in FY24 and \$149,000 ((35+48) X \$1,800) in FY25.

Additional details provided in backup files and calculations.

Workforce Assumptions:

DCYF requests \$65,000 General Fund State and 0.5 FTE in the 2024 Supplemental Budget.

DCYF assumes 0.5 Commerce Specialist 2 beginning in FY25 - \$65,000.

DCYF assume 1 FTE per 450 slots.

The ECEAP administrative rate of \$247 per slot, at 250 slots, funds a total of \$61,750. This is slightly less than the Fiscal Year 2025 cost to fund 0.5 Commerce Specialist 2 due to initial startup costs, and slightly more than needed for ongoing funding.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

This package supports the Governor's Results Washington Goal 1 area: world-class education metric that children who enter kindergarten demonstrate that they are ready. ECEAP is extremely effective at getting children ready for kindergarten through quality curriculum, ongoing assessment, educational individualization, and whole child differentiated programming.

This package supports the agency's strategic plan to create a high-quality integrated B-8 system, through supporting the creation of a responsive and inclusive integrated Pre-k system, and supporting the early learning workforce.

The items in this package work together to support child outcomes, educational quality, and workforce quality and retention for a specific, high priority population of PreK children.

Performance Outcomes:

Sustainable ECEAP Slot Rates: DCYF expects that this item will increase ECEAP contractor's workforce retention and hiring of highly qualified staff.

Expansion of Slots: will be measured in the Expansion Application for FY 25, in which contractors ask for the slots they need. Each year, DCYF tracks the slots requests and the slots funded in order to provide correct information about need for ECEAP in communities across the state.

Quality Supports Funding: DCYF will ensure that all ECEAP classrooms across the state have access to online curriculum, sufficient assessment portfolios for all children, and access to training and resources that teachers need to implement high quality education in their classrooms. This is done through the link between the Early Learning Management System and the vendor's system.

Equity Impacts

Community outreach and engagement:

DCYF has a well-developed, trusting relationship with its ECEAP contractors and providers, including tribes and other historically marginalized communities. Each year, DCYF solicits feedback monthly through various methods (such as tribal pathway meetings, ECEAP director calls), and continues to hear that the items included in this request are highly prioritized by the communities we serve. DCYF met with dozens of stakeholders through advisory bodies, advocacy groups, coalitions, and providers to solicit feedback on this decision package.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

This decision package supports developing an integrated Birth to Eight Early Learning System, helps eliminate racial disproportionality and advances racial equity. This package will positively impact tribal communities, communities of color, rural, suburban, and urban communities, families with high priority factors, families with very low incomes, and culturally and linguistically diverse families and workforce members.

Target Populations or Communities:

This package supports the communities that ECEAP serves, which includes: tribal families, children and families of color, families experiencing homelessness, children with disabilities, families with mental health needs, families experiencing domestic violence, families involved with child welfare services, families whose parents did not complete high school, and families with the lowest incomes in the state. This package works to serve these families and will provide positive impacts.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

Not Applicable

State Workforce Impacts:

Not Applicable

Intergovernmental:

This proposal further supports Indigenous families and providers acknowledging and supporting tribal sovereignty. It also provides critical support for ECEAP contractors and providers, about 60% of which are tribal, county, city, and local governments. DCYF anticipates full support of this package from this subset of providers.

Stakeholder Response:

This package provides critical support for ECEAP contractors and providers, about 40% of which are nonprofit organizations, Head Start grantees, family child care home and child care center providers, and other non-governmental organizations. It also supports ECEAP-eligible families in the state. ECEAP contractors and other early learning providers have provided feedback through multiple venues, over many years, and clearly communicated feedback to DCYF on the information in this DP, which reflects this feedback. DCYF anticipates these providers and stakeholders will support this package.

State Facilities Impacts:

Not Applicable

Changes from Current Law:

Not Applicable

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

Not Applicable

HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions

Not Applicable

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Obj. A	\$0	\$36	\$36	\$36	\$36	\$72
Obj. B	\$0	\$14	\$14	\$14	\$14	\$28
Obj. C	\$1,109	\$1,195	\$2,304	\$1,280	\$1,366	\$2,646
Obj. E	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$2
Obj. G	\$0	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$2
Obj. J	\$0	\$4	\$4	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. N	\$0	\$34,670	\$34,670	\$40,115	\$39,225	\$79,340
Obj. T	\$0	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$18

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