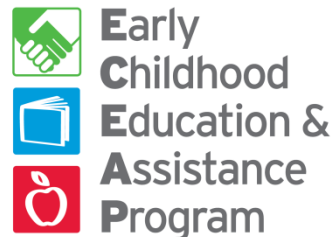


Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

Family Support Pilot: Year One Summary June 2015 through June 2016



Washington State Department of Early Learning

ECEAP. Washington's pre-kindergarten program, overseen by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) is designed to prepare 3- and 4-year-old children from low-income and at-risk families for success in school and in life. Its comprehensive approach includes: preschool education; family support; parent involvement; and, health and nutrition services. An [evaluation](#) by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy shows that children who participated in ECEAP had significantly higher math and reading test scores in the third, fourth, and fifth grades than similar children who did not participate.



ECEAP Family Support

Family support in ECEAP is about building relationships that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning for both children and parents. ECEAP's family support services are described in RCW 43.215.405. They include opportunities for families to:

- a) Increase their self-reliance;
- b) Actively participate in their child's early childhood program;
- c) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting skills;

ECEAP family support services are specified in state statute [Chapter 43.215.205 RCW](#). This important part of ECEAP is guided by studies that have long shown that family stability, mother's education level, and family income influence a child's academic achievement. ECEAP family support also draws from [recent science](#) about the positive impacts of nurturing relationships and negative impacts of toxic stress on a child's future academic success and interpersonal skills. ECEAP staff strategize with families and connect them with community resources to help set and advance family goals such as: improving family and child health; enhancing children's learning; strengthening parenting skills; and, improving their own education and employment.

PILOT GOALS: Strengthen family outcomes. Provide more intensive services to the families who need them the most.

Background. In October, 2014 DEL convened the "Preschool Operational Work Group" of 21 contractors and community partners to identify a menu of research-based family support services, shown to improve family outcomes, which provide tools to:

- "Differentiate" services based on differing levels of family need.
- "Individualize" services so that they are tailored to individual family needs.

Based on the Work Group's recommendations, ECEAP initiated a two-year pilot to:

1. Test two research-based family support programs to improve family self-sufficiency and related outcomes: the EMPATH Mobility Mentoring® and the Family Development Matrix model.
2. Develop and implement a valid statewide ECEAP family assessment to provide clear and consistent assessment and reporting of family strengths, progress and outcomes.

Year One: Pilot Family Assessment and Research-Based Models. In year one, the pilot developed and tested a statewide family assessment to support: (1) family goal setting and progress; and, (2) consistent statewide monitoring and reporting. The assessment, conducted in conversation with families at three intervals during the year, was used to identify baseline strengths, needs and new opportunities that arose and to support families in setting and advancing their goals. Previously contractors used multiple assessments.

ECEAP Family Support Pilot: Year One Summary (continued)

EMPath's Mobility Mentoring® Model. This approach, grounded in EMPATH's [Bridge to Self-Sufficiency™](#), articulates a family's transformative journey from poverty to economic self-sufficiency by optimizing the family's life in five domains: family stability; well-being; financial management; education; and career management. ECEAP family support staff act as Mobility Mentoring® coaches who partner with families to help them acquire resources and skills, and sustain behavior changes. EMPATH outcomes include dramatic increases in education and training participation (45%) and household savings (63%).

Family Development Matrix Model. The Family Development Matrix (FDM) model is a family decision-making and goal-setting model that uses an assessment tool and online database with indicators to measure family and program outcomes. A 2014 California evaluation showed increases of between 10.8 and 15.9 points in percentages of families at the safe/self-sufficient levels in areas such as: children's social and emotional development, and parental resilience.

Participating Contractors and Families. Fourteen self-selected contractors (school-based, non-profit, community colleges, local governments) that provide services in a range of communities (urban, suburban, rural, and tribal) in Eastern and Western Washington each piloted one of the research-based family support models. Of the thousands of families in the pilot program in year one, 1,552 racially/ethnically and linguistically diverse families participated for the full year, providing a full set of data for analysis. Due to challenges with data collection and cross-matching data, the number of families with usable data was less than the total families served. These issues will be addressed in year two.

Results. Families in both models experienced substantial, statistically significant progress in multiple areas. Overall, families in the FDM model showed benefits in fewer areas, and smaller absolute benefits. Note that year one data were too limited to be sure about the cause of the change. Results were discerned using a paired T-test statistical analysis, which measures whether subjects within a group vary over two conditions.

Year-One - Family Outcomes

Mobility Mentoring® Statistically significant pre/post differences for families were seen in all 21 areas of family functioning. Areas of greatest change include parent engagement (.56), resource knowledge (0.47), goal setting (0.46), budgeting (0.42), adult education (0.41).

FDM Statistically significant (but smaller) pre/post differences were seen in 16 areas including: parent involvement in ECEAP (0.38), adult education (0.29), setting goals (0.27), and employment status (0.25).

Year Two of the Family Support Pilot

1. **One Model - (EMPATH) Mobility Mentoring®.** DEL will continue to use the Mobility Mentoring® model for year two of the pilot (rather than both models) for reasons of cost-effectiveness, available types and scope of training opportunities, and a preference for internal databases.
2. **2016-2017 Participation.** Twenty contractors will participate in year two of the pilot.
3. **Tools.** DEL has improved key tools, including development of a family-friendly ECEAP *Bridge to Child and Family Self-Reliance* and a revised family assessment aligned to the new ECEAP *Bridge*.
4. **Early Learning Management System (ELMS) Improvements.** Key enhancements to improve usability and efficiency are being made based on the year one experience.
5. **Evaluation Data Improvements.**
 - ECEAP contractors will survey all families at the end of the year to learn about the services that have helped them most and ways to further improve services.
 - DEL will conduct pre and post assessments with all family support staff to learn what is working well, what improvements are needed, and what additional skills and training staff need.

Future Plans for ECEAP Family Support. In the summer of 2017, year two results will be used to inform the next steps for implementing research-based family support services to improve family and child outcomes.

"A custodial grandparent ... was struggling with medical bills. I connected them with local resources and within 2 weeks they were on their way to getting that debt off their minds. It normally would not have come up in conversation without the indicators as a guide

~ Family Support Specialist