

2018 Supplemental Budget Decision Package

Agency: 307 Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Decision Package Code/Title: PL-A4 / Develop ECEAP Support Capacity

Budget Period: 2017-19

Budget Level: Policy Level

Agency Recommendation Summary Text:

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families is requesting \$1.4 million of General Fund-State funding and 7.0 FTEs in Fiscal Year 2019 to increase support for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Washington’s preschool program for low-income families. The Department is requesting these funds to address a long-standing shortage of staffing and administrative funding stemming from a reduction from 5 percent in program support in Fiscal Year 2002 to only 3.2 percent in Fiscal Year 2018. The state mandate to expand ECEAP into an entitlement program by 2022-2023 and to increase the percentages of children ready for kindergarten by 2020 means that the staffing shortage combined with the lowest indirect rate of any state preschool in the country (per the national Ounce of Prevention Fund) is leading to untenable choices.

Fiscal Summary:

Operating Expenditures	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
001-1 General Fund-State	\$0	\$1,437,958	\$1,395,958	\$1,395,958
Total Cost	\$0	\$1,437,958	\$1,395,958	\$1,395,958
Staffing	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
FTEs	0	7.0	7.0	7.0
Object of Expenditure	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Object A – Salaries	\$0	\$488,241	\$488,241	\$488,241
Object B – Benefits	\$0	\$183,021	\$183,021	\$183,021
Object C – Contracts	\$0	\$455,478	\$455,478	\$455,478
Object G – Travel	\$0	\$16,800	\$16,800	\$16,800
Object E – Goods & Services	\$0	\$8,750	\$8,750	\$8,750
Object J – Capital Outlays	\$0	\$42,000	\$0	\$0
Object T – Indirect	\$0	\$243,668	\$243,668	\$243,668

Package Description:

To ensure that ECEAP is successfully implemented across the state and prepared to meet the entitlement target, the department is requesting 7.0 FTEs and \$1.4 million in General Fund-State support in Fiscal Year 2019.

DCYF has worked to maximize its limited funding to increase slots and to boost program quality. At the same time, as ECEAP has become increasingly valued, the Legislature has adopted significant plans for expansion. The addition of multiple program components and initiatives to ensure quality greatly affect the need for technical expertise and capacity at the department. These include:

- Implementation of evidence-based curricula,
- Integration of differentiated evidence-based family support services,
- Implementation of Early Start Act mandates, and
- A multitude of activities to support ECEAP expansion to entitlement.

Maintaining a high standard of quality in existing ECEAP programs across the state, while facilitating significant program expansion, requires a strong and capable support structure for ECEAP to support the complex and multi-faceted work of implementation in communities. An effective support structure for a high-quality comprehensive preschool program must include staff with technical expertise and time to:

- Monitor and ensure continuous quality improvement (e.g., compliance, data systems and reporting, etc.);
- Deliver ongoing technical assistance, training and quality initiatives; and,
- Develop and manage key operational functions that support expansion and movement of slots annually when ECEAP reaches entitlement (e.g., workforce and facility development, provider recruitment and readiness, family outreach and enrollment, attendance management, etc.)

A Growing Support Shortfall

The current administrative rate of \$247 per slot does not adequately provide the staffing, resources, and capacity needed to address the growing components and complexities involved in a major expansion set to make the program available to all eligible children by 2023. Since FY 2002, overhead has gone down while the number of ECEAP slots has grown by 80 percent (from 6,878-to 12,491) with only an 18 percent growth in staffing (from 15 to 18 FTEs).

In 2001-2002, ECEAP used a single part-day model and had 6,878 funded slots at 260 sites, operated by 35 contractors. Administrative funding at that time was 5 percent of overall funding at \$216.21/slot with 15 FTEs (one per 458 slots). In comparison, in the 2017-2018 program year, ECEAP has 12,491 slots at 363 sites, run through 52 contractors, running three program models with administrative funding at \$247 per slot, 18 FTEs (one per 694 slots) and only 3.2 percent of overall funding. Adjusted for inflation, the \$216.21/slot administrative rate would be \$293/slot in 2017 dollars.

This growing shortage of funding is coupled with three additional opportunities and challenges that make the current situation untenable.

Early Start Act. The *Early Start Act* (ESA) of 2015 has mandated that ECEAP provide services through additional service provider types, increasing the complexity of implementation and quality oversight details as well as understanding of different business models and pressures that affect a provider's ability to deliver services effectively. Additionally, ECEAP is contributing significant capacity to the ESA mandate to align program standards across DEL's early learning programs, a massive three-year project for the agency.

Expansion into an Entitlement Program. ECEAP is mandated to become an entitlement program by the 2022-2023 program year. Recruiting providers who are a good fit for ECEAP is complex and challenging. And, supporting new providers in their first two years requires more time-intensive monitoring and technical assistance.

Increased Program Quality Supports and Intensity. Research about how to improve child outcomes has led to improved program quality (DEL ECEAP data monitoring, coaching, training and technical assistance to sites) and two additional preschool model options (longer duration). A recent Pre-K Quality Self-Assessment done in collaboration with the National Partnership for Pre-K Quality finds those additional steps (professional development, etc.) can lead to even higher rates of kindergarten readiness.

Some other examples of initiatives and activities underway that are critical for supporting execution of ECEAP expansion but not adequately resourced include:

- Implementing new pathways to facilitate the inclusion of ECEAP in additional diverse types of providers.
- Recruitment and readiness of new providers.
- Ensuring adequate facilities and workforce.
- Multiple quality improvement efforts (i.e., numeracy training, Dual Language professional development resources for teachers (HB 1445) evidence-based family support system, coaching, etc.) Each of these efforts requires best-practice research to ensure effectiveness, piloting, systematizing, and implementing statewide and refine over time.
- Continued development of the newest program models (Full School Day and Extended Day) and additional models to reach children in rural and remote communities.
- Implementation of recommendations from DCYF's standards alignment project (that will require all ECEAP providers to become licensed child care sites). This will require significant capacity and shifts in existing work related to monitoring and compliance systems across licensing, Early Achievers, and ECEAP.
- Continued integration with other early learning programs through the *Early Achievers Framework*.

A Changing Program

The complexity of having three different models and multiple types of providers requires ECEAP to have staff who are knowledgeable about and able to address: the finance and business needs of diverse businesses; financial impact of loss of an individual slot on very small providers; varying facility types; program integration (special education, child care, etc.), etc. Additionally, since family child care homes are much smaller providers offering fewer slots, there are fewer economies of scale when serving these sites dispersed across the state (currently the number of children at a site ranges from 1 to 12), making the current caseload model and state technical assistance and system building capacity unsustainable (currently funded at 620 slots per 1 supporting FTE).

That model of 620 slots to 1 support FTE is based solely on the start-up of new slots and monitoring of contracts (and some marginal expansion of training). Generally, expansion has happened through expanded sites managed by existing contractors. However, as the program expands to include new types of contractors to meet entitlement, the support need is much greater. For example, a new contractor in Spokane started with three family child care homes offering twelve slots. This contract involves one contractor, two subcontractors, a new business model, and substantial readiness work which required 0.5 FTE of technical assistance and support from a Pre-K Specialist during the first two years of implementation.

Although DCYF maintains a strong commitment to adequately resource our partners implementing ECEAP in communities, the lack of ability to ensure capacity in ECEAP’s state office severely impacts its ability to maintain program quality; to effectively plan and execute an expansion strategy; and ultimately, to ensure ECEAP’s contribution to DCYF’s 2020 goal of 90 percent kindergarten readiness.

Base Budget:

Fiscal Year 2017 (Actuals)	General Fund-State	Opportunity Pathways Account- State	Education Legacy Trust Account- State
FTEs	13.91		3.5
Program Funding	\$43,916,760	\$39,704,361	\$12,046,239
Fiscal Year 2018 (Budgeted)	General Fund-State	Opportunity Pathways Account- State	Education Legacy Trust Account- State
FTEs	18.1		3.5
Program Funding	\$58,185,000	\$40,000,000	\$12,125,000

FTE, Salary and Benefits:

To adequately address the support needs outlined above, the department is taking two actions to ensure sufficient capacity to continue to boost child outcomes and to serve all eligible children as ECEAP becomes an entitlement program in 2022-2023. First, the program is re-structuring the ECEAP state office to further maximize efficiencies. Second, the department is requesting the following FTEs to allow us to address quality improvement needs and meet mandated Early Start Act and entitlement requirements.

Fiscal Year 2019: 1 FTE (CS3) for expansion capacity and readiness; 1 FTE (CS3), for quality initiatives and training; 1 FTE (CS2) for data systems and analytics; 3 FTE (CS3) for monitoring; and 1 FTE (PS5) for marketing, outreach and recruitment to cover functions inadequately covered now, including:

Expansion Capacity and Readiness (1.0 FTE Commerce Specialist 3):

- Build and sustain system supports for new provider readiness and capacity development (e.g. direct facilitation and coordination of a provider recruitment and readiness pathway for tribal providers, rural/isolated providers, and school districts).
- Coordinate ECEAP’s participation in statewide workforce development efforts.
- Coordinate facility development and renovations (coordination with Commerce).
- Research and pilot expansion supports like insurance and substitute pools so that diverse providers can provide services.

Data Systems and Analytics (1.0 FTE Commerce Specialist 2):

- Manage the Early Learning Management System (ELMS) issues database and respond to requests for assistance from ELMS users.
- Document ELMS defects and enhancements following Data Team protocols.
- Monitor and follow up with ELMS users on data quality issues.
- Conduct ELMS data quality research and follow through with Contractor ELMS Administrators to make needed corrections.
- Develop and revise ELMS training and technical assistance materials.
- Assist with child outcomes data compilation and analysis, including addressing equity in access and outcomes.

Monitoring (3.0 FTE Commerce Specialist 3):

- Monitor compliance to the ECEAP contract and Performance Standards (desktop and onsite visits).
- Conduct regular monitoring calls to assigned contractors, lead and participate in contractor site visits.
- Provide expert assessment of ECEAP service delivery, write reports, develop and monitor corrective action plans, provide related technical assistance, and analyze desktop monitoring reports.

Quality Initiatives and Training (1.0 FTE Commerce Specialist 3):

- Develop pilots and systematize changes to programming to align ECEAP and early learning services with child welfare services and foster care partners.
- Provide expanded training and coaching capacity for field-building activities, including:
 - Instructional leadership.
 - Cultural competency/knowledge of dual language development and of dual language learners.
 - Strategies and policies that support the learning of children with special needs in inclusive settings and children with challenging behaviors.
- Integrate and align internal and external systems (Child care/ECEAP, ECEAP/special education, P-3, child welfare services/ECEAP, etc.).

Marketing, Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator (1.0 FTE Program Specialist 5):

- Expand marketing, outreach, enrollment and attendance planning and support so that slots, particularly new expansion slots that families may not know about are quickly filled.
- Convene regional provider recruitment and service coordination.
- Develop branded and customizable materials and online and print resources so that contractors can readily recruit and enroll families.
- Research policy and procedural barriers to enrollment.
- Facilitate development of systems to enhance projection, mapping and analysis of slot demand, provider interest/readiness, available/developing facilities, and available qualified/diverse workforce so that slots are ready where and when needed.

Personal Service Contracts:

DCYF requests additional support funding for several ECEAP service contracts including TS GOLD® child assessment software purchases, curriculum purchases, and resources to support statewide Mobility Mentoring training and supports.

- **Creative Curriculum materials and training:** In Fiscal Year 2019, ECEAP will add 1,000 slots in communities across the state, which will require new curriculum materials to implement ECEAP's required curriculum, Creative Curriculum. DCYF is requesting:
 - \$125,958 for 42 bilingual kits for new classrooms.
 - \$214,390 for 110 Bilingual expanded daily resources.
- **Teaching Strategies GOLD implementation:** In Fiscal Year 2019, ECEAP will add 1,000 slots in communities across the state, which will require additional licenses to implement ECEAP's child assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD. These both help teachers develop weekly lesson plans and assess child learning and growth. Additionally, training and targeted professional development related to the assessment will be necessary for teachers. DCYF is requesting:
 - \$25,130 for child assessment portfolios, technical assistance, custom reports, and training for on-site trainers.
- **Mobility Mentoring Family Support Enhancements and Growth:** In Fiscal Year 2019, Mobility Mentoring, shown to help families reach economic self-sufficiency, will be implemented statewide with all ECEAP families. Having a robust training and technical assistance system in place for direct service staff implementing as they shift from a case management to a coaching approach with families is critical. Using the Mobility Mentoring approach, ECEAP providers provide more intensive services to the families needing it most. ECEAP's first year pilot of Mobility Mentoring, found statistically significant change occurred in all 21 areas of family functioning (i.e., financial management, parent engagement, resource knowledge, goal setting, adult education and career management, etc.). Recent research finds that these types of changes in family functioning are directly correlated with positive child outcomes and are essential to children's future academic success. DCYF is requesting:
 - \$50,000 for contract with EMPATH (Mobility Mentoring).
 - \$40,000 for contract with The Prosperity Agenda.

Decision Package Justification and Impacts

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

The department expects this investment to:

- Expand ECEAP's statewide coverage and increase slots by 7,400 by 2022-2023 when ECEAP is mandated to become an entitlement program. This will be done through substantial recruitment of providers and families, development of provider specific pathways (tribal K-12, family child care homes, etc.) and new models.
- Increase ECEAP program quality as indicated by increasing the percent of children at or above age level in mathematics in the Spring of their preschool year from 83.2% to 90% by 2020. (Literacy is now at 93.6 percent in the spring of the preschool year).

Performance Measure detail:

- Percentage of new providers recruited and ready to provide ECEAP services.
- Percentage of new slots filled within 30 days.
- Percentage of families participating in Mobility Mentoring (family support approach).
- Percentage of ECEAP contractors monitored for quality and compliance.
- Percentage of children at or above age level in mathematics.

Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents and specific populations served.

This proposal allows DCYF to execute critical ECEAP expansion strategies to prepare the system to serve all eligible children by 2023. By having the capacity to recruit and prepare providers, coordinate facilities development, maintain critical quality improvement efforts, ensure key integration of ECEAP in early learning system development efforts and continue to maintain critical oversight and accountability for the program, ECEAP will continue to be a viable and sustainable service for the children and families needing it most across Washington’s communities. The availability and accessibility of ECEAP for all eligible children is a key component to meeting DCYF’s goal of ensuring 90 percent of children are kindergarten ready by 2020.

What are other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

Impact(s) To:		Identify / Explanation
Regional/County impacts?	Yes	Identify: ECEAP expansion will provide high quality preschool for more at-risk children in all regions and most counties of the state as DCYF seeks to meet the statutory requirement for ECEAP entitlement by 2020-21.
Other local gov’t impacts?	No	Identify:
Tribal gov’t impacts?	Yes	Identify: ECEAP expansion will be available to all of Washington’s federally recognized tribal entities which will offer increased high-quality preschool to those communities.
Other state agency impacts?	No	Identify:
Responds to specific task force, report, mandate or exec order?	Yes	Identify: Per RCW 43.215.456, Section (5): “Funding shall continue to be phased in each year until full statewide implementation of the early learning program is achieved in the 2022-23 school year, at which time any eligible child shall be entitled to enroll in the program.” Also, per E2SHB1491 (the Early Start Act), ECEAP is required to participate in several mandates through

		this law related to the elements of this package.
Does request contain a compensation change?	No	Identify:
Does request require a change to a collective bargaining agreement?	No	Identify:
Facility/workplace needs or impacts?	No	Identify:
Capital Budget Impacts?	No	Identify:
Is change required to existing statutes, rules or contracts?	No	Identify:
Is the request related to or a result of litigation?	No	Identify lawsuit (please consult with Attorney General's Office):
Is the request related to Puget Sound recovery?	No	If yes, see budget instructions Section 14.4 for additional instructions
Identify other important connections		

Please provide a detailed discussion of connections/impacts identified above. How have families, providers, and communities of color within the early learning system been involved in the planning and implementation of this proposal?

The ECEAP Expansion Think Tank was convened in 2017 to engage families, providers and communities of color to provide insights and advice about obstacles to becoming an ECEAP provider and how to overcome them and about potential changes to ECEAP that can support expansion of high quality ECEAP services along the legislatively mandated timeline.

What alternatives were explored by the agency and why was this option chosen?

The department considered strategies that would have increased funds available for additional administrative supports, but those strategies ultimately were rejected, as they would have been at the expense of contracted slots--both the type delivered and the number contracted. Another option considered was limiting ECEAP slots to large organizations to realize economies of scale, but that is contrary to legislative mandate and will not reach children living in rural communities.

What are the consequences of not funding this request?

Without this funding, the department will be ill-prepared for the task of ECEAP expansion, and will likely either: a) have to sacrifice program quality improvements to ensure that expansion targets are met which will affect child outcomes; or b) implement expansion more slowly, thereby denying low-income

vulnerable children an opportunity to become prepared for kindergarten which research shows will affect their long-term academic success.

How has or can the agency address the issue or need in its current appropriation level?

The department has stretched its support funding to its limit, and has even utilized contracted slot churn savings to bolster other supports to contractors, like providing training and standardized curriculum. However, with a recent reduction in funding, the department has few savings to work with, and the options available to increase supports are limited.

Other supporting materials:

Information technology:

No

Yes

