



WSA Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP

*Serving ECEAP, Head Start, Migrant Head Start,
Tribal Head Start and Early Head Start Programs
and Families*



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WSA to Education Task Force: You Forgetting Something? You can't solve the K-12 problem without early education; Task Force should include ECEAP expansion in recommendations

Joel Ryan, Executive Director, said the following:

“Today the Joint Task Force on Education Funding ([link](#)) met in Federal Way to discuss how to address the requirements of the McCleary decision on education funding.

They may be missing the most important driver of school success – early learning. Early learning can't be second in line as we develop education priorities. **Research shows that we cannot solve the problems of K-12 without ensuring that children arrive ready to learn, and we will waste scarce resources if we approach it that way.**

The Task Force is working hard to address difficult and complex questions, but the committee's job must expand upon what is needed in “basic education” and how it should be funded, to what will achieve the type of educational outcomes our children need to be successful for the high skill jobs required of our state's economy.

Early learning investments save the state money in both the short and long term. High quality early learning programs, in study after study, have been shown to be the single most cost-effective way to close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for children in K-12 and beyond. Investments in high quality early learning reduce the need for costly school interventions such as special education and remedial services, while making it more likely children will graduate from high school and even college.

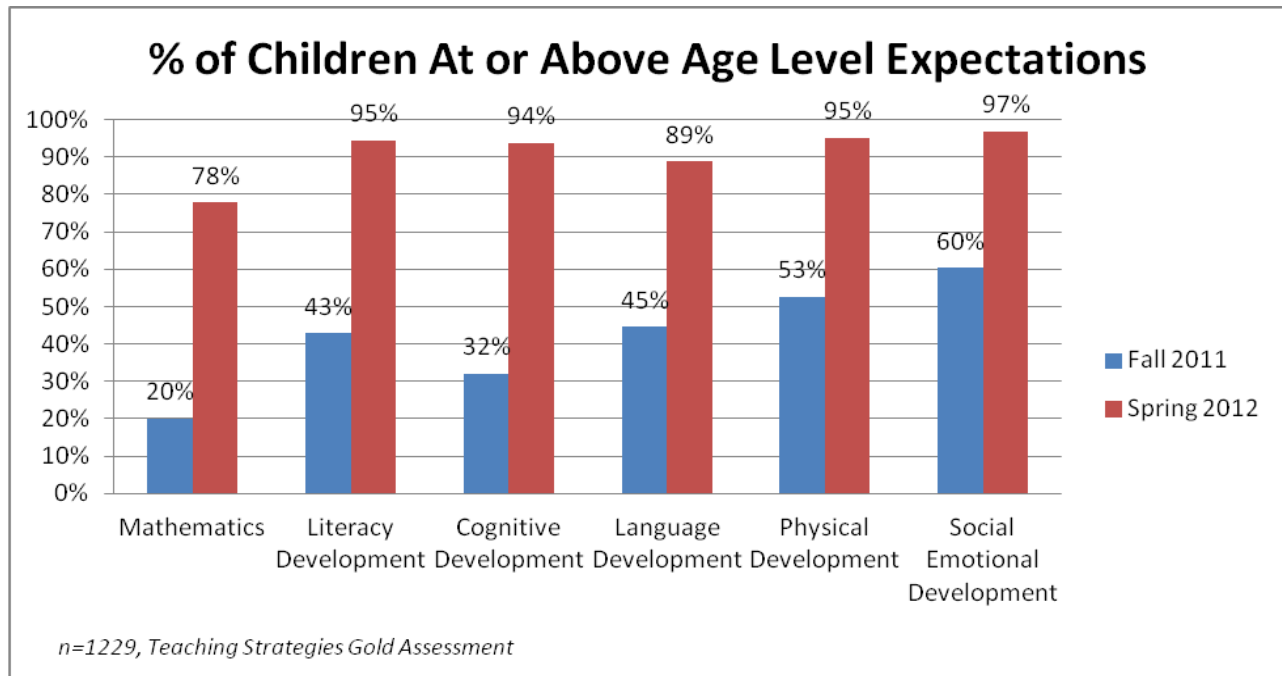
The Department of Early Learning estimates that there are more than 32,000 at-risk three and four year old children eligible but unable to enroll in our state's ECEAP

program. While the task force is well intentioned, simply funding K-12 classrooms by itself will not buy the kind of results taxpayers expect and children need.

That's why we are calling for the Task Force to include in their recommendations a significant expansion of our state's well regarded pre-k program, ECEAP, along with additional funding for pregnant moms, babies and toddlers. All you need to do is look at the most recent results from the Department of Early Learning ECEAP Outcomes Report to see how tax dollars are being put to use."

[DEL ECEAP Outcomes Report key findings:](#)

- **Children Met and Exceeded Goals in Language and Literacy.** In *Literacy Development*, only 43% of children entering in the fall were assessed 'at or above' expected age level. By spring 2012, **95% of children were 'at or above' age level.** [Studies](#) have shown that children who are not reading proficiently by 3rd grade are four times more likely to drop out before graduating.
- **Children acquired the foundational mathematics skills they needed.** In mathematics, which includes special relationships, number concepts and operations, measuring and patterns, **57.8% of children moved from below age level in the fall to at or above age level between fall and spring.** Studies show that children's math understanding as they enter kindergarten predicts their success level throughout their education.
- **Children Developed the Social-Emotional Skills to Sit, Pay Attention, Play Well With Others, and Learn.** Studies have shown that one of the key indicators of future success in school and work is the development of self control. Sharing, cooperating, showing patience and handling frustration well allow children to interact with peers and adults in a positive manner. At the beginning of the year 24.4% of children showed 'strength' in self control. By the end of the year 41.5% showed 'strength' in this category, and only 3.1% showed 'concerns'. It is social emotional development gains like this that make ECEAP such a strong program – these '[soft skills](#)' are predictive of future success in school and adult life.
- **Children Received the Medical Help They Needed So They Could Learn.** At the time of enrollment 33.9% of ECEAP children were behind on their medical exams. By the end of the year, only 9.2 percent were behind schedule. 7.2% of children received medical help as a result of the ECEAP medical exams, and 13% of children received an individualized ECEAP health plan for a chronic condition. Early health intervention has both short and long term benefits. In the short term, conditions that affect learning are identified and treated so children are ready for kindergarten. In the long term, programs like ECEAP have shown significant benefits into adulthood, including a large drop in mortality rates and lower levels of heart disease, smoking, and obesity.



About ECEAP

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is Washington’s pre-kindergarten program serving at-risk three and four year olds and their families. ECEAP provides children with preschool education, health services, intensive family support, and parent involvement. In 2010-2011 ECEAP served 8,391 children. More than 93% of the children enrolled in ECEAP were living at or below 110% of the federal poverty level, 7.1% of the children were homeless, 3% were in foster care, and 9.1% were on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) designed for children with physical or cognitive disabilities.

About WSA

The Washington State Association of Head Start/ECEAP is a statewide organization composed of representatives from ECEAP, Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start, and Native American Head Start. The association has been in existence since the late 1960’s, and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1986. The organization advocates for Head Start and for ECEAP in Olympia and in Washington DC. You can visit our web site at www.wsaheadstarteceap.com.