

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6668

As of January 29, 2010

Title: An act relating to eligibility requirements for the early childhood education and assistance program.

Brief Description: Regarding eligibility requirements for the early childhood education and assistance program.

Sponsors: Senators Kauffman and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/27/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is Washington's comprehensive whole child, family-focused, preschool program designed to help low-income and at-risk children and their families succeed in school and life. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) administers ECEAP and directly contracts with service providers.

Under current law, an eligible child is a child who is not eligible for kindergarten, and whose family income is at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). Priority is given to children from families with the lowest income, children in foster care, or eligible children from families with multiple needs.

Up to 10 percent of participants do not have to qualify by income, but are eligible by rules adopted by DEL. Under DEL's rules, these children must be impacted by developmental factors, (i.e., developmental delay or disability) or environmental risk factors (i.e., domestic violence, chemical dependency, CPS involvement, other factors affecting school success).

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is aimed at improving educational opportunities for students with disabilities. A child is eligible for services under Part B if the child is between that ages of three and 21, and by reason of one or more of the following conditions is unable to receive reasonable educational benefit from regular education: mental retardation; hearing impairments; speech or language impairments;

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serious emotional disturbance; orthopedic impairments; autism; traumatic brain injury; other health impairments; or specific learning disabilities, and needs special education and related services. At a state's discretion, eligible children may include preschool-age children who are experiencing developmental delays.

Summary of Bill: An eligible child also includes a child with disabilities who qualified for funds in accordance with Part B of IDEA and any other laws relating to special education services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2010.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Children with developmental disabilities increase their success through school. This bill will help ensure that children who receive early intervention services continue on through preschool. It is very important to have opportunities for all children to move forward; physical therapy and social and emotional services are both important. Including kids with disabilities in ECEAP creates a special environment for all kids learning together. Wouldn't it be great to have a classroom with every child getting the services they need regardless of what funding source is behind them? If we add one additional child we will be successful.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kauffman, prime sponsor; Jada Rupley, Educational Service District 112.