

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5089

As Reported by House Committee On:
Human Services & Early Learning

Title: An act relating to increasing early learning access for children ages three and older.

Brief Description: Increasing early learning access for children ages three and older.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Darneille, Palumbo, Wilson, C., Kuderer and Saldaña).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 3/15/19, 3/22/19 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by Committee)**

- Allows mid-year enrollment of income-eligible 3 year olds in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) who have received Early Head Start, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers, or Birth to Three ECEAP pilot project services.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program.

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is the state's voluntary preschool program for 3 and 4 year olds. The ECEAP provides comprehensive services that include education, health and nutrition, and family support for participating children and their

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families. Children are eligible for the state-supported ECEAP who are eligible for special education due to a disability, are from a family with an income at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), or who qualify under rules adopted by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). In the 2022-23 school year, any eligible child will be entitled to be enrolled in the ECEAP.

The DCYF rules require an eligible child to be 3 years old but not yet 5 years old by August 31 of the school year in order to enroll in the ECEAP.

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers.

Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires individual and family intervention services for children from birth to age 3 who have a disability or developmental delay.

The DCYF is the lead agency for IDEA Part C and the delivery of early intervention services through the state's Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program. Early intervention services include family resource coordination, developmental services, occupational or physical therapy, and speech or language therapy.

Early Head Start.

The Early Head Start (EHS) program is a federally funded early learning program that serves pregnant women and infants and toddlers under the age of 3. The EHS program provides comprehensive support, including child development and family support services, designed to nurture healthy attachments between a child and his or her caregiver.

Birth to Three ECEAP.

In December 2018 the DCYF received a federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five award of \$5.3 million for planning and training activities related to integrating Washington's early learning system. Activities related to planning for an early ECEAP for children ages birth to 3 are allowed under the grant.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The DCYF must adopt rules to allow the inclusion in the ECEAP, as space is available, of a nonentitled child who turns 3 years old at any time during the school year when the child has a family income at or below 200 percent of the FPL or meets at least one risk factor criterion adopted by the DCYF in rule. The child must have received services from or participated in:

- the ESIT program;
- the EHS or successor federal program providing comprehensive services for children from birth through age 2; or
- the Birth to Three ECEAP, if such a program is established.

Children enrolled in the ECEAP under these criteria are not considered part of the state-funded entitlement.

Conforming amendments are made in the event that Second Substitute Senate Bill 5437, related to expanding eligibility to the ECEAP, is enacted.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The maximum household income allowed for a nonentitled 3 year old to be enrolled in the ECEAP at any time during the school year is raised from 110 percent to 200 percent of the FPL. Alternatively, the child may meet one risk factor criterion adopted by the DCYF in rule. Participation in the Birth to Three ECEAP, if such a program is established, is added to the programs the child must have previously received services from or participated in.

Conforming amendments are made in the event that Second Substitute Senate Bill 5437, related to expanding eligibility to the ECEAP, is enacted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 2, which makes conforming amendments, which takes effect only if Second Substitute Senate Bill 5437, relating to expanding eligibility to the ECEAP, is enacted; and section 1, which takes effect only if section 2 does not take effect by the effective date of the section, which is 90 days.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The obstacle of mid-year enrollment is an issue that is overdue for a fix. This policy will close the gap for high-need children who have received ESIT or EHS services so they do not have to wait for ECEAP services. This bill allows the DCYF to start articulating a suite of services for children from birth to age 5 with special needs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Katy Warren, Washington State Association of Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program; and Frank Ordway, Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.