S-3683.2

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**SENATE BILL 6419**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Rolfes, Zeiger, Billig, Wellman, Conway, Darneille, Kuderer, Palumbo, and Walsh

AN ACT Relating to promoting access to the Washington early childhood education and assistance program; amending RCW 43.216.505; creating a new section; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that research continues to demonstrate the efficacy of the state's early childhood education and assistance program, known as ECEAP. Studies in Washington and from other states show that ECEAP prepares children for kindergarten success and has significant positive impacts on third, fourth, and fifth grade test scores. The legislature also finds that in some areas of the state, expanding ECEAP has proven challenging because there are too few eligible children to form an ECEAP classroom. The result is that children who are income eligible and the furthest from opportunity remain unserved. The legislature finds further that in other ECEAP classrooms, funded seats remain empty because providers do not have sufficient flexibility to serve families in need who are slightly over income but often have similar risk factors. The legislature intends, therefore, to provide more flexibility in determining eligibility for ECEAP in order to maximize the state's investment and assure that program funding is deployed to serve the greatest number of children and families.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.505 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 210 are each amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 43.216.500 through 43.216.559, 43.216.900, and 43.216.901.

(1) "Advisory committee" means the advisory committee under RCW 43.216.520.

(2) "Approved programs" means those state-supported education and special assistance programs which are recognized by the department as meeting the minimum program rules adopted by the department to qualify under RCW 43.216.500 through 43.216.550, 43.216.900, and 43.216.901 and are designated as eligible for funding by the department under RCW 43.216.530 and 43.216.540.

(3) "Comprehensive" means an assistance program that focuses on the needs of the child and includes education, health, and family support services.

(4) "Eligible child" means a child not eligible for kindergarten whose family income is at or below one hundred ten percent of the federal poverty level, as published annually by the federal department of health and human services, and includes a child whose family is eligible for public assistance, and who is not a participant in a federal or state program providing comprehensive services; a child who is homeless; a child eligible for special education due to disability under RCW 28A.155.020; and may include children who are eligible under rules adopted by the department if the number of such children equals not more than ((~~ten~~)) twenty-five percent of ((~~the total~~)) enrollment by individual contracted provider in the early childhood program. Priority for enrollment shall be given to children from families with the lowest income, children in foster care, or to eligible children from families with multiple needs.

(5) "Family support services" means providing opportunities for parents to:

(a) Actively participate in their child's early childhood program;

(b) Increase their knowledge of child development and parenting skills;

(c) Further their education and training;

(d) Increase their ability to use needed services in the community;

(e) Increase their self-reliance.

(6) "Homeless" means without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act, P.L. 100–77, July 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 482, and runaway and homeless youth act, P.L. 93–415, Title III, September 7, 1974, 88 Stat. 1129.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect July 1, 2018.

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