

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6419

C 155 L 18

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning access to the Washington early childhood education and assistance program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Zeiger, Billig, Wellman, Conway, Darneille, Kuderer, Palumbo and Walsh).

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education **House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services**

Background: The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). This state-funded, voluntary preschool program serves eligible children ages three and four. An eligible child is a child not eligible for kindergarten and:

- whose family income is at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level—\$27,060 for a family of four; or
- is eligible for special education.

Other children may be eligible under rules adopted by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) if the number of such children equals not more than 10 percent of enrollment in the program.

Current DEL rules provide that an eligible child may be from a family with income that exceeds 110 percent of the federal poverty level if the child is impacted by specific developmental or environmental risk factors that are linked by research to school performance.

State law provides that priority for enrollment must be given to children from families with the lowest income, children in foster care, or to eligible children from families with multiple needs. Current DEL rules also prioritize children who are four years old or homeless.

State law requires that state funding continue to be phased in each year until full statewide implementation is achieved in the 2022-23 school year, at which time any eligible child shall be entitled to be enrolled in the program.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) will administer ECEAP starting on July 1, 2018.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This federal act provides federal grant funding to support school districts that serve homeless students.

Summary: DCYF must adopt rules that allow the inclusion of children in ECEAP whose family income is above 110 percent of the federal poverty level if the number of such children equals not more than 25 percent of total statewide enrollment.

Children who are over income must be homeless or impacted by specific developmental or environmental risk factors that are linked by research to school performance. Homeless means without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

DCYF must prioritize children for enrollment in ECEAP who meet the definition of eligible child. As space is available, children who are over income may be included in ECEAP. Priority within this group must be given to children who are experiencing homelessness, involved with the child welfare system, or have a developmental delay or disability that does not meet the eligibility criteria for special education.

Children who are over income are not to be considered eligible children for ECEAP and are not considered to be part of the state-funded entitlement.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	1	
House	70	28	(House amended)
Senate	48	1	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 1, 2018