
HOUSE BILL 2099

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Representatives Leavitt, Penner, Barnard, Timmons, Reed, Kloba, Ryu, Parshley, Zahn, Richards, Schmidt, Doglio, Simmons, Berry, Eslick, Obras, Paul, Nance, Scott, Callan, Goodman, Reeves, Shavers, Fosse, Bergquist, Salahuddin, and Bernbaum

Prefiled 12/04/25. Read first time 01/12/26. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding access to the early childhood
2 education and assistance program for military families; amending RCW
3 43.216.512 and 43.216.514; adding a new section to chapter 43.216
4 RCW; and providing an effective date.

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

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.216.512 and 2025 c 412 s 12 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 (1) The department shall adopt rules that allow the enrollment of
9 children in the early childhood education and assistance program, as
10 space is available, if the number of such children equals not more
11 than 25 percent of total statewide enrollment, when the child is not
12 eligible under RCW 43.216.505 and (~~has~~):

13 (a) Has a family income level above 36 percent of the state
14 median income but at or below 50 percent of the state median income
15 adjusted for family size and the child meets at least one of the risk
16 factor criterion described in subsection (2) of this section; or

17 (b) Has a family income level above 36 percent of the state
18 median income but at or below the maximum household income for
19 working connections child care eligibility as established in RCW
20 43.216.802, adjusted for family size, and is from a household with a
21 parent who is a military member.

1 (2) Children enrolled in the early childhood education and
2 assistance program pursuant to this section must be prioritized for
3 available funded slots according to a prioritization system adopted
4 in rule by the department that considers (~~(risk)~~):

5 (a) Risk factors that have a disproportionate effect on
6 kindergarten readiness and school performance, including:

7 (~~(a)~~) (i) Family income as a percent of the state median
8 income;

9 (~~(b)~~) (ii) Child welfare system involvement;

10 (~~(c)~~) (iii) Domestic violence;

11 (~~(d)~~) (iv) English as a second language;

12 (~~(e)~~) (v) Expulsion from an early learning setting;

13 (~~(f)~~) (vi) A parent who is incarcerated;

14 (~~(g)~~) (vii) A parent with a behavioral health treatment need;

15 and

16 (~~(h)~~) (viii) Other risk factors determined by the department to
17 be linked by research to school performance; and

18 (b) Additional factors affecting households with a military
19 member parent, including:

20 (i) A military member parent who is currently deployed or has
21 scheduled deployment within the current school year; and

22 (ii) A military member parent who is a single custodial parent.

23 (3) Children enrolled in the early childhood education and
24 assistance program under this section are not considered eligible
25 children as defined in RCW 43.216.505 and are not considered to be
26 part of the state-funded entitlement required in RCW 43.216.556.

27 (4) For purposes of this section, "military member" means an
28 active member of the United States armed forces, a member of a
29 military reserve component, or a member of the national guard, who is
30 either stationed in or a resident of Washington state.

31 (5) This section expires August 1, 2030.

32 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 43.216
33 RCW under the subchapter heading "early childhood education and
34 assistance" to read as follows:

35 (1) The department shall adopt rules that allow the enrollment of
36 children in the early childhood education and assistance program, as
37 space is available and subject to appropriated funding, when the
38 child:

39 (a) Is not eligible under RCW 43.216.505;

1 (b) Is from a household with a parent who is a military member;
2 and

3 (c) Has a family income level above 50 percent of the state
4 median income but at or below the maximum household income for
5 working connections child care eligibility as established in RCW
6 43.216.802, adjusted for family size.

7 (2) Children enrolled in the early childhood education and
8 assistance program pursuant to this section must be prioritized for
9 available funded slots according to a prioritization system adopted
10 in rule by the department that considers:

11 (a) Risk factors that have a disproportionate effect on
12 kindergarten readiness and school performance, including:

- 13 (i) Family income as a percent of the state median income;
- 14 (ii) Child welfare system involvement;
- 15 (iii) Domestic violence;
- 16 (iv) English as a second language;
- 17 (v) Expulsion from an early learning setting;
- 18 (vi) A parent who is incarcerated;
- 19 (vii) A parent with a behavioral health treatment need; and
- 20 (viii) Other risk factors determined by the department to be
21 linked by research to school performance; and

22 (b) Additional factors affecting households with a military
23 member parent, including:

- 24 (i) A military member parent who is currently deployed or has
25 scheduled deployment within the current school year; and
- 26 (ii) A military member parent who is a single custodial parent.

27 (3) Children enrolled in the early childhood education and
28 assistance program under this section are not considered eligible
29 children as defined in RCW 43.216.505 and are not considered to be
30 part of the state-funded entitlement required in RCW 43.216.556.

31 (4) For purposes of this section, "military member" means an
32 active member of the United States armed forces, a member of a
33 military reserve component, or a member of the national guard, who is
34 either stationed in or a resident of Washington state.

35 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.216.514 and 2021 c 199 s 507 are each amended to
36 read as follows:

37 (1)(a) The department shall prioritize children for enrollment in
38 the early childhood education and assistance program who are eligible
39 pursuant to RCW 43.216.505.

1 (b) A child who is eligible at the time of enrollment in the
2 early childhood education and assistance program maintains program
3 eligibility until the child begins kindergarten.

4 (2) As space is available, children may be included in the early
5 childhood education and assistance program pursuant to ((RCW
6 ~~43.216.512~~) section 2 of this act.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Sections 2 and 3 of this act take effect
8 August 1, 2030.

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