

## 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY:

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

32.6% of low-income five year olds enter Washington schools fully kindergarten-ready.<sup>1</sup> In comparison, 60% of non-low income five year olds enter school kindergarten ready.

This 30-point opportunity gap – **unequal access to the resources necessary for academic success** – contributes over time to the assessment, graduation, and dropout rate gaps currently experienced by Washington’s low-income students.

National and state-level research proves that quality early learning environments – like the Washington Early Childhood

Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) – can help close the opportunity gap. Even better, it does so with a \$4.75 return on every \$1 invested.<sup>2</sup> One study

that compared test scores from 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders who attended ECEAP to those who did not, found that ECEAP alumni earned significantly higher math and reading scores – as good or better than the most effective pre-K programs nationally.<sup>3</sup>

Washington is poised to enhance its leadership in early childhood education and help close opportunity gaps. If we decrease the 30-point kindergarten readiness gap between low income and non-low income kids, we can decrease their 20-point graduation rate gap, the 12-point dropout rate gap, and 11- to 19 point assessment pass rate gap. Increasing early childhood education funding will ensure that every student can access the opportunities resulting from the huge investment we made in the K-12 system.<sup>4</sup>

Let’s work with thousands of parents and providers to ensure all Washington kids benefit from affordable, high-quality early childhood education.

**32.6%** of low-income five year olds enter Washington schools fully kindergarten-ready.<sup>1</sup>

- 1. Increase the number of funded ECEAP spaces** for the 3- and 4-year olds in your district;
- 2. Invest in the creation of more early learning facilities** across the state;
- 3. Maintain quality standards that benefit Washington kids by restoring the cuts made to Early Achievers** during the 2017 session.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/Kindergarten.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Kay & Pennucci, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Bania, N., Kay, N., Aos, S., & Pennucci, A. (2014). Outcome evaluation of Washington State’s Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, (Document No. 14-12-2201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2017documents/2017-05-GraduationAndDropoutStatistics.pdf>



LEAGUE OF  
EDUCATION  
VOTERS™



## For more about ECEAP

Liz Coker, Kindergarten readiness among children who participated in the Washington state Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). Education Research and Data Center, 2017.

Noa Kay & Annie Pennucci, Outcome evaluation of Washington state's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. (Doc. No. 14-12-2201). Olympia: Washington state Institute for Public Policy, 2017.

**“When my daughter Lauryn reached about a year old, she still wasn’t talking much. NO ONE could understand her but me. She mumbled a lot, and her words were garbled.”**

When Lauryn turned three her mother April enrolled her in the local ECEAP program, where the speech delay and behavioral cues prompted teachers to arrange for speech and hearing specialists to evaluate Lauryn. They discovered that Lauryn was 75% deaf in one ear and 25% deaf in the other due to Eustachian Tube Dysfunction. Lauryn’s speech mimicked what she heard. Without ECEAP support, April believes Lauryn could have begun school “unable to hear, afraid of learning, with people not being able to understand her.” Instead, Lauryn’s work with ECEAP and (later) Head Start staff allowed her to enter school completely Kindergarten-ready.

**“Instead of starting Kindergarten with a disability or a delay, we were able to fix the problem before she became another statistic.”**

Today, April writes, “Lauryn is in 7th grade, no speech issues, has good grades and was recently selected to be in the inaugural AVID class at her school. She is in 4-H, she volunteers, plays volleyball and doesn’t lack social skills at all!”

[educationvoters.org](http://educationvoters.org)

## For more on early childhood education and closing opportunity gaps

Arya Ansari & Adam Winsler, “Stability and sequence of center-based and family childcare: Links with low-income children’s school readiness.” *Children and Youth Services Review* (2013) 35: 358-366.

Jessica De Feyter & Adam Winsler, “The early developmental competencies and school readiness of low-income, immigrant children: Influences of generation, race/ethnicity, and national origins.” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* (2009) 24: 411-431.

James Heckman, “Schools, Skills, and Synapses.” *Economic Inquiry* (2008) 46(3): 289-324.

Noa Kay & Annie Pennucci, Early childhood education for low-income students: A review of the evidence and benefit-cost analysis (Doc. No. 14-01-2201). Olympia: Washington state Institute for Public Policy, 2014

Craig T. Ramey, Frances A. Campbell, Margaret Burchinal, Martie L. Skinner, and David M. Gardner, Sharon L. Ramey, “Persistent effects of early childhood education on high-risk children and their mothers.” *Applied Developmental Science* (2000) 4 (1-2): 2-14.

Amanda Roy & C Cybele Raver, “Are all risks equal? Early experiences of poverty-related risk and children’s functioning.” *Journal of Family Psychology* (2014) 28(3): 391-400.