

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

When Washington state five-year-olds arrive in kindergarten each year, they are beginning an educational journey on which some of them are already behind their peers. Our state has a 26-point kindergarten readiness gap – only 30.5% of kindergarteners from low income families are fully school ready, compared to 56.5% of their non-low income peers.<sup>1</sup>

To achieve readiness for all Washington children, some kids need more support, earlier. Washington has initiated a high-impact, research-proven early childhood education intervention program: the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP).<sup>2</sup>

ECEAP, our state's pre-kindergarten program for low income families, provides comprehensive education, health, and family support services to our most at-risk preschoolers. ECEAP is not only a good investment – it returns \$4.33 of benefits for each dollar we invest now<sup>3</sup> – it catalyzes learning at one of the greatest time periods of brain growth and plasticity.<sup>4</sup> In fact, at the end of one year of ECEAP, 47% of ECEAP four-year olds – all of them children of low-income parents – are fully kindergarten ready. At the end of two years of ECEAP, 54% of four-year olds are fully kindergarten ready.<sup>5</sup> In other words, a dosage of two years of ECEAP more than doubles the kindergarten readiness rates for children from low income families, from



*Preschool students at South Shore PreK-8*

30.5% to 54.2%, and almost eliminates the 26-point income-based kindergarten readiness gap.

Meeting our ECEAP entitlement goal for 2020 will allow 3,600 more kids to get the support and intervention they need to be kindergarten ready. But it also means they will be more likely to meet their third grade reading goal, more likely to persist to high school graduation, less likely to be referred into special education services, and more likely to enroll and persist into postsecondary education.<sup>6</sup> Our investment today means a lifetime of difference for our children and our communities.

<sup>1</sup> OSPI, Kindergarten Readiness by Student Program and Characteristic, <https://washington-statereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/View-SchoolOrDistrict/103300>

<sup>2</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>3</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, State early childhood education programs: Low-income, <https://www.wsipp.wa.gov/Benefit-Cost/Program/270>

<sup>4</sup> Stiles J & Jernigan TL, The basics of brain

development. *Neuropsychology Review* 2010; 20(4):327-48.

<sup>5</sup> Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families, 2018-2019 ECEAP Outcomes Report.

<sup>6</sup> DeFeyter & 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: 411-31. Barnett & Lamy, "The effects of state pre-kindergarten programs on young children's school readiness in five states," *The National Institute for Early Education Research* (2006). Fantuzzo, Rouse, et al., "Early childhood experiences and

kindergarten success: A population-based study of a large urban setting," *School Psychology Review*, 34 (4): 571-88. Karoly, Kilburn & Cannon (2005). Broberg, Wessels, Lamb, & Hwang, "Effects of day care on the development of cognitive abilities in 8-year olds: A longitudinal study," *Developmental Psychology*, 33(1): 62-9. Gilliam & Zigler, "A critical metanalysis of all evaluations of state-funded preschool from 1977 to 1998: Implications for policy, service delivery and program evaluation," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15(4): 441-73. Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, "Early childhood interventions: proven results, future promises," RAND Corporation (2005). Barnett, "Long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes," *The Future of Children* 5(3): 25-50.