

COMPARISON OF ECEAP AND HEAD START

Overview

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is the State of Washington's whole-child, family-focused preschool program designed to help low-income and at-risk children and their families succeed in school and life. Head Start is a national program that promotes school readiness. In Washington State, there are 15 ECEAP-only agencies, 10 Head Start-only agencies, and 18 agencies that operate *both* ECEAP and Head Start.

Both ECEAP and Head Start provide education, family support, health, and nutrition services to support school readiness for children from low-income families. In both programs, children attend high-quality early learning preschools. Families build skills and access resources to support their children's growth and development and advocate for their children in future years. The demographics of families and children enrolled in ECEAP and Head Start are similar. The federal government establishes Head Start Performance Standards and the state Department of Early Learning establishes ECEAP Performance Standards. Further information on the similarities and differences between these two programs is outlined below.

Similar ECEAP and Head Start Performance Standards

• Children's age eligibility.
• Prioritization of children most in need of services – low income, child welfare involvement, developmental delays and disabilities, or environmental risks.
• Class size and adult:child ratio.
• Developmentally- and culturally-appropriate curriculum, with positive child guidance.
• Child screening and assessment, ongoing observation, individualized curriculum and guidance. Support and coordination for children with special needs. Requirement to use assessment results for planning and individualization.
• Facility health and safety requirements (similar to licensed child care).
• Health status monitoring, medical and dental screening and follow-up care, immunizations, and dental hygiene.
• Access to mental health support for children and families.
• Nutritious meals and snacks provided during preschool day.
• Parent participation in meaningful program governance, decision-making, and leadership development.
• Individualized family support services, focusing on family strengths, to set and follow-up on family goals, access community resources, and support kindergarten readiness.
• Community partnerships to maximize and streamline health, education, and social services. Community kindergarten transition planning.
• Annual program self-assessment required.

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Substantial Differences between ECEAP and Head Start Performance Standards

	ECEAP	Head Start
Income eligibility (90% of enrolled families must be at this level)	110% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG)	100% FPG (current reauthorization bill changes this to 130% FPG). Allows enrollment based on child care subsidy - up to 200% FPG in WA.
Disabilities	No set-aside of slots. Children with disabilities are enrolled by income-eligibility, or as part of 10% of enrollment allowed over-income.	10% of slots must be available to children with disabilities.
Over-income eligibility	Maximum 10% of slots are available to children from over-income families, based on developmental or environmental risk.	Maximum 10% of slots are available to children from over-income families.
Enrollment	Fill all slots by 30 days. Maintain active enrollment of 95%.	Fill all slots by first class day. Fill each vacancy within 30 days.
Preschool classroom hours per year	240 hours required. Actual average 360.	448 hours required. Actual average 540.
Program review (on-site, intensive, based on Performance Standards)	Every four years, conducted by DEL staff.	Every three years, conducted by federally-trained consultants and peer reviewers.
On-going monitoring of services, screenings, enrollments, etc. by funders	Monthly monitoring of electronic reports.	Annual Program Information Report. Risk Assessment oversight system replaces "Early Alert" system in 2007
Compliance with Performance Standards	Providers develop Action Plans, in collaboration with DEL staff, for out-of-compliance standards. DEL monitors Action Plans, providing technical assistance. On-site follow-up may occur. Philosophy of collaborating with provider to reach compliance.	An improvement plan is developed for out-of-compliance standards. A follow-up review may be scheduled. Deficient programs have strict timelines to comply or funding may be revoked.
Training and Technical Assistance	Provided by DEL staff, as provider or statewide needs are noted.	Separate national training and technical assistance system, co-located in regional offices (Seattle). In addition, each grantee receives funds that can only be used for staff development.
Staff qualifications	Lead teachers and family support specialists must have a related AA or higher degree. Assistant teachers and family support/health aides must have a CDA or 12 related credits. Staff who do not meet qualifications are allowed 5 years to complete a professional development plan.	All lead teachers must have a CDA, AA, or BA; 50% must have an AA or higher by 2008. (A BA requirement is in the pipeline.) There are no requirements for assistant teachers or family support staff. 180 day waiver of qualifications, for teachers. Hiring preference for current and former Head Start parents.
Screenings (developmental, vision, hearing, growth)	Within 90 days.	Within 45 days.
Child Outcomes data	No statewide outcomes measures.	Child Outcomes Framework. Must analyze data from 8 developmental domains three times per year, and use it for program planning.
Parent-teacher conferences	Required three hours per year.	Required four times a year, at least twice at home visits.
Family support services	Minimum of three hours per year, with specific content.	No specified number of hours, but requirements for content of services.

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2007- 2008 ECEAP and Head Start Funding levels**

	ECEAP	Head Start	Migrant Head Start	American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start
Number of funded slots for three and four year olds in Washington State	7081	9718	1228 ¹	1075
Average funds per slot ²	\$6536	\$8725	\$7316	\$7790

¹ Based on three- and four-year-olds actually enrolled in the 3,093 available slots for all ages in 2007.

² Does not include funding of state or regional office or technical assistance system. Average was determined by dividing total funds to contractors and grantees by total number of slots.

Demographics

	ECEAP ³	Head Start ⁴	Migrant Head Start	American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start
Four-year-olds (one year before kindergarten)	78%	67%	51%	58%
Three-year-olds (two years before kindergarten)	22%	33%	49%	42%
Children determined to have a disability at enrollment	5%	7%	4%	4%
At or below Federal Poverty Guidelines ⁵	82% ⁶	94%	99%	75%
Income from wages	72%	71%	100%	76%
Income from TANF	16%	24% ⁷	7%	30%
Homeless	4% ⁸	6%	>1%	3%
Home language	65% English 29% Spanish 6% Other	64% English 25% Spanish 10% Other 1% Unspecified	>1% English 95% Spanish 4% Other	96% English 4% Spanish
Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino origin	36%	37%	99.7%	7%
Race:				
White	50%	44%	79%	11%
Black or African American	10%	10%	0%	>1%
Asian	5%	6%	0%	>1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	5%	6%	>1%	77%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2%	1%	0%	>1%
Other or multiracial	8%	12%	0%	4%
Unspecified	26%	20%	21%	6%

³ From cumulative enrollment of 6,835 children. Data is from ECEAP Management System, Cumulative Summary of Demographic Characteristics, March 15, 2007

⁴ Percentages are based on a cumulative enrollment of 11,925 children. Data is from the Head Start Program Information Form for the 2005-2006 Program Year, Washington State,

⁵ The Federal Poverty Level for 2007 is \$20,650 for a family of four. 37% of ECEAP families have household income under \$10,000.

⁶ Families are eligible for ECEAP at 110% of Federal Poverty Guidelines.

⁷ May include Working Connections Child Care Subsidy

⁸ At time of enrollment