



## **ECEAP Fact Sheet**

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The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a comprehensive “whole child”, family-focused preschool program designed to help low-income and at-risk children and families succeed in school and life. The program was established in 1985, and was modeled after the successful federal Head Start program.

### **Services Provided**

ECEAP provides an intensive combination of education, health and nutrition screening and assistance, parent involvement and family support. Three- and four-year-olds attend high-quality pre-school classes, are screened and immunized for possible health problems that could hinder learning. Family needs are assessed so that families can be referred to community resources, and adults are provided with training to improve their parenting, leadership, and self-sufficiency skills. ECEAP has been successful in preparing children for school, identifying and addressing health and nutrition issues, and helping parents with parenting, leadership and self-sufficiency skills. Parents are involved both in the classroom and through local parent-run policy councils.

### **Eligibility**

ECEAP is available to families who earn less than 110% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$23,320/year for a family of four). Families who receive public assistance, children in foster care, and disabled children are also eligible.

In 2008 the Washington State Department of Early Learning contracted with 40 schools, child care centers, and community and faith-based facilities to provide ECEAP services to more than 8000 children and families. Of these children, approximately 50% are Caucasian, 29% Hispanic, 13% African-American, and 8% are from other ethnicities.

### **ECEAP Works**

ECEAP's comprehensive commitment to families has proven successful. In a 12-year longitudinal study of ECEAP (1988-2000), researchers found that ECEAP children made significantly greater academic gains, displayed more positive behaviors, enjoyed school more, and had fewer health problems than non-ECEAP children.

Families also greatly benefited from ECEAP's family orientation and focus on parent involvement and training. In year 1 of the study only 5% of ECEAP families were above the Federal Poverty Level; in year 9 over 50% had reached that level, a ten-fold increase. Their mean family income rose by more than 51%, and their reliance on public assistance was greatly reduced.

Other studies have shown that at-risk children without quality preschool were 70% more likely to commit violent crimes, have lower graduation rates and higher drug use.

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### **For more information, please contact:**

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