

Just for Parents

Special Interest Articles:

- Obama's Budget Proposal
- Maintaining Connections
- Items of Interest to Early Learning

Parent Ambassador of the Week:



Name: Connie Woodhouse
Hometown: WA

Connie is married to Eddy and together they have 8 children and are currently raising 4 grandchildren. All of the grandchildren have attended ECEAP or Head Start. Connie is the Chairperson for Policy Council for Pierce and King Counties has chosen to become a part of the growing movement for our children's success in life.

***"Tell me and I forget.
Show me and I
remember. Involve me
and I understand."***
-Chinese Proverb

Early Learning in Basic Education-2261

The basic education bill recently passed redefining the definition of basic education. The original bill was written in 1977 and had not been updated since that time. One of the things included in the recommended definition is early learning services for at-risk children. This would provide additional and more secure funding opportunities for ECEAP in the future, both for quality and for additional children served.

The bill would set up an early learning working group that would report to the basic education steering committee. This group would be responsible for developing a proposal for how to fully serve at-risk children, including issues of eligibility, service delivery options, and program standards.

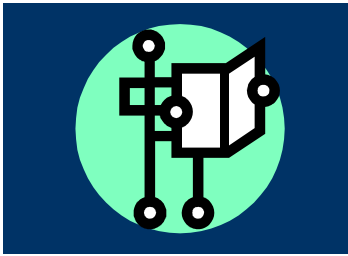
Originally the bill required that the funding for the program run through school districts. This was a concern to the community-based ECEAP programs (the programs that are not run through school districts). Through the legislative efforts of WSA and other early learning advocacy groups, the legislation was changed so that the work group would make the funding decisions.

The dedication and presence of WSA, Parent Ambassadors and other early learning advocacy groups were instrumental in helping get early learning included in the definition of basic education. Parent Ambassadors led numerous ECEAP advocacy days in Olympia, testified to legislators at public hearings, met one-on-one with legislators, gathered letters of support from parents in programs, called and asked others to call the legislative hotline and shared their personal success stories about ECEAP to raise awareness and support our request to be included in the definition of basic education.

WSA Present at Childcare Subsidy Hearings

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) serves as the lead Childcare and Development Fund Plan (CCDF) agency for the state, and must submit a plan every two years describing how the state will spend its federal childcare dollars. The funding is used for a variety of initiatives, including childcare subsidies. The final plan is due by July 1, 2009 and will cover the time period of October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2011.

Public hearings were held earlier this month to allow input before the final plan is written. WSA was present at these hearings to represent families and requested that co-pays be capped at 10% of family income and that a 12-month re-certification process be included in the plan. The longer recertification process would ensure that children will receive continuity of care for the entire school year and that families will have a longer time period before they have to submit paperwork for reviews, unless there is a change that needs to be reported.



This newsletter is created by WSA's Parent Ambassador Program. These ambassadors advocate for quality in the early childhood development of at-risk children.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.wsaheadstarteceap.com

**Finding Resources in
your community:**

ParentHelp123.org is a website that helps families to search by zip code and keywords for local resources such as childcare, food banks and immunization clinics.

The benefit finder helps:

- 1. Check Eligibility.**
- 2. Fill-out Applications**
- 3. Print and Mail Applications**

Soon it will offer a list of additional services in and Spanish language services.

President Obama's Budget Proposal

President Obama's budget proposal provides a total of \$1.086 trillion for annual appropriations, and allows the possibility of more spending in certain areas if Congress later chooses to adopt the greater spending levels. Early learning and education were listed among the top priorities. Below are some highlights:

Head Start and Early Head Start grow by \$122 million in FY 2010. The growth is in addition to the \$2.1 billion in temporary economic recovery funding. Together, the proposal will support doubling the number of children in Early Head Start, to 115,000. However, there is no effort to specifically earmark funds for Early Head Start.

There will be a new \$300 million Early Learning Challenge Fund in the Department of Education. The new fund will help states create comprehensive zero-to-five systems that prepare children for kindergarten and beyond. These funds are primarily intended to support Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems at the state level.

A nurse home visiting program will be available for new parents that are also low income. This would be a mandatory program and will not need annual appropriations.

\$3.2 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program to help low-income families with their home heating and cooling expenses.

Maintaining Early Learning Connections

The end of the year is rapidly approaching and many of our children will be graduating at the end of May or sometime in June. Do not forget to share your contact information with any families that you would like to maintain contact with. The summer is the perfect time for a day at beach or a picnic in the park!

If you are interested in continuing to receive information about early learning and ways that you can continue to help families across WA State – and even the country, please visit the WSA website at wsaheadstartandeceap.com and sign-up for our listserv.

If you did not have the opportunity to serve on your local Policy Council (*not* Parent Council), helping ECEAP and Head Start support families, please consider joining next year. These families and community friends help ECEAP and Head Start by contacting legislators and sharing the needs of their communities. Contact a local family support worker or director of any ECEAP or Head Start provider for more information.

Items of Interest to Early Learning

Congressional Recess May 23rd-May 30th. Members of Congress and our two Senators will be on recess (home in Washington). This is an excellent time to invite them to visit your Head Start program or to set up a time to meet with them at their district offices. To set up a meeting contact their DC office or local office and ask to speak to the scheduler. They are likely to ask you to e-mail them your request. Simply send them a short e-mail explaining that you are a Head Start/ECEAP parent, where and when you would to meet (policy council meeting, tour, etc.) and how many people will be in attendance.