



WSA Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP

*Serving ECEAP, Head Start, Migrant Head Start,
Tribal Head Start and Early Head Start
Programs and Families*



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Contact: Joel Ryan, 253.486.9077, joel@wsaheadstarteceap.com

Failure of Super Committee Means Big Cuts to Head Start - 1,500 Children in Washington State Could Lose Services; Media Ignoring Potential Cuts to Children's Programs In Favor Of Coverage of Efforts to Undo Military Spending Cuts

Media Ignoring Potential Cuts to Children's Programs In Favor Of Military Spending Cuts

With the collapse of the deficit-cutting Super Committee, Congress' emergency backup budget-cutting plan now is supposed to take over -- automatic, across-the-board spending reductions of roughly \$1 trillion from military and well as domestic government programs. The big federal deficit reductions that are to be triggered by Monday's Super Committee collapse kick in January 2013.

While current media attention has focused almost exclusively on efforts already underway to reduce the impact to military spending, it is critical to note that non-defense discretionary spending also faces a huge wallop. While many programs impacting low income children and families are in a protected category and not subject to across the board cuts, there are notable exceptions including WIC, Title 1 and special education funding, subsidized housing, and Head Start.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in 2013, \$38.6 billion will be cut out of non-defense discretionary spending programs through an across the board cut. They estimate that all non-defense discretionary programs like Head Start will face a 9.3% reduction starting in January 2013. To read more about how the across the board cuts works please go to <http://www.cbpp.org/files/8-4-11bud.pdf>.

Immediate Impact to Head Start: 1,500 Children Will Be Cut In January 2013

Here in Washington State nearly 16,500 children attend our Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant-Seasonal Head Start or American Indian Head Start. Based on these numbers, a 9.3% cut in 2013 would mean that over 1500 at-risk children in Washington State would lose the opportunity to arrive at kindergarten healthy and prepared for school success. This cut would take place just at the wrong time. The Department of Early Learning estimates that more than 18,500 children are eligible for Head Start and our state's preschool program, but cannot receive services due to a lack of funding. Children birth-3 years old have even less access to quality services – less than 5% of eligible children are being served in Washington.

Long-Term Impact to Head Start: Tighter Budget Caps Will Squeeze Program

Under the agreement in subsequent years 2014-2021, the 'cap' for domestic discretionary spending increases by only 2.4% each year, a level far below what is necessary to meet increases in population, need, or the cost increases due to inflation. These tighter budget caps

would replace the ones put in place by the Budget Control Act passed in August and result in fewer “real dollars” being available for children needing Head Start services.

Joel Ryan, WSA Executive Director, said the following:

“As one of the co-chairs of the Super Committee, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) wisely insisted that any deal include shared sacrifice with a combination of cuts to entitlement spending and tax increases on the very wealthiest. Unfortunately, not all members agreed with this approach and a deadlock ensued, leaving Head Start children in a precarious situation with a target on their backs. This story is just as important as the incredible amount of coverage being devoted to the military budget.”

“We are hopeful that in the months ahead Congress and President Obama will work together to solve the long term deficit problem and that a final agreement that is fair and balanced can be brokered before the automatic cuts kick in in January 2013. Failure to do so would mean that those most deeply impacted by the ongoing recession—poor children— will also be the ones hurt the most. This is an inexcusable result.”

About WSA

The Washington State Association of Head Start/ECEAP (WSA) is a statewide organization composed of representatives from ECEAP, Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant/Seasonal Head Start, and Native American Head Start. The association has been in existence since the late 1960's, and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1986. The organization advocates for Head Start and for ECEAP in Olympia and in Washington DC. You can visit our web site at www.wsaheadstarteceap.com