

2025 BUDGET + POLICY PRIORITIES



As the Legislature faces challenging decisions in 2025, Start Early Washington calls on the Legislature to:

1. Meet the Commitments of the [Fair Start for Kids Act of 2021](#)

- a. Increase income eligibility for the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program to 75% of the State Median Income effective July 1, 2025.
- b. Set WCCC provider reimbursement rates at the 85th percentile of the 2024 Market Rate survey beginning in the 2025-27 biennium.



2. Shift Child Care Reimbursement Policy to Cost of Quality Care

Support legislation that codifies the use of Cost of Quality Care rather than the Market Rate Survey to reimburse WCCC providers. The Cost of Quality Care Rate Model takes into account the true cost of providing quality care and provides living wages and benefits for child care workers.

3. Invest in Early Learning Facilities

Invest \$50 million from the 2025-27 Capital Budget in the Early Learning Facilities Fund to support grants and loans to address the state's ever-growing need for child care. The current demand for funding far outweighs allotted resources.

Additionally, support legislation that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the Early Learning Facilities Fund by establishing an Emergency Fund for the program; clarifying eligibility for certain ECEAP programs; adding Tribal Compact Schools to the Public Schools Grant Program; and clarifying match requirements.

4. Fully Fund Home Visiting Rates

Invest \$7.8M for the 2025-27 biennium to fully fund home visiting rates so the program's two models that serve the most families – Nurse-Family Partnership and Parents as Teachers – can transition to rates as of July 1, 2025 and be reimbursed for their true cost of service.

In 2023, the Legislature made a down payment to address stagnant reimbursement for home visiting services and to support much-needed transition of program reimbursement to a rates-based system.

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For more information, please contact:

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