

State Agency Decision Packages

WASHINGTON STATE: 2024



Each September, state agencies submit to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) "Decision Packages" containing agency requests for consideration of funding to be included in the Governor's budget released in mid-late December. 2024's key early learning requests submitted by the Department of Children, Youth and Families include:

ECEAP ENTITLEMENT

DCYF requested a total of \$37M for the supplemental budget, with the amount rising to \$82.09M in years 25-27. DCYF proposes the new funding support three areas: slot rates, slot expansion and quality supports.

- Slot Rates (\$29.759M). DCYF requested a 19% rate increase for school-day slots and a 28% increase for working-day slots. Funding at this amount would equal the full rate recommendation in the ECEAP cost study. This would raise the school-day rate from \$14,893 to \$17,659 (and then to \$18,030 in SFY 26). It would also increase the working-day rate from the current \$21,478 to \$27,587 (going up to \$28,166 in SFY 26).
- Slot Expansion (\$4.976M). The adopted 2023-25 budget included 500 new school-day slots. In the supplemental budget, DCYF is requesting an additional 200 school-day and 50 working-day slots. The decision package notes that three contractors returned 246 slots this year due to staffing shortages.
- Quality Supports (\$1.046M in maintenance and \$149K for new slots). This funding request would support child assessment, curriculum and training. This request was not fully funded in the 2023-25 budget and \$1.046M represents that funding gap. Additional funding is needed because of pricing increases from a vendor and quality funding not provided to support new slots allotted.

MAKING CHILD CARE WORK FOR FAMILIES

A total of \$12.597M in the 2023-25 supplemental budget is requested to align eligibility for ECEAP, Working Connections, Head Start, Early Head Start and Early ECEAP. Alignment would include:

- Allow participation in ECEAP, Early ECEAP, Head Start and Early Head Start as an approved Working Connections activity. This would cost \$2.377M and impact about 166 families who are enrolled in Working Connections and either Head Start or ECEAP.
- Continued Working Connections Eligibility for 12 months for children adopted or in guardianship. This would cost \$1.091M.
- Exclude child support, Social Security and SSI as income for ECEAP and Working Connections Eligibility. This would cost \$6.876M for child support and \$2.115M for SS/SSI exclusion.

INFANT RATE ENHANCEMENT AND NON-STANDARD HOURS BONUS

A total of \$23.758M is requested in the 2023-25 supplemental budget and \$47.458M in 2025-27 to:

- Increase infant rate enhancement from \$90 a month to \$500 a month. This would cost \$14 million and impact about 2500 children. DCYF also requests 1 FTE to manage the contracting of slots for the approximately 100 infants placed with kin or relative parents.
- Increase non-standard hour care bonus from \$135 a month to \$500 a month. This would cost \$8M.
- Increase shared services funding to \$1.7M. This supports training, mentoring and consulting.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN COORDINATED RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

DCYF requests \$1.357M and 2 FTE to implement the requirements of the 2023 Transition to Kindergarten legislation (the adopted budget did not include this funding). The decision package also includes funding for Child Care Aware to support bringing local partners together to coordinate and communicate. The goal is to support increased access to pre-K and informed parental choice.

October 2023

For more information, please contact:

ERICA HALLOCK, Director of Policy & Advocacy | ehallock@startearly.org | (509) 991-2390