



Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Children, Youth and Families requests \$12,597,000 (\$12,586,000 General Fund-State) and 4.75 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to further support families with access to high quality early learning programs. Families with low income rely on Head Start, ECEAP, and Working Connections Child Care to access high quality early learning programs. This proposal aligns eligibility across these programs to further support families with access to these programs.

Program Recommendation Summary

030 - Early Learning

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090 - Program Support

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) requests \$82,000 (\$71,000 GF-State) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to fund program support functions that scale with the additional FTEs requested in this package. This will allow the agency to scale in capacity the critical back-office business needs, such as but not limited to, Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance, etc.

Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Staffing						
FTEs	0.0	4.7	2.35	4.7	5.5	5.1
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$0	\$12,515	\$12,515	\$12,887	\$22,397	\$35,284
Fund 001 - 1	\$0	\$71	\$71	\$71	\$83	\$154
Fund 001 - 2	\$0	\$11	\$11	\$11	\$13	\$24
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$12,597	\$12,597	\$12,969	\$22,493	\$35,462
Revenue						
001 - 0393	\$0	\$11	\$11	\$11	\$13	\$24
Total Revenue	\$0	\$11	\$11	\$11	\$13	\$24

Decision Package Description

Washington State families receive help accessing high quality early learning activities under three primary programs: Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). Families access multiple programs while providers layer services to support children and families. Children lose access to early learning opportunities due to eligibility differences and when eligibility periods do not align. This proposal aligns eligibility rules across ECEAP and WCCC while also further supporting WCCC eligibility when families are participating in ECEAP, Early ECEAP, Head Start, and Early Head Start.

Alignment of eligibility for ECEAP, Head Start, and WCCC allows for family choice when participating in the integrated early learning system. Further alignment supports provider participation in the programs allowing for increased family access by layering services and allowing consistent income eligibility determinations. The specific policy proposals are:

Allow participation in ECEAP, Early ECEAP, Head Start, and Early Head Start as an approved activity for WCCC.

This provides families who participate in layered services with continued eligibility for WCCC when they otherwise maintain eligibility for WCCC. This supports families with full access and keeps providers who offer school-day models with wrap around services whole. This will impact approximately 166 families.

Provide households with a child who was receiving protective services one full WCCC eligibility period following permanency by adoption or guardianship.

This further aligns WCCC eligibility with ECEAP eligibility allowing children who have received protective services at least one WCCC eligibility period. This supports adoptive families and families who receive permanent guardianship who may otherwise be ineligible for WCCC. Approximately 1,000 families finalized adoptions in the last year.

Exclude child support, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income payments for ECEAP and WCCC.

This aligns ECEAP and WCCC countable income rules and allows non-taxed income to be excluded from income eligibility decisions. This allows families with fixed incomes to use their payments towards basic needs and allows increased access to high quality early learning activities. This will allow approximately 1,542 children to have increased access to early learning services by aligning countable income between WCCC and ECEAP when excluding child support, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income.

This decision package extends family eligibility for early learning programs, supporting family access and provider participation. Two groups of stakeholders benefit from this proposal:

Low-income families

Families with children will have increased access to early learning services and will have more consistent continuity of care.

ECEAP, Head Start, and WCCC providers

Providers will have necessary economic supports to participate in ECEAP required for current needs and future expansion.

This proposal connects and improves family access to child care services. Without this funding, it is likely families will continue to be unaware of the services they are eligible for and miss opportunities for their children. Different eligibility requirements complicate family access to ECEAP, Head Start, and WCCC. Providers braid and blend ECEAP, Head Start, and WCCC funding to provide the best services for families. These programs should work together to support providers.

DCYF requests funding for this proposal to support access to high quality early learning opportunities for children who find permanency in adoption or other permanent placements, single-parent families, and families with low income. These populations are disproportionately represented by children of color.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

DCYF requests \$12,597,000 (\$12,586,000 General Fund-State) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to align eligibility across HeadStart, ECEAP, and WCCC to further support families with access to high quality early learning programs.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
Adoptions & Guardianships	\$ -	\$ 1,091,000	\$ 1,946,000	\$ 1,946,000
Excluding Child Support	\$ -	\$ 6,876,000	\$ 5,261,000	\$ 10,022,000
Excluding SSI	\$ -	\$ 2,115,000	\$ 1,416,000	\$ 6,179,000
Excluding ECEAP & HeadStart	\$ -	\$ 2,377,000	\$ 4,267,000	\$ 4,267,000
Barcode and OAH	\$ -	\$ 138,000	\$ 79,000	\$ 79,000
Total	\$ -	\$ 12,597,000	\$ 12,969,000	\$ 22,493,000

ECEAP and Head Start as Approved Activities

DCYF assumes the cost to expand WCCC eligibility to ECEAP and Head Start participants will be \$2,226,000 GF-S in FY25.

DCYF will support 17,278 ECEAP slots in FY25. Five percent of children participating in ECEAP, or 864 cases, also participate in WCCC. Of the 864 cases, 130 cases are denied at reapplication. DCYF assumes that 23%, or 30 cases annually, would be extended 12 months for children participating in ECEAP.

The anticipated annual cost for allowing ECEAP participation is \$741,000 (\$2,072.12 monthly per cap x 12 months x 30 cases).

The first year will have a 12-month roll-up, which is 54% of the annual total, with a cost of \$400,200 in FY25.

Based on the 2022 Head Start Program Information Report, 1,505 children participate in Head Start programs and Subsidy. 593 cases are denied at reapplication. DCYF assumes that 23%, or 136 cases annually, would be extended 12 months for participating in Head Start programs.

The anticipated annual cost for allowing Head Start participation is \$3,382,000 (\$2,072.12 monthly per cap x 12 months x 136 cases).

The first year will have a 12-month roll-up, which is 54% of the annual total, with a cost of \$1,826,000 in FY25.

Expand WCCC Eligibility Following Permanency by Adoption and Guardianship

DCYF assumes the cost to expand WCCC eligibility following permanency by adoption and guardianship will be \$1,006,000 GF-S in FY25.

DCYF assumes 51 new adoptions per fiscal year and 24 new guardianships per fiscal year, for a total caseload impact of 75 new cases per fiscal year.

The anticipated annual cost for expanding eligibility is \$1,864,000 (\$2,072.12 monthly per cap x 12 months x 75 cases).

The first year will have a 12-month roll-up, which is 54% of the annual total, with a cost of \$1,006,000 in FY25.

Excluding Child Support Income

DCYF assumes the cost to exclude child support from income eligibility will be \$6,532,000 GF-S in FY25.

DCYF assumes 25% of WCCC cases, or 7,446 cases, have child support income coded. Of these cases, 36%, or 2,681 cases would have a lower copayment.

DCYF assumes the copayment would decrease an average of \$42.12.

The anticipated annual cost as a result of lower copayments is \$1,355,000 (2,681 cases X 12 month eligibility X \$42.12).

The first year will have a 12-month roll-up, which is 54% of the annual total, with a cost of \$731,600 in FY25.

DCYF denies 408 cases annually for being above 60% State Median Income (SMI) as a result of child support income.

The anticipated annual cost for excluding child support from income eligibility is \$10,742,000 (\$2,072.12 monthly per cap x 12 months x 408 cases).

The first year will have a 12-month roll-up, which is 54% of the annual total, with a cost of \$5,800,000 in FY25.

DCYF assumes that 1% of ECEAP cases are denied eligibility due child support income. No costs are assumed in FY25 or FY26, as ECEAP will not yet have reached entitlement.

In FY27, when ECEAP reaches entitlement, DCYF assumes that 1% of this population will be added to the caseload and that 238 slots will be needed, with 85% of slots being School Day (SD) and 15% being Working Day (WD). This amounts to 202 School Day slots and 36 Working Day slots.

The total anticipated cost for ECEAP School Day slots in FY27 is \$3,063,000 (202 School Day slots x \$14,893 SD slot rate).

The total anticipated cost for ECEAP Working Day slots in FY27 is \$776,000 (36 X \$21,478 WD slot rate).

DCYF requests additional funding to increase ECEAP School Day and Working Day slot rates to match the ECEAP Rate Study. This would add \$2,766 to the School Day slot rate and \$6,109 to the Working Day slot rate. The total anticipated cost to provide a sustainable rate for ECEAP slots added in this section would be \$873,000 (\$2,766 X 202 SD slots) + (\$6,109 X 36 WD slots).

Excluding Social Security and SSI Income

DCYF assumes the cost to exclude child support from income eligibility will be \$1,989,000 GF-S in FY25.

DCYF assumes that 5% of WCCC cases, or 1,489 cases, have Social Security or SSI income coded. Of these cases, 44%, or 655 cases would have a lower copayment.

DCYF assumes the copayment would decrease an average of \$51.

The anticipated annual cost as a result of lower copayments is \$401,000 (655 cases X 12 month eligibility X \$51).

The first year will have a 12-month roll-up, which is 54% of the annual total, with a cost of \$217,000 in FY25.

DCYF denies 132 cases annually for being above 60% State Median Income (SMI) as a result of social security or SSI income.

The anticipated annual cost for excluding social security or SSI from income eligibility is \$3,282,000 (\$2,072.12 monthly per cap x 12 months x 132 cases).

The first year will have a 12-month roll-up, which is 54% of the annual total, with a cost of \$1,772,000 in FY25.

DCYF assumes that 1% of ECEAP cases are denied eligibility due to Social Security or SSI income. No costs are assumed in FY25 or FY26, as ECEAP will not yet have reached entitlement.

In FY27, when ECEAP reaches entitlement, DCYF assumes that 1% of this population will be added to the caseload and that 238 slots will be needed, with 85% of slots being School Day (SD) and 15% being Working Day (WD). This amounts to 202 School Day slots and 36 Working Day slots.

The total anticipated cost for ECEAP School Day slots in FY27 is \$3,063,000 (202 School Day slots x \$14,893 SD slot rate).

The total anticipated cost for ECEAP Working Day slots in FY27 is \$776,000 (36 X \$21,478 WD slot rate).

DCYF requests additional funding to increase ECEAP School Day and Working Day slot rates to match the ECEAP Rate Study. This would add \$2,766 to the School Day slot rate and \$6,109 to the Working Day slot rate. The total anticipated cost to provide a sustainable rate for ECEAP slots added in this section would be \$873,000 (\$2,766 X 202 SD slots) + (\$6,109 X 36 WD slots).

Barcode and Office of Administrative Hearings

DCYF assumes the cost to make necessary Barcode changes associated with these policies will be \$97,700 GF-S in FY25.

DCYF assumes the cost of consultation with the Office of Administrative Hearings associated with these policies will be \$40,000 GF-S in FY25.

Communication and Outreach

DCYF requests \$125,000 GF-S per fiscal year for communication and outreach.

Additional details and assumptions provided in backup calculations.

Workforce Assumptions:

DCYF requests \$582,000 (\$571,000 General Fund State) and 4.75 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget.

Working Connections Eligibility Staff

4.75 Public Benefit Specialist 3's – \$582,000 per fiscal year

DCYF assumes 1 Public Benefit Specialist 3(PBS3) per every 200 cases, 1 Public Benefit Specialist 4 (PBS4) per every 11 PBS3, and 1 Public Benefit Specialist 5 per every 11 PBS3/PBS4.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

This decision package supports developing an integrated Birth-to-Eight early learning system. Families of color disproportionately miss out on services for themselves and their children due to historically negative experiences with government at all levels and systems that were not designed with their needs in mind. DCYF and other departments providing services should systematically analyze and revise eliminate policies, programs, and other barriers to services for families of color.

This proposal streamlines the application and eligibility determination process which can be daunting to some families. DCYF seeks opportunities to simplify policies, programs and other services that may benefit families. The aligning of ECEAP and WCCC application process allows a family to seamlessly access high-quality child care for their children.

Performance Outcomes:

WCCC and ECEAP quality assurance will measure approved application, participation rates in both programs, and payment data. Performance will also be measured in stabilized provider participation and slot availability for ECEAP with future increases to meet future needs.

Equity Impacts

Community outreach and engagement:

This decision package supports developing an integrated Birth-to-Eight Early Learning System, helps eliminate racial disproportionality and advances racial equity.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

These recommendations have been made and supported by providers, advocates, and families. DCFY met with dozens of advisory groups, workgroups, providers groups and parent groups to gather input and feedback on how to improve access to child care. These asks are reflective of extensive feedback and dialogue. This proposal will further support Indigenous families and providers while acknowledging and supporting tribal sovereignty. Pushback on this proposal will be based on social values related to adoptive/kinship parents and their parental responsibility to support children they have welcomed into their families, as well as social values based on roles of custodial and non-custodial parents, and child support.

Target Populations or Communities:

This proposal includes families who participate in ECEAP, families who adopt or provide permanent guardianship for a child receiving protective services, and families receiving child support, Social Security income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). This proposal is also supported by ECEAP, Head Start, child care providers.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

Not applicable

State Workforce Impacts:

Not applicable

Intergovernmental:

This proposal further supports Indigenous families and providers acknowledging and supporting tribal sovereignty.

Stakeholder Response:

This proposal is supported by families who participate in ECEAP, families who adopt or provide permanent guardianship for a child receiving protective services, and families with child support, SSI, or SSDI. This proposal is also supported by ECEAP, Head Start, child care providers, and child care advocates including Child Care Aware. These recommendations have been made and supported by providers and support families. These will further support Indigenous families and providers acknowledging and supporting tribal sovereignty. Pushback on this proposal will be based on social values related to adoptive/kinship parents and their parental responsibility to support children they have welcomed into their homes, as well as social values based on roles of custodial and non-custodial parents, and child support.

State Facilities Impacts:

Not applicable

Changes from Current Law:

DCYF will need to modify WAC Chapter 110-15, rules pertaining to family eligibility. No changes to RCW are needed.

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

Not applicable

HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions

Not applicable

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Obj. A	\$0	\$322	\$322	\$322	\$378	\$700
Obj. B	\$0	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$145	\$269
Obj. C	\$0	\$262	\$262	\$203	\$203	\$406
Obj. E	\$0	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$10	\$19
Obj. G	\$0	\$11	\$11	\$11	\$13	\$24
Obj. J	\$0	\$34	\$34	\$0	\$6	\$6
Obj. N	\$0	\$11,753	\$11,753	\$12,218	\$21,642	\$33,860
Obj. T	\$0	\$82	\$82	\$82	\$96	\$178

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