

Fair Start for Kids Act

Eligibility Changes 2022-2023



This document serves as a fact sheet on Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Early ECEAP eligibility changes as a result of the Fair Start for Kids Act. These changes increase eligibility for ECEAP and Early ECEAP services and will be implemented in the Early Learning Management System (ELMS) in 2022-23. It is important for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to ensure children with the highest needs are being served.

ECEAP Eligibility for Children 2022-2023

Eligibility requirements that will be in place in ELMS during the 2022-23 school year are as follows. A child is eligible for ECEAP if they are at least 3 years old by Aug. 31 of the current school year, are not age-eligible for kindergarten, and are one of the following:

- From a family with income at or below 36% of the state median income (SMI)
- Qualified by a school district for special education services. All children with a school district Individualized Education Program (IEP) meet this requirement

- Experiencing homelessness as defined by the federal McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act.
- Has participated in:
 - Early Head Start (EHS)
 - An Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program or received class C developmental services from another state
 - A birth to 3 early childhood education and assistance program (Early ECEAP)
 - An Early Childhood Intervention and Prevention Services (ECLIPSE) program
- Is a tribal child defined by rule from a Washington State federally recognized tribe and DCYF, and is at or below 100% SMI
- From a family with an income that exceeds 36% SMI for non-tribal children or 100% SMI for tribal children and is impacted by specific prioritization factors

ECEAP eligible children are not automatically enrolled in ECEAP. They must still be prioritized.

Eligible, enrolled children maintain their eligibility for ECEAP until kindergarten, without re-verification of income or prioritization factors. All previously enrolled children returning for a new school year may be re-prioritized against new children when enrollment slots are limited.

Children served by school district special education or ECLIPSE may be simultaneously enrolled in ECEAP.

Children served by Head Start may not be simultaneously enrolled in ECEAP.



Allowable ECEAP Children for 2022-2023

As space is available, children who are:

- At least 3 years old by Aug. 31 and between 36% and 50% SMI for non-tribal children or above 100% SMI for tribal children with at least one prioritization factor
- Turning 3 years old after Aug. 31 with prior enrollment in ECLIPSE, EHS, ESIT, or Early ECEAP and below 50% SMI for non-tribal children or 100% SMI for tribal children, or impacted by at least one other prioritization factor
- Allowed children must not exceed 25% of total statewide ECEAP enrollment

Early ECEAP Eligibility for Children 2022-2023

Eligibility requirements that will be in place in ELMS in the 2022-23 school year are as follows. A child is eligible for Early ECEAP is defined as – except when transitioning to ECEAP or Head Start – a child must be an infant or toddler younger than 3 years old, and are one of the following:

- From a family with income at or below 50% of SMI
- Receiving early intervention services with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- Experiencing homelessness as defined by the federal McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act
- Has participated in:
 - EHS
 - ESIT or class C developmental services from another state
 - ECLISPE
- Is a tribal child defined by rule from a Washington State federally recognized tribe and DCYF, and is at or below 100% SMI. If tribal family income is above 100% SMI, they must have one of the following:
 - Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
 - Is currently experiencing homelessness
 - Previous ECLIPSE services and/or exiting EHS, ESIT, or IDEA Part C services

Children who are eligible for Early ECEAP are not automatically enrolled in Early ECEAP. They must still be prioritized.

Eligible, enrolled children maintain their eligibility for Early ECEAP, without re-verification of income or risk factors. All previously enrolled children returning for a new program year may be re-prioritized against new children when enrollment slots are limited.

Early ECEAP children transitioning to ECEAP will need to be re-verified and prioritized.

Children served by early intervention services may be simultaneously enrolled in Early ECEAP.

Children served by EHS may not be simultaneously enrolled in Early ECEAP.

Important Links

Fair Start for Kids Act: <https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5237-S2.SL.pdf?q=20210723130832>

McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act: <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/homeless-education>



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