EARLY START ACT

In 2015, Washington’s legislature passed and Governor Jay Inslee signed the Early Start Act (HB 1491). The bipartisan, historic Early Start Act enacts unprecedented policies and resources to help ensure all children a great start.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

✓ Provides parents with information about the quality of early learning so that they can make informed choices for their children.

✓ Supports continuity of care so that children receive the consistent care essential for bonding and attachment and parents can count on stable care.

✓ Recognizes that high-quality early learning is culturally and linguistically responsive to the needs of families.

RESOURCES FOR EARLY LEARNING PROVIDERS

✓ Establishes unprecedented new resources for professionals including scholarships, grants, annual quality awards, and free training and coaching.

✓ Provides focused supports for providers serving children in low-income communities including:
  ▪ Grants to purchase materials and supplies
  ▪ Access to substitute teachers
  ▪ Translation of materials into provider and family home languages

✓ Requires differentiated types and amounts of technical assistance and coaching based on individual provider need and cultural context.

✓ Provides consistent, predictable funding through 12 month child care subsidy enrollments.

✓ Increases subsidy payments to providers demonstrating high-quality.
✓ Requires a professional development pathway for providers that is culturally and linguistically reflective of their needs and demographics.

✓ Supports a system that providers and families can count on by providing funding to support quality in the maintenance level state budget.

ACCOUNTABILITY, OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW OF IMPACTS ON DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

✓ Requires that providers receiving public funds demonstrate high-quality through participation in Early Achievers and attainment of set quality levels.

✓ Requires an Early Achievers Review Subcommittee to review and inform the Department of Early Learning’s ongoing Early Achievers implementation, with specific consideration of cultural and linguistic responsiveness.

✓ Requires ongoing annual reports to the legislature reviewing Early Achievers progress to ensure it is working in our diverse communities.

✓ Protects access to care by triggering a process to review barriers and mitigate impacts to children served if 15% or more providers in any county or zip code don’t meet quality rating requirements after 2018.

✓ Directs that a joint select committee of the legislature meet in 2018 to review Early Achievers implementation, including adequacy of resources.

✓ Requires exploration of alternate quality assessment tools that meet the culturally specific needs of Washington Tribes.

✓ Directs collection and analysis of longitudinal data disaggregated by race/ethnicity focused on child outcomes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Legislative bill report.

Grid of key policy changes included in the Early Start Act.

Children’s Alliance blog post on passage of the Early Start Act.

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