

**Puget Sound Educational Service District**  
**Early Learning**  
**State Legislative Update**

**Early Learning Policy Wins**

**ECEAP Over-income Enrollment Increases to 25% vs 10% of Enrollment Opportunities**

SB 6419 Concerning access to the Washington early childhood education and assistance program will improve flexibility for ECEAP contactors/providers by allowing them to increase the proportion of families enrolled who have income over 110% of federal poverty level from 10% of program participants to 25%. Governor Inslee signed this bill on 03/21/2018 for a July 1, 2018 implementation.

**Mental Health Services for Children and Youth**

HB 2779, Improving access to mental health services for children and youth, including exploring new resources for funding home visiting services.

**Working Connections Child Care**

See below Budget Proviso was passed that would support parenting students

**Budget Information Impacting Early Learning Families**

**Home Visiting**

The budget provides funds to sustain home visiting as well as \$2.3 million expansion via the Home Visiting Services Account. This represents a 40% increase in state funding for home visiting and will carry forward (meaning it's ongoing). There's also \$100,000 (\$50,000 State General Fund + \$50,000 Medicaid) for Health Care Authority to explore Medicaid as a potential funding opportunity (part of E2SHB 2779). And \$150,000 for the Dept of Children, Youth and Families to work with Health Care Authority on this Medicaid exploration and also to look at an expansion plan (also part of E2SHB 2779).

**Working Connection Child Care (WCCC)**

WCCC program provides subsidized child care to low-income families whose incomes are below 200 percent of the federal poverty level WCCC is braided with ECEAP and Head Start dollars to provide high quality care through PSESD Early Learning program. Funding level maintained in state budget. The budget includes a proviso (p. 239) directing the process and priorities for spending new federal dollars expected this spring as the result of a federal budget agreement that promises to double Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding for two years. Note the bolded priorities V and VI regarding parenting students-

- 23 (IV) Providing nurse consultation services to licensed providers;***
- 24 (V) Allowing working connections child care consumers who are***
- 25 full-time community or technical college students to attend college***
- 26 full-time and not have to meet work requirements; and***
- 27 (VI) Meeting new or expanded federal mandates.***

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and State Family Assistance (SFA)**

TANF assists parents with incomes so low they cannot meet basic needs for themselves and their dependent children. The program provides cash support, childcare, job training, and other support services as parents transition to employment. The current TANF cash grant is \$613 for a family of four, or 31 percent of the Federal Poverty Line. Over the last twenty years the value of the TANF cash grant has eroded more than 40 percent. The erosion of the cash grant coupled with policy changes that have made it harder to access and remain on TANF have driven our state's caseload to its lowest point ever (less than 27,000 families) despite persistent poverty and a deep poverty rate that is double that of twenty years ago. As the caseload has declined due to restrictive policy, hundreds of millions of dollars have been swept out of the TANF program to the state General Fund in the last decade.

SFA provides a cash assistance program comparable to TANF to documented immigrant families with children who have resided in the U.S. less than five years and do not yet qualify for the federal TANF program.

\$8.98 million to fund a 6.8% increase in the TANF cash grant. This allocation combined with a 2.5 % increase passed by the legislature in 2017, will increase the maximum cash grant for a family of four from \$613 to \$671. This level of funding fully restores and exceeds the 15 percent cut made the TANF grant during the Great Recession.

### **Resource Limits**

\$438,000 to increase resource limits for people accessing public assistance programs, including TANF. This would raise the resource limit for liquid assets (savings) from \$1,000 to \$6,000 and raise the allowable value of a car from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

### **State Food Assistance Program**

The State Food Assistance program helps immigrant families and individuals avoid hunger by providing subsidies to help purchase food. Immigrants are not eligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly called Food Stamps) until they have been in the U.S. for five years. Maintained in State budget.

## **HEALTH CARE**

Under federal health care reform, the Affordable Care Act, states had the option to expand Medicaid. By choosing to adopt the Medicaid expansion in 2013, our state is now working to provide healthcare to all Washingtonians with incomes below 138 percent of the federal poverty level. Since expansion, a record number of Washingtonians have signed up for this critical health care program. With the current U.S. Congress abandoning efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the threat to the continuation of the Medicaid expansion has subsided.

### **Apple Health for Kids**

The Apple Health program provides health care for children from families earning up to 318 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, regardless of citizenship status. Maintained in the budget.

### **Medicaid's Adult Dental**

Medicaid Adult Dental coverage is an optional Medicaid program that had been eliminated for nearly all adult Medicaid recipients in recent years. In 2013, the legislature restored funding to Adult Dental, which ensured that the people who are newly eligible for Medicaid under the expansion could also access adult

dental coverage at no cost to the state. Unfortunately, there are still many adults going without the care they need, including disabled, senior immigrants. Maintained current investments in the budget

## **REVENUE**

In Washington state, people with the lowest incomes pay up to eight times the amount of their personal income in taxes than those in the top one percent of income earners. No new major revenue was introduced. Furthermore, current proposal reduces the state property tax rate from \$2.70/\$1,000 of assessed value to \$2.40/\$1,000 resulting in a net loss of nearly \$390 million in state revenue through 2021. To pay for this tax cut, the final budget largely draws down reserves from the state's rainy day/emergency fund (Budget Stabilization Account).