

Pass and Fund HB 1391/SB 5484: Making improvements to Early Achievers based on recommendations of the Joint Legislative Review Committee (\$37.4 million for the 2020-21 biennium)

THE PROBLEM

Currently in Washington State, 59% of all children under age six live in homes where all adults work. These children need child care. Young children who attend child care spend on average 33 hours per week in care, while 90% of their brains develop before they ever set foot in a kindergarten classroom. Young children spend on average 10 times more hours in child care than they receive in a year of pre-k, meaning child care has a big impact on school readiness. Currently less than half of Washington's entering kindergartners are ready for school.

Children in child care spend on average 33 hours/week in care while 90% of their brains develop. The quality of care MATTERS!

THE OPPORTUNITY

High-quality child care provides important early learning for all children ages 0-5, not just a few hours per day of pre-k for four-year-olds. Investments in high-quality early learning have proven to provide a 13% return on investment, equating to a \$6 return for every dollar invested over the life of each child served.¹

Early Achievers is Washington's framework for increasing the quality of child care. High-quality child care is proven to increase graduation rates, wages earned as adults, and workplace productivity; and it decreases costs related to K-12 remediation, corrections and state dependency. High-quality child care is the best investment the state can make.

Data show Early Achievers is working! Nearly 80% of participants report they are satisfied with Early Achievers, and 89% of rated programs have reached a "quality level of excellence." As of January 2019, there are more rated Early Achievers programs than unrated ones, and data from the University of Washington show significant gains in quality in three-year renewal ratings.

THE SOLUTION

Pass and fully fund HB 1391/SB 5484. This bill would implement the recommendations of the bipartisan Joint Legislative Review Committee on Early Achievers. Those recommendations would increase provider access to coaching, provide more incentives and flexibility for participating programs and encourage the legislature to increase reimbursement rates.



¹J. Heckman, Nobel Prize Laureate, "Quantifying the Life-cycle Benefits of a Prototypical Early Childhood Program," 2016