

## Session Wrap-Up: Early Care and Education

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The six early care and education bills we have been following passed and have been referred to the Governor for signature. Some highlights include:

- Making it possible for caregivers to receive unemployment benefits when a job loss is related to lack of care ([HB 1106](#)).
- Prohibiting homeowner associations from unreasonably restricting the use of a unit as a licensed family home child care or center ([HB 1199](#)).
- Providing child care assistance for enrollees in apprenticeship programs ([HB 1525](#)).
- Creating a new Transition to Kindergarten Program ([HB 1550](#)).
- Broadening the availability of child care subsidies for immigrant families and children ([SB 5225](#)).
- Waiving background check fees for child care applicants ([SB 5316](#)).

The state budget passed by the legislature provides significant funding to improve access and quality consistent with the provisions of the 2021 Fair Start for Kids Act (ESSS Bill 5237). This includes increased reimbursement rates for state pre-K programs (ECEAP), child care providers serving children through the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC), and Home Visiting contractors. These rate increases will increase the financial viability of programs, make it easier for them to recruit and retain staff, and improve the availability of services for low-income families. Funding is also provided to assist ECEAP and child care programs in serving children with complex needs (including mental health consultation), expand the number of ECEAP slots including conversion of slots to full-day, provide Tribal early learning grants, and make it easier for homeless families to retain child care subsidies.

### How You Can Be Involved

If you have been following these issues (thank you!), do reach out to your senator and representatives to let them know you appreciate the attention given to early care and education in the 2023 Legislative Session. Contact Karen Tvedt, [ktvedt@lwvwa.org](mailto:ktvedt@lwvwa.org) if you have questions.