

Weekly Legislative Update: Early Care and Education

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Early care and education bills we support are moving forward through the legislative process including [SB 5225](#); [SB 5316](#); [HB 1106](#); [HB 1199](#); [HB 1525](#) (see our [legislation grid](#) for details).

One bill ([HB 1550](#)) unexpectedly moved to our oppose column after it was replaced by a striking amendment in the Senate prior to public hearing. Instead of HB 1550 as passed by the House, the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee heard a substantively different bill. No longer focused on alignment and coordination among early care and education programs, the HB 1550 striker now creates the Transition to Kindergarten (TTK) Program with OSPI having full administrative and rule-making authority. The bill in its current form is opposed by many in the early care and education community. It is scheduled for executive session (vote) in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee on March 27 at 1:30 pm.

The just-released Senate Operating Budget Proposal ([PSSB 5187](#)) includes lots to be happy about for those of us who are convinced that high quality early care and education is critical to the development of young children, parents being able to work, and state economic vitality. While it doesn't include everything advocates wished for, here is just some of what the Senate proposes:

- Significant rate increases for child care home and center providers, pre-k programs (ECEAP), and home visitation services for vulnerable young families. This should make it easier for programs to hire and retain workers and improve access for families who receive state assistance.
- Expanding the number of children served by ECEAP, funding tribal early learning grants to provide culturally appropriate early learning for tribal children, and expanding supports for child care providers serving children with complex needs.
- Funding for some of the Senate bills we support including [SB 5225](#) and [SB 5316](#) (assuming they are enacted).

The **House Budget Proposal** should be released in a few days, we're eager to see how it compares with the budgets proposed by the Governor and Senate.

How You Can Be Involved

- If you're interested in a particular bill, use the links above to go to the bill page. These pages include staff summaries and reports including who testified pro versus con on the bill. There is also information about how to access videos of hearings on the bill.
- Contact Karen Tvedt, ktvedt@lwvwa.org if you have questions.