

Early Learning Overview

Senate Ways and Means Committee

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Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) Overview

- Early intervention services for children birth to 3 with developmental delays or disabilities.
- Services are provided through community-based organizations primarily in the family home.
- Services can include specialized instruction, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy.
- Washington's Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is ESIT and was formally established in October 1986.
- 24,149 children were enrolled during Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023.





Access to high-quality early care and education means

- ✓ Children will arrive at Kindergarten ready to learn
- ✓ Parents and guardians can participate in the workforce
- ✓ The Washington State economy is stronger

Access is driven by the availability and affordability of care

Increasing access means **more families are eligible** and the **rate paid for care is sufficient** for the costs of quality.

Fair Start for Kids Act (2021)

- ↑ Eligibility
- ↑ Rates
- ✓ **Access is increasing**



Washington's Child Care and Early Learning Landscape



Child Care and Early Learning Universe

Settings



Family Homes

- Children served in a residential home
- Ages 0-12
- Up to 12 children (Waiver allowed)



Centers

- Children served in commercially zoned setting
- Ages 0-12
- Capacity based on sq. ft.



Outdoor

- Children served outdoors in public land
- Ages 4 -12
- Capacity based on sq. ft.



Schools

- Children served in district school settings
- Ages 0-12
- Capacity based on sq. ft.

Program Elements

Licensed child care: Foundational quality standards **ensure safe, healthy, and nurturing environments.** Serves children birth through age 12.

Early Achievers: Washington’s **quality rating and recognition system.** Providers are licensed and eligible to receive subsidy through Working Connections Child Care. Private pay providers may also participate. Serves children birth through age 5.

Working Connections Child Care: Washington’s **child care subsidy program,** helping low-income families pay for child care. Providers must be licensed or certified. Eligibility up through age 12.

ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program): **Washington's state-funded pre-kindergarten** program for 3- and 4-year-old children from families furthest from opportunity with a 9 out of 10 NIEER quality rating.

Head Start: Federally funded preschool program for 3- and 4-year-old children from families furthest from opportunity.

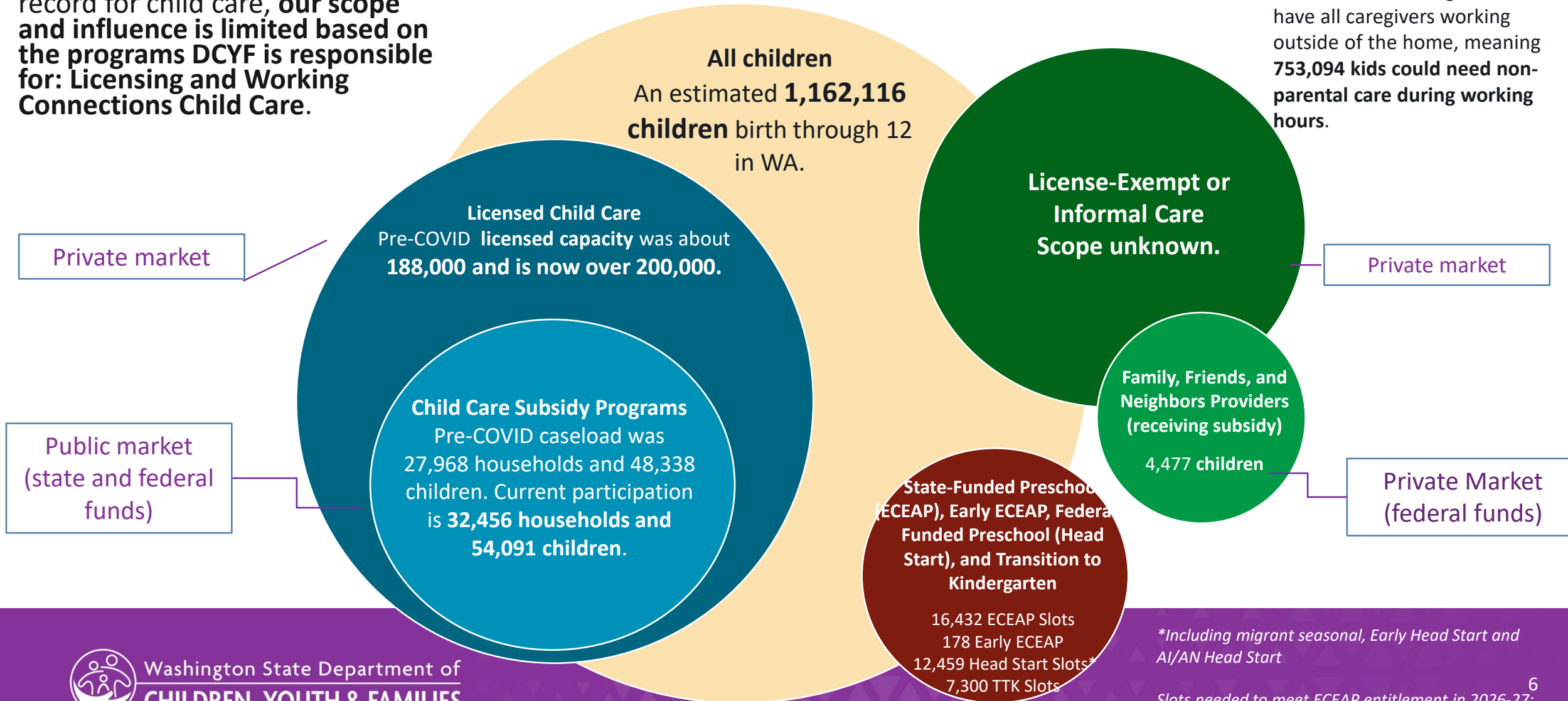
Developmental PreK: Separate schools or classroom intended for preschool aged children (3-5 years) with IEPs that offer specially designed instruction across a variety of domains and developmental needs (cognition, social emotional/behavior, fine/gross motor, communication, adaptive, etc.)

Transition to Kindergarten: A program for children, below the age of five, who do not have access to high-quality early learning experiences prior to kindergarten.

Universe of Early Care and Education in WA and DCYF's Role

While DCYF is the state agency of record for child care, **our scope and influence is limited based on the programs DCYF is responsible for: Licensing and Working Connections Child Care.**

An estimated 64% of children under 13 in Washington State have all caregivers working outside of the home, meaning **753,094 kids could need non-parental care during working hours.**

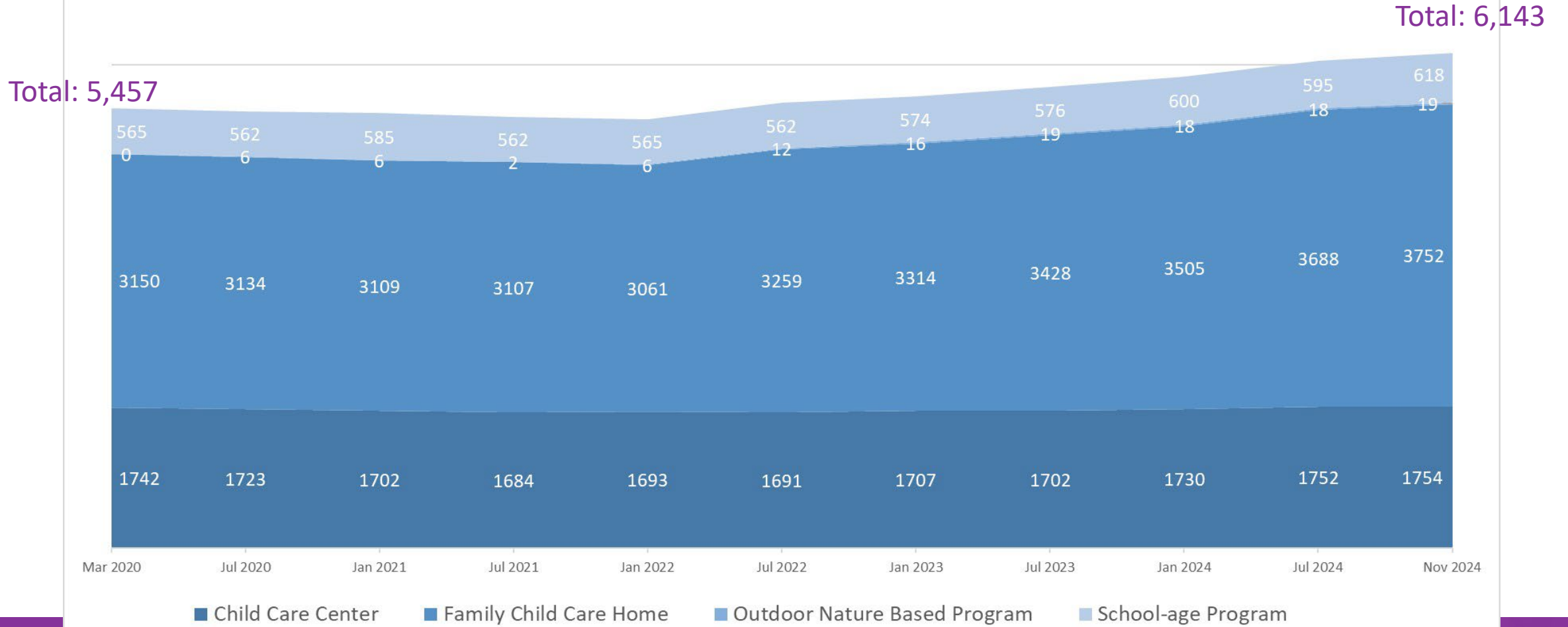


**Including migrant seasonal, Early Head Start and AI/AN Head Start*

Slots needed to meet ECEAP entitlement in 2026-27:
25,014

Statewide Licensed Providers

Open Child Care Providers, By Type

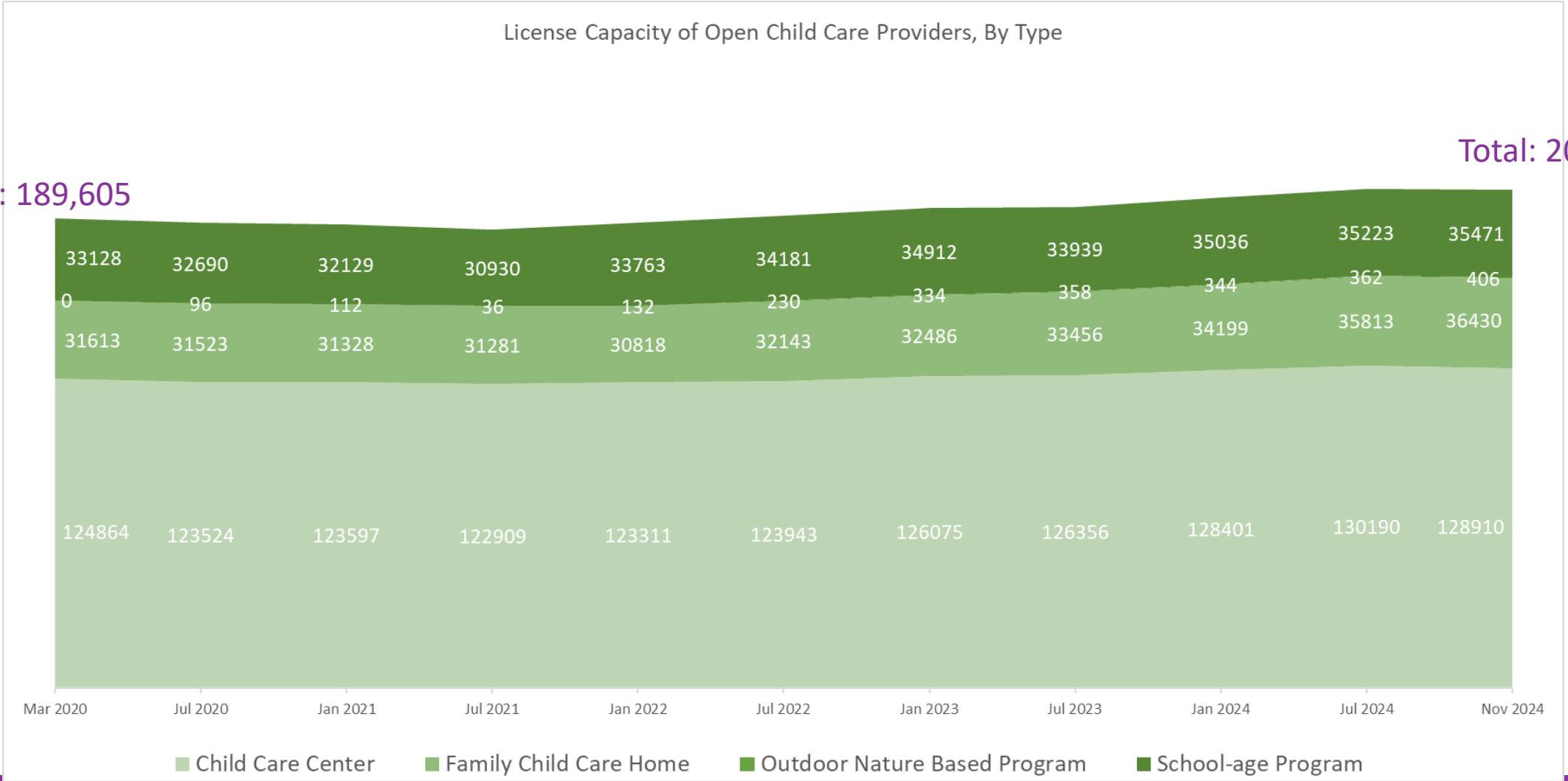


Statewide Licensed Capacity

License Capacity of Open Child Care Providers, By Type

Total: 189,605

Total: 201,217



Federal Funding and Oversight

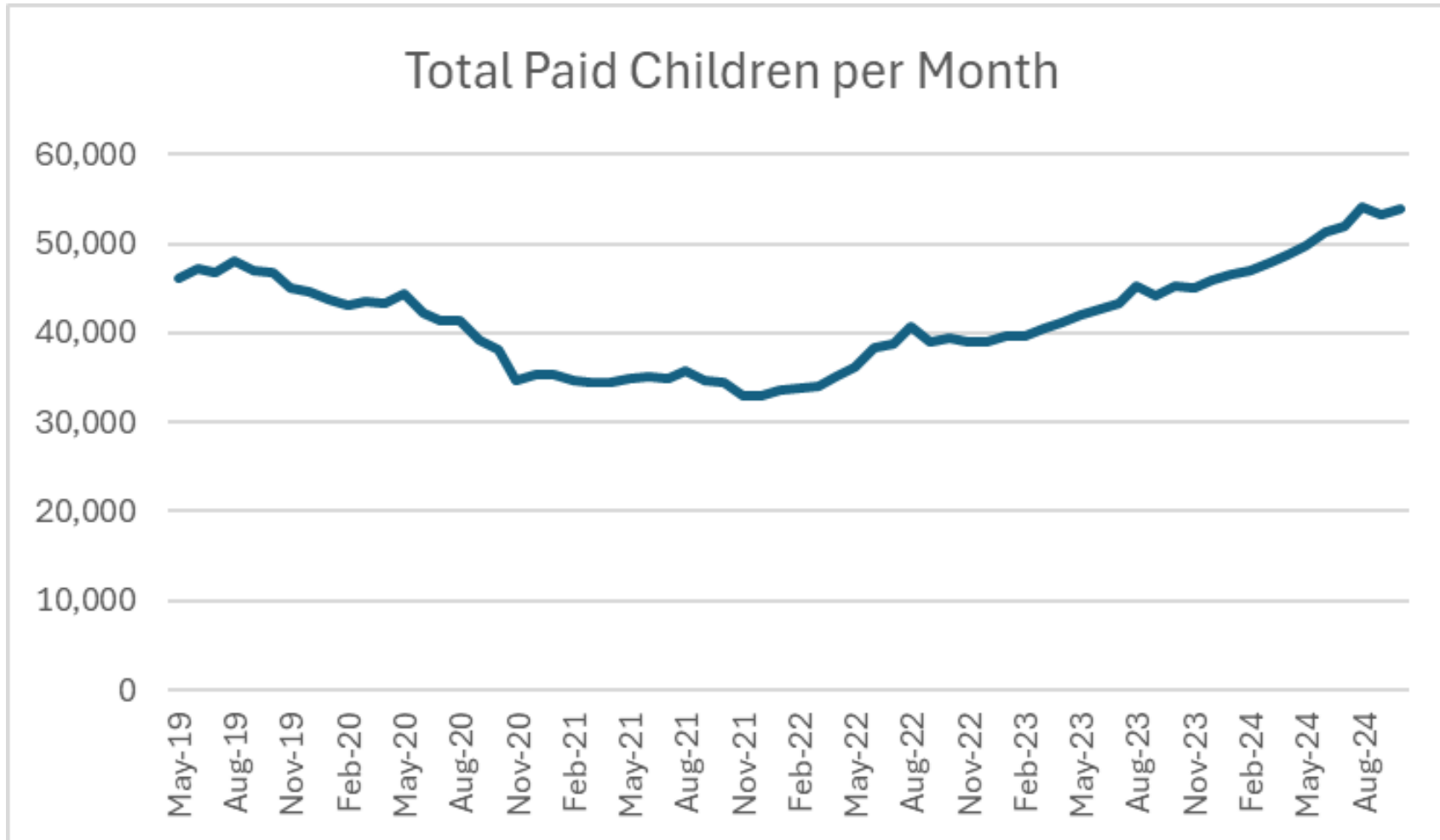
- Federal oversight, rules and expectations to receive the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG or CCDF) funds; overseen by Federal Administration for Children and Families Office of Child Care (OCC).
- States develop and submit a CCDF Plan to articulate how expectations and rules are met.
- Rules include family access (subsidy), health and safety standards (licensing), and quality and professional development activities (provider supports).
- Funding allocation for states is determined by the following:
Population under 5 and under 13 from the Census Bureau; Free and Reduced Price School Lunch Program participation from the Department of Agriculture; and Per Capita Income from the Department of Commerce



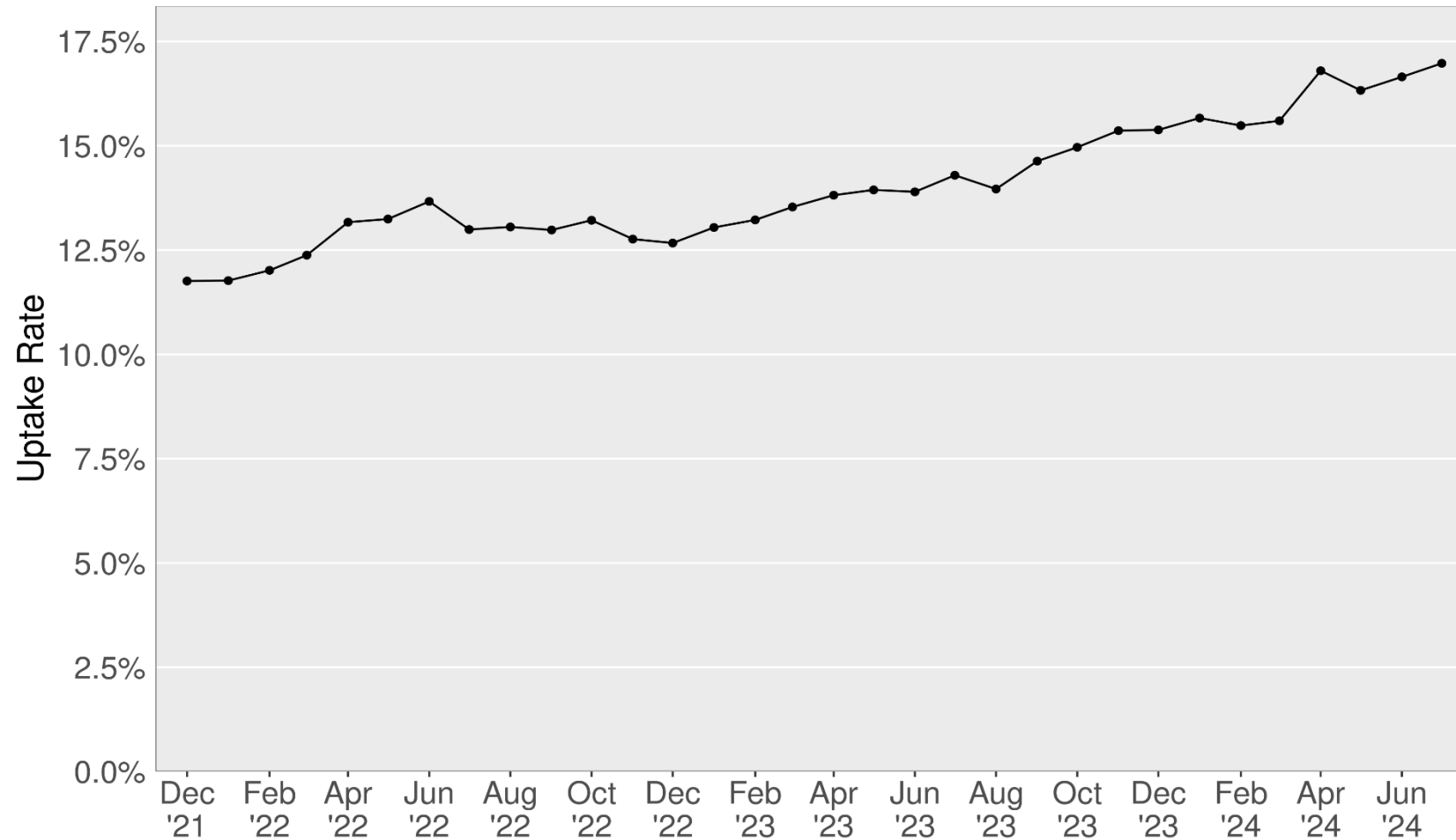
Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) Overview

- **Goal:** Provide families with financial assistance to support equitable access to high-quality child care to support child outcomes
- **Current participation:**
 - 54,091 children are using WCCC to access care, about 32,456 families
- **Families** up to 60% state median income (SMI) are eligible for WCCC
 - Up to \$5,507 per month or \$66,084 per year for a family of three
- Average family benefit is ~\$2,025 per month, paid to the provider
- The average cost to the family is \$65 (average copay) but no more than \$215.

WCCC Total Paid Children



Statewide Subsidy Utilization



Early Achievers is Washington's QRIS.

- A Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a framework for increasing observable quality in child care settings.
- Early Achievers participation for subsidy child care providers was mandated by the Early Start Act of 2015.
- Early Achievers standards are part of a continuum of quality, from licensing through ECEAP requirements.



Participation & Ratings Page

This dashboard page illustrates a "snapshot" of Early Achievers participation and the distribution of EA Quality Ratings by Early Start Act timeline and provider facility type. Click the "Notes" button for more information about ESA Provider Timelines. Select a bar segment from the "Providers by Participating and Rating Status" to filter the "Participating Providers by Rating" chart. You can select multiple categories by holding "CTRL" as you select bar segments.

ESA Provider Type

- ECEAP
- Subsidy
- ECEAP + Licensed
- Not State Funded

Facility Type

- (All)
- Center-Based EL Site
- Home-Based EL Site

Participation & Rating Status

- (All)
- Not Participating
- Participating, Not Rated
- Participating, Rated

Participation & Rating

- Participating, Rated
- Participating, Not Rated

Notes

Map Page

Data as of 12/28/2024

Selected Provider Count



Providers by Participating and Rating Status

Click a segment of the bar chart below to filter the "Participating Providers by Rating" chart



Cost of Quality Care

	Cost of Quality Care Study	Market Rate Survey
Purpose	Set rates according to the true cost of providing quality care; recognizes rates are inclusive of true costs assuming more providers will accept subsidy	Set rates based on provider rates in a given geographic market; assumes if rates are competitive with private rates, providers will accept subsidy
Methodology	Studies operating cost (wages, rent, quality features, etc.) by child age and region	Surveys providers on rates they charge by child age and region

A cost of quality rate would be used to set reimbursement rates for child care providers that adequately reflect and cover the cost of delivering high quality care.

Cost of Quality Care History

- State legislature created a **Child Care Collaborative Task Force**; directs development of cost of quality model.

2018

2020

- Task Force issues a report recommending adoption of a **Cost Estimation Model (CEM)** instead of a Market Rate Survey.

- Legislature enacted the **Fair Start for Kids Act** to improve affordability and accessibility of child care requiring an implementation plan for a Cost of Quality Care rate.

2021

2023

- **Passage of the Early Care & Education Access and Living Wage Proviso.** Directs development of a implementation plan by June 30, 2025 for capping family child care costs at 7% of household income and living wages and benefits for providers (COQ).

- **2024 Cost of Quality Child Care and Market Rate Survey Study** report developed, to analyze the true cost to provide high quality care in WA. Includes recommendations from the **Early Educator Design Team**, made up of providers.

2024

What is the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)?

Prepares Washington's 3- and 4-year-old children who are furthest from opportunity for success in school and life.

Provides individualized education, family support, health and nutrition services for the specialized population we serve.

- Increases social-emotional, physical, and pre-academic skills
- Ensures each child receives medical and dental screenings and care
- Helps families move toward self-sufficiency and builds their capacity to support their children's success



ECEAP Models

Part Day

- Minimum of three hours per day
- 30 weeks per year
- 360 hours per year
- \$9,835 per slot, per year

School Day

- Average of six hours per day
- At least four days per week
- 1,000 hours per year
- \$15,683 per slot, per year

Working Day

- 10 hours per day
- Five days per week
- Year round – at least 2,370 hours per year
- \$23,411 per slot, per year

2024-25 ECEAP Slots

Program Model	Funded Slots	% Slots	Enrollment Dec 2024
Part Day	6,293	38%	5,478
School Day	9,223	56%	7,894
Working Day	916	6%	801
Total	16,432	100%	14,173



THANK YOU

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Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

A photograph showing a white rectangular card with the words "Thank you" written in a blue, cursive script. The card is placed on top of a brown, textured envelope. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

Thank you

Appendix



Current Subsidy Rates as Compared to MRS Subsidy Rates Licensed Child Care Centers – Current Regions

Current Monthly Subsidy Rates

	Infants	Toddlers	Preschool	School Age
Region 1	\$1,365	\$1,235	\$1,170	\$1,174
Region 2	\$1,300	\$1,080	\$985	\$720
Region 3	\$1,949	\$1,768	\$1,595	\$1,440
Region 4	\$2,500	\$2,235	\$1,885	\$1,994
Region 5	\$1,596	\$1,408	\$1,227	\$1,192
Region 6	\$1,694	\$1,485	\$1,270	\$1,105
Spokane	\$1,508	\$1,245	\$1,147	\$1,078
Cost FY24				\$534,319,000
Cost FY25				\$578,428,000
Biennial Cost				\$1,112,747,000

2024 MRS Subsidy Rates

	Infants	Toddlers	Preschool	School Age
Region 1	\$2,100	\$1,510	\$1,170	\$1,025
Region 2	\$1,674	\$1,510	\$1,340	\$1,245
Region 3	\$2,320	\$2,160	\$1,910	\$1,745
Region 4	\$2,975	\$2,660	\$2,350	\$1,773
Region 5	\$1,910	\$1,795	\$1,645	\$1,470
Region 6	\$1,930	\$1,768	\$1,605	\$1,455
Spokane	\$1,720	\$1,430	\$1,380	\$1,100
Cost FY26				\$132,335,000
Cost FY27				\$142,758,000
Biennial Cost (Above Current Cost)				\$275,094,000



MRS Subsidy Rates as Compared to COQC Subsidy Rates Licensed Child Care Centers – Current Regions

2024 MRS Subsidy Rates

	Infants	Toddlers	Preschool	School Age
Region 1	\$2,100	\$1,510	\$1,170	\$1,025
Region 2	\$1,674	\$1,510	\$1,340	\$1,245
Region 3	\$2,320	\$2,160	\$1,910	\$1,745
Region 4	\$2,975	\$2,660	\$2,350	\$1,773
Region 5	\$1,910	\$1,795	\$1,645	\$1,470
Region 6	\$1,930	\$1,768	\$1,605	\$1,455
Spokane	\$1,720	\$1,430	\$1,380	\$1,100
Cost FY26				\$132,335,000
Cost FY27				\$142,758,000
Biennial Cost (Above Current Cost)				\$275,094,000

Cost of Quality Care (COQC) Subsidy Rates

	Infants	Toddlers	Preschool	School Age
Region 1	\$3,048	\$2,284	\$1,979	\$1,345
Region 2	\$3,147	\$2,355	\$2,038	\$1,382
Region 3	\$3,726	\$2,766	\$2,382	\$1,600
Region 4	\$3,997	\$2,959	\$2,544	\$1,702
Region 5	\$3,444	\$2,566	\$2,214	\$1,494
Region 6	\$3,348	\$2,498	\$2,157	\$1,458
Spokane	\$2,990	\$2,243	\$1,944	\$1,323
Cost FY26				\$344,014,000
Cost FY27				\$371,109,000
Biennial Cost (Above Current Cost)				\$715,123,000



What's Next for Early Learning in Washington State

An integrated, mixed-delivery system of affordable (no more than 7% of their income), high-quality early care and education for ALL of Washington's children and providers are provided a living wage and benefits.

- We are building on the existing foundation to strengthen an integrated, mixed-delivery system of affordable, high-quality early care and education for ALL of Washington's children.
- We have a focus on child outcomes, school readiness, family and provider well-being and self-sufficiency.
- Providers have the skills and training to be successful and are paid a living wage with benefits.

