



Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) requests \$4,185,000 General Fund-State in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to support the use of the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) State Special Education 0-3 funding for the full months of service provided to infants and toddlers eligible for early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Part C).

Program Recommendation Summary

030 - Early Learning

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Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$0	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$8,370
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$8,370

Decision Package Description

The Early Support for Infants and Toddler (ESIT) program is funded with multiple sources, including State Special Education 0-3 funding and other state funding, as well as federal IDEA Part C grant funds. State funding is currently appropriated to DCYF based on the annual average headcount of children who are eligible for and receiving early intervention services. The headcount must be multiplied by the per pupil statewide allocation for the prototypical K-12 school, multiplied by 1.15. DCYF is required to distribute funds to ESIT service providers and, when appropriate, to County Lead Agencies. Currently, a child is considered to have received ESIT services if the child received services within a month prior to the monthly count day. The monthly count day has historically been the first school day (prior to September 2020) or first business day of the month.

Current law limits DCYF and local ESIT provider agencies from counting eligible children for the full number of months they receive services, provided RCW 43.216.580 requires children to be receiving early intervention services, for purposes of funding, defined as "...if the child has received services within a month prior to the monthly count day." Children who have exited the program mid-month may not be counted in the monthly count date under the current language. This decision package corresponds to requested legislation to revise RCW 43.216.580 to define children to be receiving early intervention services "...if the child has received services within the same month as the monthly count day, which is the last business day of the month". For example, if a child begins receiving services in February, the provider does not receive a payment until the child is added to the first business day of the March billing. If this child left the program mid-month in December of the same year, the provider would not receive a payment for that month (the child would be added on the first business day in the December billing). In total, this provider would receive 10 payments for 11 months of service.

ESIT Provider Agencies (n=45) serve more than 21,390 children and their families on an annual basis. DCYF proposes to right-size funding to fit actual caseload by modifying and clarifying the single monthly count used for enrollment, billing, and forecast reports to include all children served in the current month, including children referred, evaluated, and enrolled with an active Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

If this proposal is funded, it will result in increased service levels, including rural communities, to ensure that all eligible infants and toddlers and their families receive high-quality, comprehensive services that meet their individual needs and increase their potential for school readiness and participation in home and community life. Targeted child outcomes include: (a) positive social-emotional skills; (b) acquisition and use of knowledge and skills; and (c) use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. Family outcomes include families: (a) know their rights; (b) effectively communicate their child's needs; and (c) help their children develop and learn.

If this proposal is not funded, we will not close the gap between the number of eligible children and their families currently receiving services and the number potentially eligible to receive services. DCYF has evaluated alternatives that include curtailed or postponed action and found these alternatives were not in the best interest of children and families, nor would they resolve the current limitations. Therefore, this proposal is the best option because it provides the opportunity to equitably increase the capacity of local ESIT Provider Agencies to ensure equitable access to high-quality early support services.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

Not applicable.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

DCYF estimates a cost of \$4,185,000 GF-S in the 2024 Supplemental to implement the proposed changes to monthly count day.

Direct Client Services: \$4,185,000 GF-S in FY25, and each fiscal year thereafter to support the increased caseload (estimated at 2.8%) resulting from moving the monthly count day from the first business day of the month to the last business day of the month. This is the cost of an estimated additional 342 cases per year (based on the February 2023 FY25 caseload of 12,226), times the ESIT per capitated spending rate of \$12,235 per case (based on the FY25 Sped BEA Rate of \$10,639 times 1.15).

Workforce Assumptions:

Not applicable.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

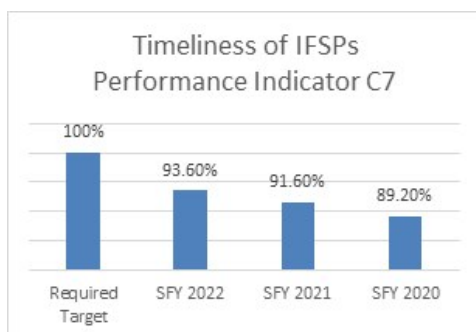
Governor's Results Washington: This decision package is aligned with the Governor's Results Washington Goal 1: World-class Education metric. Specifically, children who enter kindergarten who demonstrate they are ready.

DCYF Strategic and Racial Equity Plan: Within the DCYF Strategic and Racial Equity Plan, this decision package directly supports Agency Priority: Creating a high-quality integrated B-8 system. Specifically, focused on expanding access to infant/toddler supports and services.

Performance Outcomes:

As a result of this legislative action, program service levels are expected to continue to increase, improving equity in access to services, and correlated increases to annual enrollment counts will be reflected. As a performance measure, the annual December 1st Child Counts by Settings data which are reported to the federal Office of Special Education Programs, will be used as the primary incremental performance metric. This positive impact means the gap between the number of children accessing services (4.3%) and those potentially eligible for service (16%) will close.

Another potential performance metric is a reduction in the number of days between receipt of referral, an evaluation being conducted, and development of an IFSP. Federal statute requires an IFSP to be developed within 45 days of receipt of referral for children meeting eligibility criteria. While there has been steady improvement in this metric, a gap of 6.4% remains between the actual start of early support services and the required start of timely early support services.



Source: Washington State Annual Performance Reports

Costs incurred for referral, evaluation, and IFSP development are not currently covered in the State Special Education 0-3 funding formula. The ability to count and invoice for the full months of early support services, as requested in this proposal, would help to close the gap.

Equity Impacts

Community outreach and engagement:

The ESIT program has a strong partnership and community engagement infrastructure in place. As required in Executive Order 19-02, DCYF has established and continues to maintain an active *Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and Their Families*, often referred to as the SICC. The purpose of the Council is to advise and assist DCYF and other participating state agencies in coordinating and implementing policies that constitute a statewide system of early intervention services, including: (1) Identifying sources of fiscal and other support for early intervention services; (2) Assigning financial responsibilities to the appropriate agency; (3) Promoting interagency agreements; and (4) Providing appropriate services for children. The council also advises and assists DCYF in achieving full participation, coordination, and collaboration with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), Health Care Authority (HCA), and other participating agencies in the implementation of the statewide early intervention system. Extended outreach and engagement are enhanced through the Council's established communication and planning systems. Multiple early support advocacy/constituency groups have also participated in development, review, and/or networking discussions of the proposal. This includes the Early Childhood Development Association of Washington (ECDAW), Wee Care Coalition, Partnership for Action-Voices for Empowerment (PAVE), and The ARC of King County.

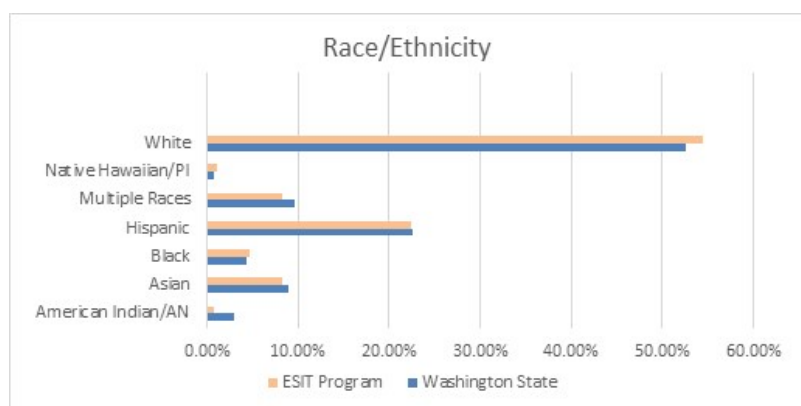
Revisions to First Draft of Proposal: As noted above, DCYF continues to provide extended opportunities for engagement through the SICC as well as through established advocacy and constituency groups. In its earlier form, the proposal included draft language referring to required provision of services and an active IFSP. Input from stakeholders pointed out the redundancies. General consensus continues to prioritize removing the current limitation related to counting and funding the full months of services.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

Consideration of persistent disproportionality (underrepresented) in referral and enrollment levels of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) children and their families, as recently identified by DCYF's Office of Innovation Alignment and Accountability (OIAA), is a high priority for the ESIT Program. This proposed change will help ensure local provider costs associated with referral and evaluation will be covered as all children served within the same month as the monthly count day.

Universal Beneficiaries Targeted: All eligible children and their families will be beneficiaries of this proposal. There will not be any populations or communities excluded. This proposal will have a positive impact on Child Find, referral, and evaluation activities, particularly within rural communities that have disparate access to community and/or county-based funding resources. The ability to count children and receive funding for the first, and typically the most expensive month of service delivery, will also strengthen equitable access to services for children and their families most often impacted by institutional racism.

For example, currently the race/ethnicity of children enrolled in the program is disproportionate to the race/ethnicity of the children residing in the State of Washington.



Source: DCYF and [Washington State of Babies Yearbook 2022](#)

Target Populations or Communities:

There are no target populations or communities that are excluded or would be disproportionately impacted by this proposal. Rather, it will support the ability of local provider agencies to remove barriers to equitable access to services which may inadvertently impede participation, including insufficient staffing patterns and high caseloads leading to delays in eligibility decisions, which delays equitable access to the development of an IFSP and the timely start of early support services.

Current inequities in access to local funds, including county-based tax revenues, mean that some of our children and their families who are furthest from developmental opportunities and social justice have even less opportunity to equitably access early support services necessary

for kindergarten readiness and future school success. This proposal will help increase sustainable state resources to be equitably distributed to ensure accessible services statewide.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

Not applicable.

State Workforce Impacts:

Not applicable.

Intergovernmental:

Tribal Sovereign Nations providing early support services through a government-to-government contract with DCYF would benefit from the change in legislation described in this proposal.

Stakeholder Response:

Non-governmental Stakeholders: The primary stakeholders positively impacted by the proposal are the 21,000+ children and their families served by the program on an annual basis. A secondary set of stakeholders that would be positively impacted are the 45 local ESIT provider agencies and their workforce. A tertiary stakeholder group with less yet noticeable impact, are the public schools receiving toddlers turning three who are potentially eligible for special education preschool services under Part B of IDEA. Being able to count and receive funding for children for the full months of service delivery would help sustain more reasonable Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) caseloads, which directly support timely, smooth, and effective transitions for children and their families.

Anticipated Support: Consistent with the support clearly demonstrated by diverse stakeholders in the 2023 legislative session with proposed HB 1676 (Advocacy-driven Legislation), positive support is anticipated from key stakeholders and constituency groups.

State Interagency Coordinating Council Reports: The State Interagency Coordination Council, with authorizing authority through Executive Order 19-02, has actively engaged in ongoing discussions substantiated through its Finance Committee, regarding the need to revise how children are counted for enrollment, billing, and forecast reporting to reflect accurate and valid service levels provided by local ESIT Provider Agencies, based on the total number of children served each month.

Community engagement and outreach has been completed through both formal and informal work streams. The Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) continues to be focused on strategies to support equitable funding for the provision of early support services. Both the Public Policy Committee and the Finance Committee, both sub-committees under the SICC, have been actively engaged in discussions, reviews, and input on this agency requested legislation.

State Facilities Impacts:

Not applicable.

Changes from Current Law:

DCYF has provided agency request legislation as an attachment to the proposal and submitted the request through BATS.

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

Not applicable.

HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions

Not applicable.

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Obj. N	\$0	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$4,185	\$8,370

Agency Contact Information

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