

EXTENDING THE HOMELESS GRACE PERIOD FOR WORKING CONNECTIONS CHILD CARE

Washington currently allows a "Homeless Grace Period" (HGP) of up to four months for families experiencing homelessness to meet the full eligibility requirements of the Working Connections Child Care subsidy (WCCC). For 49% of families accessing the grace period, four months was not enough time.

Support HB 2456/SB 6351 to increase early learning opportunities for vulnerable children.

Extending the grace period from 4 to 12 months would maintain access to the high-quality early learning environments for homeless children that are critical to childhood development, while giving their families the time needed to resolve issues related to homelessness such as housing and employment.

Extend the Homeless Grace Period to create needed continuity of care for kids

Children in homelessness experience daily trauma that can have long-term impacts. Quality child care provides a safe, development-focused environment that is a proven protective factor for kids, and critical to their resilience.

Consistency across systems

12-month authorization is consistent with existing WCCC authorization period for housed families.

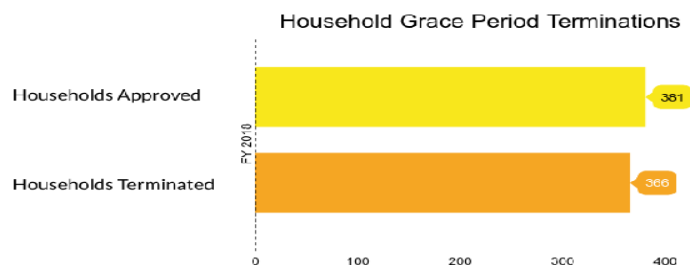
Sources

- Child Care Resources, Annual Report to Child Care Aware of Washington, July 2019: Helping Families Experiencing Homelessness Navigate and Access Child Care
- Lemon, M., and Pennucci, A. (2018). Students Experiencing Homelessness in Washington's K-12 Public Schools: 2016-17 Trends, Characteristics and Academic Outcomes. Schoolhouse Washington, a project of Building Changes: Seattle, WA.

Statewide data from October 2018—September 2019 indicates that children are not receiving the stable care they need while their families are experiencing crisis:

30 children experiencing homelessness lose access to child care each month.

747 families were approved for child care through the HGP. 49% of these families lost eligibility for quality child care after the grace period ended.



52% of families in the HGP program were unable to use the subsidy, according to Child Care Resources program data. Given the shortage of slots system-wide and difficulty of finding providers able to take subsidy, 120 days was not long enough to find care.

This is especially difficult for families needing support with unique behavioral and health needs, care during nonstandard business hours, and access to transportation.

6 out of 10 K-12 students

experiencing homelessness in WA are students of color. Homelessness in the first five years of life exacerbates racial inequities in our education system.