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Washington State Department of Early Learning

DEL Update | October 2013

Director's Note



By DEL Director Dr. Bette Hyde

We were very happy that the Legislature passed—and Gov. Jay Inslee signed—a 2013-15 state operating budget that includes 1,700 additional enrollment slots for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). That means by school year 2014-15, we will have 10,091 enrollment slots for this important program that since 1985 has

helped children from low-income families get school-ready through high-quality classroom learning, health and nutrition services, and family support.

ECEAP is slated to become an entitlement program in school year 2018-19, at which time any eligible child may enroll. We will need an estimated 9,591 additional slots on top of what the Legislature has already funded to serve all children whose families choose to enroll. The Legislature in Senate Bill 5904 asked the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to create an implementation plan to be sure that we are prepared to expand the program. DEL delivered this plan to the Legislature, and it is available [on our website](#).

This implementation plan deals with ECEAP as it currently exists, because that is what SB 5904 directed us to do (there is a “future exploration and action items” section at the back of the report that touches on some issues that were outside the scope of the bill but we think are important to address).

However, a legislative task force created in another bill last session (Senate Bill 5595) is charged with thinking more broadly about how to create a “mixed-delivery system” that integrates child care and preschool programming to better serve families with a high-quality full-day experience. That means figuring out how to include family home child care providers and others who have not traditionally offered ECEAP.

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Welcome, new ELAC members!

The Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) provides input and recommendations to DEL so our strategies and actions are well-informed and broadly supported by parents, child care providers, health and safety experts and the public. We post ELAC meetings on the [DEL calendar](#).

ELAC members are parents, child care providers, health and safety experts and legislators, as well as representatives of Tribal Nations, independent schools, K-12 and higher education, and others interested in creating a statewide early learning system that helps all children realize their full potential.

This is going to require some serious out-of-the-box thinking on the part of DEL, legislators and advocates. It is clear the Legislature wants to break down barriers between child care and publicly funded preschool, to give a more seamless experience for children and families. An important step was on Oct. 1, when DEL opened up enrollment in Early Achievers to ECEAP and Head Start programs. ECEAP programs must join by 2015 under House Bill 1723. Having one consistent quality framework—including consistent coaching for early learning professionals and program assessment regardless of whether a program is funded by child care dollars or ECEAP—helps pave the way for integration.

I encourage you to attend the SB 5595 task force meetings or watch them on TVW so you can follow this important discussion and share your ideas. You can watch video of the first two meetings on www.tvw.org by searching “child care.” The next meeting is Oct. 23 in Walla Walla. Please feel free to share your thoughts with me, too, at betty.hyde@del.wa.gov.

MERIT changes go live Oct. 1



DEL recently made some changes to Managed Education Registry Information Tool (MERIT) for child care and early learning professionals.

Starting Oct. 1:

- ECEAP and Head Start facilities can register and their employees can create professional records in MERIT.
- ECEAP and Head Start facilities can participate in Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system, and track their Early Achievers activity in MERIT.
- We've made it easier for people to print applications they submit through MERIT and they will receive an email confirmation when their applications are received.
- We made some terminology changes that are more user-friendly and better reflect MERIT users.

Some ELAC members are appointed by the Governor. Others are appointed by various entities as required in the legislation that created ELAC.

DEL would like to welcome the following new members to ELAC:

- **Lisa Webb**, family home child care provider in Tacoma
- **Karen Walker**, DEL's Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program administrator
- **Nelly Mbajah**, Department of Social and Health Services' Early Childhood Development Program Manager
- **Jennifer Ross**, parent representative from Spokane
- **Bianca Bailey**, DEL's Parent Advisory Group representative
- **Rep. Jessyn Farrell**, 46th District
- **Sen. Annette Cleveland**, 49th District
- **Luba Bezborodnikova**, Puget Sound ESD Associate Superintendent for Early Learning, representing Head Start/Early Head Start
- **Gene Sharratt**, Executive Director, Washington Student Achievement Council
- **Cory Sbarbaro**, Interim Chief Executive Officer & President, Thrive by Five Washington

[Washington's Early Learning State and Local Coordination Project](#) recommends expanding ELAC membership to include representatives from each of our state's [10 Early Learning Regional Coalitions](#). DEL has invited each coalition to elect a Regional Advisor to represent local and regional perspectives and needs on ELAC. The Regional Advisors are:

- **Susan Barbeau**; First Five FUNDamentals of Pierce County
- **Samantha Bowen**; Southeast Region
- **Enrica Hampton**; SOAR, King County
- **Karri Livingston**; Investing in Children, Central Region
- **Rhodes Lockwood**; Olympic-Kitsap Peninsulas

Within the next week, we will post video tutorials to [DEL's YouTube channel](#) and on the [DEL website](#).

Early learning and child care professionals who have questions can contact MERIT Support at merit@del.wa.gov.

DEL's CCDF plan approved



DEL's 2014-15 plan for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) was recently approved by the federal Office of Child Care.

CCDF is a federal grant administered by

the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children & Families. CCDF block grants are awarded to states, territories and Tribal Nations to help ensure families with low incomes, families receiving temporary public assistance, and families transitioning from public assistance can obtain child care while they work or attend classes.

CCDF pays for:

- Subsidized child care for families. DEL sets policy for Working Connections Child Care subsidy program, while the Department of Social and Health Services determines eligibility and makes payments to providers.
- Activities to improve the quality of child care and offer additional services to parents, such as child care referral services and training for child care providers.
- Other research and technical assistance at the state and national levels.

As the lead state agency for the CCDF block grant, DEL must submit a plan every two years for how the funding will be used to improve accessibility and quality of child care in our state.

The 2014-15 plan builds upon goals we set and accomplished for prior years' plans, including 12-month subsidy authorization, development of a career lattice and strengthening Washington's professional registry system, called Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT). The goals for 2014-15 include:

- Allowing child care licensing to focus on the providers' strengths and allowing DEL child care licensors to focus on high-risk indicators.
- Continued work to improve the quality of child care through [Early Achievers](#), Washington's quality rating and improvement system.
- Increasing online resources and supports for child

- **Wilanne Ollila-Perry**; Northwest Region
- **Nancy Spurgeon**; North-Central Region
- **Sandra Szambelan**; Inland Northwest Early Learning Alliance, Northeast Region
- **Dan Teuteberg**; Visions for Early Learning, West Central Region
- **Jodi Wall**; SELF (Support for Early Learning and Families), Southwest Region

Read more about [ELAC's work](#) on the DEL website.

Revised subsidy rules help families

The Washington state Department of Early Learning (DEL) is revising rules regarding Working Connection Child Care (WCCC) subsidy program authorized payments and units of care. Currently, families who receive WCCC benefits are eligible for full-day child care when their children need care between five and 10 hours per day. Effective Dec. 1, families who receive WCCC benefits and participate in 110 hours or more of approved work or related activities per month will be eligible for full-time child care. Approved activities include education, training and job-seeking.

The rule change stems from Senate Bill 5595 concerning child care reform. Governor Inslee signed the bill into law on May 21.

This rule gives families flexibility to shift child care subsidy hours based on changes to their schedules. For example, parents whose work schedules vary week to week will have full-time care authorized to cover changing work hours.

DEL is accepting public comment on the rule change through Oct. 24. There are several ways to comment on the proposed rules:

- [Attend a public hearing](#)
- [Comment online](#)
- Submit comments by email to rules@del.wa.gov.

- care providers.
- Aligning and streamlining Washington early learning systems, including subsidized child care.

[Read the entire CCDF plan.](#)

Statewide child care nutrition, physical activity survey coming soon!



For the first time, child care providers in Washington will be surveyed about nutrition and physical activity in licensed child care settings.

Early in October, the University of Washington will contact all licensed child care providers who care for children ages 2-5 with a unique survey link that will ask

about nutrition and physical activity at their facility. Getting information from child care providers in all areas of the state is the best way to learn about nutrition and physical activity for young children. The results of the survey will help guide the programs and services that are offered to early care and education professionals.

Important information for licensed child care providers:

- The survey is online. Each licensed provider will receive a unique link to take the survey contained in an email from the University of Washington.
- Providers who respond to the survey by Nov. 6 will be entered to win a random drawing for prizes including 3 iPads, 20 gift cards valued at \$50 and 250 gift cards valued at \$10.
- If you prefer a written copy of the survey, contact survey coordinator Bridget Igoe at 206-616-6527 or igoe@uw.edu.

The survey is being conducted in partnership with the University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition, DEL, YMCA, Child Care Aware of Washington, the Washington Department of Health, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and local health departments.

DEL introduces updated Child Care Basics curriculum

View the [proposed rule text and more information](#) on DEL's website.

News you can use

Environmental Health workshop

What: Toys, Crafts, Chemicals & More: What's Safer for Kids?

When: October 17, 6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Where: Tukwila Library

Cost: Free

Description: Environmental Health workshop for child care providers in King County. Hands-on practice identifying safer toys, art materials, household products, plastics and more. Two additional STARS credits may be available for personalized follow-up consultation at your childcare.

[Read more and register.](#)

WAEYC Annual Conference

Early childhood education teachers, administrators, experts, parents and advocates will gather at the Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC) annual conference Nov. 14-16 in Seattle. [Find more information or register.](#)

Early learning online conference

The Quality Conference for Early Childhood Leaders will be held Nov. 8 online or by phone. The conference has six workshops and is taught by Dr. Patricia Nan Anderson. [Find more information or register.](#)

Free four-week online training course

Effective Classroom Interactions: Supporting Young Children's Development is a free, four-week online course.

This course is intended to increase teachers' knowledge about specific types of teacher-child interactions that promote young children's development. The course will focus

DEL has released the new Child Care Basics curriculum, a revised version of the existing Basic STARS training. DEL collaborated with a team of early childhood education faculty in Washington to develop the new curriculum, which includes introductory material on child

development, learning environments, school readiness topics and Early Achievers in addition to fundamental concepts on health and safety and quality practice. The curriculum focuses on Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals, aligns with the new Washington Administrative Code (WAC) requirements, and meets the needs of professional in child care centers and family child care homes.

DEL introduced the curriculum to Washington state-approved trainers via webinars in August and September. Once the trainers attend the webinar, they will be able to offer the 30-hour training to early learning and child care professionals. The new curriculum will also be offered at community colleges and Washington Online Learning (WAOL) online starting this fall, and will be worth 3 credits.

School-age providers should continue taking the 20-hour STARS training. The Child Care Basics curriculum does not include information for school-age providers.

Providers who complete the Child Care Basics curriculum are eligible for cost reimbursement through DEL. You can find more information about this in [MERIT](#) or [contact your licensor](#).



on helping teachers to offer emotionally supportive interactions to the children in their care. [Find more information or register](#).

State immunization news

The [summer/fall 2013 edition of the Washington State Department of Health Office of Immunization and Child Profile newsletter](#) is now available. It contains articles on school and child care center immunization requirements and reporting updates (starting on page 9), encouraging flu vaccination, WA Immunization Information System updates, and more.

Cybersafety for families

[Cybersafety: An interactive guide to staying safe on the Internet](#) is a free website that has safety tips and resources to help families stay safe while they are online.

Health plans enrolling now

Starting Oct. 1, people in Washington who do not have health care insurance may now enroll in Washington's Health Benefit Exchange. There are dozens of plans to choose from and [Washingtonhealthplanfinder](#) has tools that help you calculate the plans' cost to you.

Health care coverage will begin Jan. 1, 2014.



Join the Washington ShakeOut Oct. 17

At 10:17 a.m. on October 17, 2013, hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians will "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" in [The Great Washington ShakeOut](#), the state's largest earthquake drill. Join millions of people worldwide who participate in Great ShakeOut Earthquake drills.

SNAP benefits reduced on Nov. 1

Food assistance benefits through the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will be reduced for more than a million Washington residents on November 1, following the October 31 expiration of the federal government's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

A family of three receiving the maximum benefit amount will see a reduction of \$29 a month, from \$526 to \$497.

A temporary increase in the food benefits – known as Basic Food in Washington state - began in April 2009 to help people affected by the recession and to help stimulate local economies.

Households that receive help through the state-funded Food Assistance Program for legal immigrants also will be affected by the reduction. Those benefits are set at 75 percent of SNAP benefit levels.

- [Find a food bank](#) for help with food.
- [View the full press release](#) from the Department of Social and Health Services.

Participating is a great way for individuals, families, businesses, schools, colleges, government agencies and organizations to be prepared to survive and recover quickly from big earthquakes— wherever you live, work, or travel.

The Great Washington ShakeOut has a [flier specifically for child care providers and educators](#) to help them plan an earthquake drill.

[The Great Washington ShakeOut](#) website has drill resources, frequently asked questions, registration information and a chance to win a \$10,000 home earthquake retrofit.

