



## **Early Learning Advisory Council**

### **Meeting Minutes**

February 1, 2022 – 9:00am-3:00pm  
Virtual Meeting

#### **Welcome & Virtual Meeting Protocols**

DCYF Deputy Director of Community Engagement Deanna Stewart welcomed attendees, walked through virtual meeting protocols, ELAC’s Purpose, Essential Racial Equity Questions, and Community Agreements.

#### **Introductions**

Regional Advisor Enrica Hampton initiated introductions and shared a letter from ELAC Co-Chair, Chelle Downey-Magee announcing her resignation from ELAC. We thank Chelle for her dedication, work and support in the early learning field. She will be missed.

#### **Feedback Loop, State Agency/Partner and Regional Coalition Updates, FSKA Temporary Licensing Subcommittee Update, and New Member Orientation Recap/Next Steps**

ELAC Co-Chair Lois Martin led the group in reviewing the Feedback Loop, State Agency/Partner and Regional Coalition Updates, FSKA Temporary Licensing Subcommittee Update and new member orientation. Time was provided for members to ask questions.

- [Feedback Loop](#)
  - [2021 Annual Reflection](#)
- [State Agency/Partner Updates](#)
  - [DSHS Community Service Offices Letter](#)
  - [DSHS Mid Certification Reviews Letter](#)
  - [DSHS SHB 5164 Letter](#)
  - [DSHS Stakeholders and Community Partners Letter](#)
- [Regional Coalition Updates](#)

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| <b>Discussion</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am a new person to these meetings, so I hope this question is appropriately timed. Has there been discussion here about <a href="#">SB 5630</a> (including early learning in the basic education program, preschool for all three and four year olds)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Since it has not yet had a hearing and policy cut off is Thursday, February 3, 2022, it will not be moving forward.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• My understanding is that this bill including preschool as part of the definition of basic education has happened a number of times over the years without a lot of energy behind it. You are right, given there is only one legislative member signing on, there is not a huge concerted effort to move this forward. It would be great to build the collective energy towards that end.</li> <li>• With ELAC meetings it seems like there is a lot of turnover, I love fresh perspectives. You don’t treat the Community Agreements as a rolling document, free to add in as needed or something we address and review every few years? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is something ELAC members are able to change, but we are trying to be more intentional this time in updating them.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If one would need translation for the Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA) Temporary Licensing Subcommittee meeting on February 8, would they go to that meeting and have translation or a different time? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I would recommend they reach out to us at <a href="mailto:dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov">dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov</a> so we can schedule a translator or if February 8 does not work for them we can schedule a separate meeting with</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>them, too. Also, if they are interested we can add them to the FSKA Temporary Licensing Subcommittee distribution list so they receive information and updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you would like to get engaged with your local coalition you can find more information on our main website. <a href="https://www.washingtoncfc.org/">https://www.washingtoncfc.org/</a></li> </ul> |
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**2022 Work Plan**

Members reviewed, discussed, and provided feedback on the 2022 Work Plan topics, and assigned topics to the Provider Supports Subcommittee.

- [2022 Draft ELAC Work Plan](#)
- [2022 Work Plan Discussion Question Responses and Feedback](#)

**Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) Data Reporting**

DCYF Director of the Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) Vickie Ybarra provided a data update to support ELAC’s Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA) work.

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| <b>Discussion</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can find more information on the Child Care Stabilization Zip Code Factors dashboard <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• Are licensors reaching out to their caseload to see who is open/closed? Concerned there may be more closures than reported, or folk who may still hold a license, but are not accepting children because of the pandemic.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, we have certainly heard that concern. We can only report on the data we have. We do think there may be some under reporting here but we don’t have any way to validate that.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is there a plan in place to find out what the number is of who is open or closed?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We have not heard anything about next steps with that.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For the percentages closed for family homes and centers, the previous research shows that most children are cared for in family homes, if this is accurate, that is pretty alarming that most of the closures are in family child care homes.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School age programs and child care centers are the ones that closed more. Most children are cared for in centers. Centers have the largest licensed capacity in the state.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is this based on licensed capacity or how many rooms are actually open?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This is based on licensed capacity at the time the data was pulled, during that month. The data you are talking about; we don’t have access to. I would love to talk with you to get more ideas.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Felt great concern listening to the data analyses painting a rosier picture of what is going on in the field. Concerning that this is what legislators are seeing. The data does not reflect what we as providers are experiencing in the field. It is not getting better; it is worse than it has ever been.</li> <li>• I am curious if it would be useful to reach out to the county healthcare contacts that childcare centers need to contact when faced with a coronavirus disease (COVID) exposure.</li> <li>• Centers have not recovered. I agree that I am worried that this data may be used to incorrectly sway how the centers are supported.</li> <li>• Do you have disaggregated racial/ethnic data for loss of employment? Specifically, to the parent survey?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I know that we did include American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) but it looks like in the main recording line, we aggregated AI. I have the raw data; I can pull information that you would like to know. In terms of immigration status, we don’t usually ask that question anywhere in our surveys. We certainly would not know refugees’ information either.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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|                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is this report going to roll out? A report that is not the reality of what is actually going on in the field?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In terms of the analyses of the provider level, we have no plans of a report.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Did you collect the number of families that had to report in person to work and didn't have an option to keep the child home? Are these the families that are using care? What about the actual well-being of the early childhood care for children?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ That is an excellent question. We have data sufficient to know of people reporting to work because we have a category of essential workers and I have the raw data so I can go back and pull that information.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Also, it may be useful to collect information on how providers have had to alter how they are offering childcare due to pandemic stressors. Examples include altered hours, child slot availability due to forced smaller class sizes due to staffing availability, ages accepted changing, changes to if they are able to offer care to children with special needs.</li> <li>• Would like to know how the pandemic has impacted parent students and how they are utilizing care.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I will take a look at the parent survey to get that answer.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Thank you for the report, but I agree with everyone. We have been more impacted by Omicron than any time during the pandemic. We definitely need to remind that this data is before Omicron.</li> <li>• So important to make it clear that this data has limitations.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Vickie Ybarra at <a href="mailto:vickie.ybarra@dcyf.wa.gov">vickie.ybarra@dcyf.wa.gov</a></li> </ul>   |

**Early Learning Funding**

DCYF Assistant Secretary of Early Learning Nicole Rose and DCYF Early Learning Division Operations Deputy Amy Russell provided updates on early learning funding in Washington, FSKA and stabilization grants.

- [Early Learning Funding Presentation](#)

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| <p><b>Discussion</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you assure compliance with the grant dollars?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One of the things that we do is have providers fill out a spend plan. Then we do a review and we sample providers and look at what providers have spent their dollars on. That is one way we have been looking at compliance.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How much money is left?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We have granted \$288,486,000 as of January, with approximately \$73 million remaining.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is there a plan in place to ensure an equitable sampling across the state and provider ethnicity when reviewing compliance? There has been concern across the field, especially with family providers, that providers of color are being audited at a higher level.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We can share at a later date and time how we go about sampling for receipt gathering. We can bring that back to the group in the feedback loop and follow up.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Local Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) sites are expecting updated contracts for the current year because Federal Account Reconciliation Plan (ARP) money is now included in their contracts. Is the original state funded ECEAP budgeted amount still in early learning?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Let me follow up on that, because I thought ECEAP is general state funds.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Can you give a breakdown of one time funds received and what those dollars were or will be spent on?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We can definitely follow up on that. Some of those dollars were spent on items when there was a shift to full time authorizations. We will make sure to pull that together and make sure this group has that information.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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- I thought the FSKA had subsidy rates increasing up to 85% within a couple years. It's already at 85%? Is there a statewide ECEAP waitlist that shows there is a need for further expansion?
  - We did raise rates to 85% to the 2020 market rate. I can follow up with waitlist information.
- Do you happen to know the decrease from pre-pandemic – January, February 2020?
  - That is a great question and part of the puzzle piece of putting the data points together of licensed capacity and who is accessing care. There is a budgeted cap for Working Connections and that budgeted cap is 33 thousand and we have been sitting below that cap for quite some time. We have seen fluctuations in case load over time. That is all data we are trying to unpack right now.
- Can you explain why the 2021 market rate data was not used for setting the rates?
  - It was just finalized and was not finalized at the time of setting the rates/budget.
- You had mentioned expanding ECEAP by thousands, so I wondered if that's based on known needs (waitlist) or legislation only?
  - ECEAP has been based on forecast and caseload, pick up rates, potential of eligibility of three and four year olds. That is kept with a contractor right now.
- What was the delay in finalizing the 2021 survey before the budget was due?
  - Happy to talk about the market rate survey and the process around that.
- What thought has been put around the infant mental health consultants partnering with others who are supporting this similar work in child care? Are there ways we can come together to support this work?
  - This is a great question. We should think about where those opportunities are and that can happen sometimes in the Early Achievers revisions meetings and how can we be supportive at the community level. Are there shared professional development opportunities to look at? What our plan had been for delivery has been much different than what has happened in the last couple years. I think we are just now getting to the place where looking at what does coordination look like? Also, looking at professional development as a place to start, looking at regional differences is something to sort out. We are acutely aware to meet the needs of all and come together to do this.
- Is there any way to incorporate information about the equivalency waiver because a lot of people do not know about it?
  - I will connect with Angela Abrams, the Professional Development Administrator and team on how to incorporate that information in these presentations and if anyone has ideas on how DCYF can get that information out there, feel free to let us know.
- I believe Washington Communities for Children would be happy to partner in getting that information out to our communities
- What would be helpful is if this information for an experience waiver is shared out as broadly and colorfully as the Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE) and other educational programs.
- When you look at the amount of children served in centers compared to family homes, there is a discrepancy of how the stabilization grant dollars have been dispersed.
  - We have noted this.
- It's also worth noting that the previous presentation showed that a large number of licensed family home providers have or are closing. Many will wait until after the timeline ends required by the Stabilization Grant.



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| <b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can find more information on experience equivalency work and the equivalency waiver below:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Education and Equivalents</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Equivalent Options for Education</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Professional Development Webinars</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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**Complex Needs Fund and Equity Grants**

Nicole and Amy provided updates on complex needs funds and gathered feedback on equity grants.

- [Complex Needs Fund and Equity Grants Presentation](#)
- [Complex Needs Fund and Equity Grants Discussion Questions and Feedback](#)

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| <b>Discussion</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was the 4.6 million determined, was that allocated from the Legislature?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The rule to only apply once, is that per legislation or how you are proposing to roll out the program?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The rule to only receive a grant once every two years is in the bill language: ESSSB 5237- Fair Start For Kids Act, Section 307 Early Childhood Equity Grants found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What has been the intentionality of reaching out to the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We are just starting our outreach effort at ELAC today and are hoping to hear from you all what that would potentially look like.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How do we learn from the investment so we can inform the future?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can include discussion questions in the follow up email to provide feedback via email and give a deadline.</li> </ul>   |

**Closing Remarks/Adjourn**

- [Meeting Reflection Question Responses and Feedback](#)

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| <b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next Early Learning Advisory Council meeting will be on April 12, 2022.</li> </ul> |
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