

Early Learning Advisory Council

February 4, 2025




Welcome to today's webinar.
Please remember to mute your phone and computer upon entry.
We will begin shortly. Thank You!



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Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



FEBRUARY.

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Introductions

Please share:

- Your name
- Your role (Member or Regional Advisor of ELAC)
- February Fun Fact: Share 1-2 words in the chat that comes to mind when they think of February!



Executive Committee Recruitment

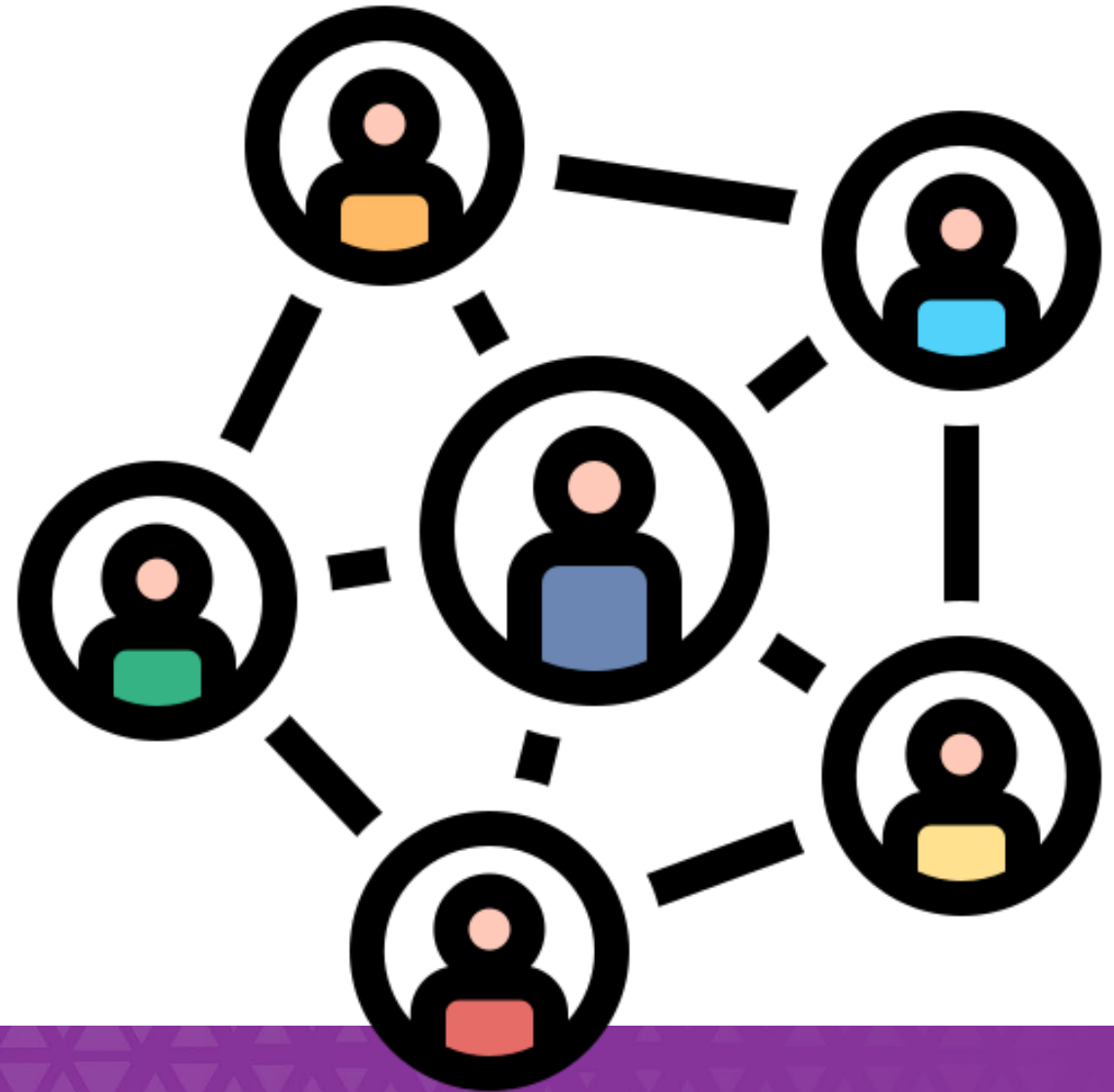


Lead, Inspire, Make a
Difference—Your
Voice Matters!



Responsibilities, Roles and Requirements

- Develop the yearly work plan
- Create meeting agendas
- Attend and participate in planning meetings
- Lead and facilitate discussions
- Collaborate on planning efforts
- Maintain active ELAC or Regional Advisor status
- Be in good standing for at least six months



What It Takes to Serve

Insights from Former EC Chairs

- [youtube.com/watch?v=vmjtJEgMAFA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmjtJEgMAFA)
 - Time marker: 1:31:12
- ELAC Charter



DCYF Early Learning Legislative Tracking

Nicole Rose

Assistant Secretary, Early Learning

Courtney Parker

Policy Advisor, Early Learning

February 4, 2025



Washington State Department of
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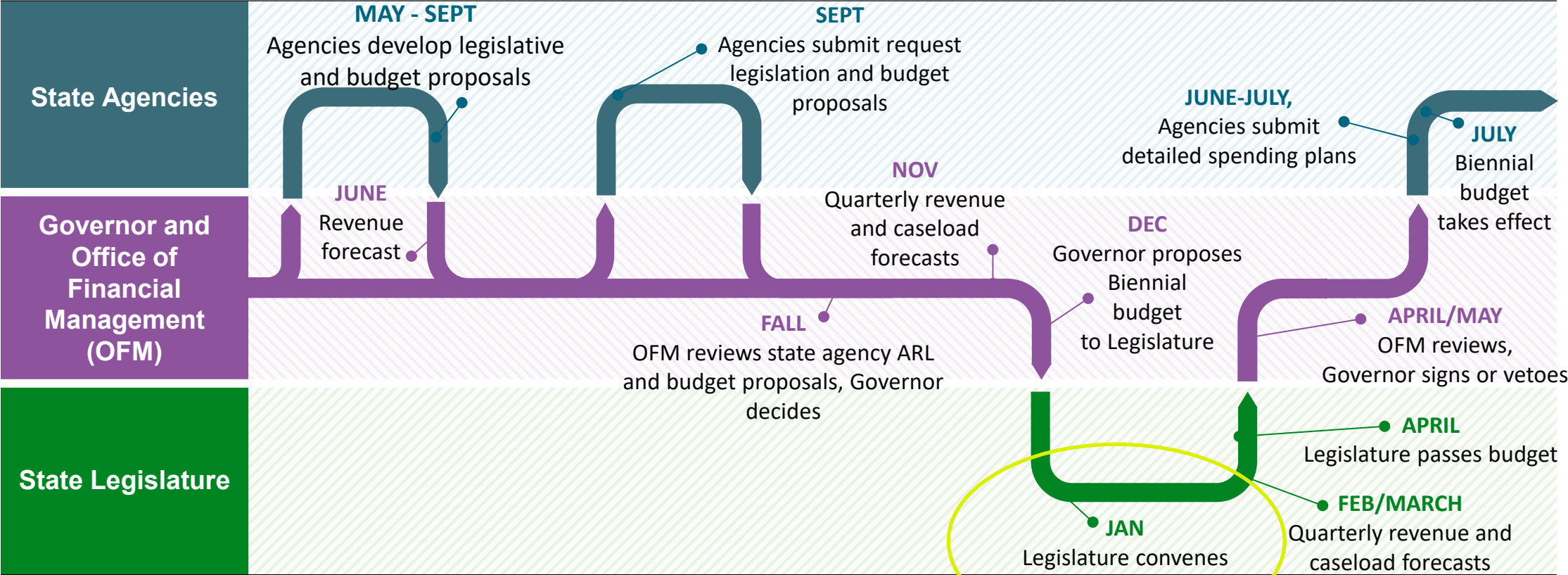


Agenda

- 2025 Legislative Session
- 2025 DCYF Legislative proposals – Update
- Early Learning Bill Tracker



Legislative Session Timeline



Realities

- Year one of biennial session, budget setting session, long session
- New administration; significant lawmaker changes
- Current programs are outpacing revenue growth



DCYF Priorities for 2025



**Stabilize
Juvenile
Rehabilitation**



**Prevention
Services**



**Adolescent
Service
Enhancement**



**Legally
Required
Early
Learning
Expansions**



**Effective &
Efficient
Government**



WCCC Eligibility 75% SMI & Dual Language

Decision Package

Request: \$256.925M

Funded: \$5.136M

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- 80 percent of Washington children ready for Kindergarten
- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- High-quality early learning available and affordable to all in Washington

What?

Increase Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) eligibility to 75 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) effective July 1, 2025, as required under [RCW 43.216.802\(3\)](#), and to increase dual language rates to adjust for inflation under [RCW 43.216.775](#).

Why?

- Expanding income eligibility provides families with increased and equitable access to high quality child care, which is essential to family self-sufficiency and positive child outcomes.
- High quality child care supports child development and kindergarten readiness.

Components Include:

- ~~Increase Working Connections Child Care eligibility to 75 percent SMI~~
 - 75 percent eligibility expansion delayed until FY30
- Increase Dual Language Rates using the U.S. Implicit Price Deflator
- Increased funding for outreach, resource and referral to inform families who are eligible and who have not been eligible historically

Child Care Subsidy Base Rates

*Decision Package w/
Caseload updates*

Request: \$284.897M

Funded: \$284.897M

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- 80 percent of Washington children ready for Kindergarten
- High-quality early learning available and affordable to all in Washington
- Support the early learning workforce
- Prevention goals connected to early learning

✓ Fully Funded

What?

Maintain child care center subsidy base rates at the 85th percentile of the most current market for child care centers as required by [RCW 43.216.828](#), resulting in a rate increase based on the 2024 Market Rate Survey (MRS).

Why?

- Requested funding will support family access and child care providers in meeting the needs of children served based on the 2024 MRS.
- Requested funding needed to comply with the [Fair Start for Kids Act](#) (2021) and [RCW 43.216.828](#).
- The increase in subsidy base rates was also included in the bargained subsidy rates for licensed family homes in the Collective Bargaining Agreement with SEIU 925. Parity will be maintained if the bargained subsidy rates and this request are funded.

Components Include:

- Increase subsidy base rates beginning July 1, 2025
- *Note: DP includes center-based care rate increase. FCC rate increase is in the collective bargaining agreement between DCYF and family child care providers.*

Comply with New CCDF Requirements

Decision Package

Request: \$94.914M

Funded: \$88.019M

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

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What?

Comply with the 2024 Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule change that became effective April 2024.

Why?

- Requested funding needed to comply with federal requirements.
- Funding will increase access and affordability to high quality child care.

Components Include:

- Supports eligible children and families with a full 12 months of WCCC benefit authorization beginning July 1, 2025.
- Align child care subsidy payment practices with the private market by July 2026:
 - Pay providers prospectively (instead of retrospectively), and
 - Pay based on enrollment (instead of by attendance)
- Only require overpayment collection for families approved under presumptive eligibility when federally required
- One-time costs for an outreach and communication contract and training support for providers who participate in child care subsidy programs

ECEAP Entitlement

*Decision Package
Request: \$451.416M
Funded: \$65.076M*

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

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What?

Prepare for the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) to meet entitlement per [RCW 43.216.556](#).

Why?

- High quality early learning/prekindergarten supports school readiness and success and increases high school graduation rates.
- ECEAP’s family self-reliance model helps families set and achieve goals related to health, wellbeing, and family self-sufficiency.

Components Include:

- Sustainable ECEAP slot rates, ~~representing a 29 percent slot rate increase~~
 - *representing an 18 percent slot rate increase in FY26*
- ~~Slot expansion for an additional 6,515 slots to meet entitlement~~
 - ECEAP Entitlement delayed until 2030-31 school year
- Slot conversion of Part Day slots to School day slots ~~(7,592)~~ and ~~Working day slots (18)~~
 - *Convert 250 Part Day slots to Full Day slots and add 500 Full Day slots in FY27*
- ~~Quality supports for curriculum and ongoing assessments for classrooms and children and increased funding for scholarships and ratings~~

Early Learning Bills

Bill Number	Abbreviated Title	Description
<p><u>HB 1082</u> (SB 5279)</p>	<p>Concerning qualifications for child care providers.</p>	<p>Allows licensed child care providers until August 1, 2028 to demonstrate experience-based competency as an alternative to comply with current child care licensing rules. Directs DCYF to convene a stakeholder group to improve early learning and school-age staff qualification requirements and verification processes.</p>
<p><u>HB 1128</u> (SB 5062)</p>	<p>Child care workforce standards board.</p>	<p>Creates the Board with specific designated members and requires the Board to adopt statewide rules and standards establishing minimum child care employment standards relating to compensation, health and safety, and other working conditions. Excludes the licensing of child care facilities from the Board’s purview.</p>
<p><u>HB 1282</u></p>	<p>Enhancing transparency measures and modifying liability insurance requirements.</p>	<p>Requires greater efforts on behalf of DCYF and child care providers to make insurance, licensing, inspection, and Early Achievers information more accessible to parents and guardians of enrolled children.</p>

Early Learning Bills

Bill Number	Abbreviated Title	Description
<u>HB 1314</u> (SB 5297)	Early learning facilities grant and loan program.	Makes changes to the Early Learning Facilities (ELF) program, including establishment of an Emergency Fund; clarifies ECEAP conversion qualifies for ELF; makes Tribal Compact Schools eligible for the ELF Public School District program; and changes the match requirements.
<u>HB 1350</u> (SB 5500)	Modernizing reimbursement rates for the WCCC program.	Transitions reimbursement rates for the WCCC program to reflect the Cost of Quality Care (Sets the floor for Working Connections subsidy base rates at the 85 th percentile of the most recent Market Rate Survey. Requires DCYF to then recommend rates based on the cost of quality care).
<u>HB 1351</u>	Adjusting age requirements for accessing ECEAP.	Adjusts age requirements for accessing the ECEAP to allow for enrollment of eligible three-year-olds who turn three during the school year after the August 31 deadline.



Early Learning Bills

Bill Number	Abbreviated Title	Description
<u>HB 1450</u>	Transition to kindergarten programs.	Makes adjustments to the Transition to Kindergarten program.
<u>HB 1489</u>	Adjusting implementation dates for programs related to ECE and child care.	Delays dates for WCCC income eligibility implementation and ECEAP entitlement to align with former Governor Inslee's proposed biennial budget.
<u>HB 1648</u>	Modifying child care provider qualifications.	Delays the certification and qualification requirement timeline for child care providers, creates a work equivalency option, and increases access to community-based training options.
<u>SB 5130</u>	Eliminating child care licensing fees.	Eliminates fees for obtaining a child care license.



Unfunded Agency Requests

DCYF agency request legislation and proposed decision packages that were not approved or funded in the Governor's Budget at any level are included in the following slides for reference.

Licensing Complaint Unit

Decision Package
\$5.605M

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- Support the early learning workforce
- Prevention goals connected to early learning

What?

Create a child care complaint investigations unit within the Licensing Division to address the licensing complexities for all child care licensed providers and support provider compliance.

Why?

- Child care licensors administer all aspects of licensing oversight, both compliance and complaint investigations. This unit would create separation of duties, which would reduce risk of bias and conflict of interest.
- A child care complaint investigation unit will improve the quality and intention of licensing practice, improve quality and availability of provider services statewide equitably.
- Enable staff to meet timelines and support licensed providers holistically.

Components Include:

- Requests 20.0 full-time equivalents to create the Complaint Investigations Unit.

One Pager Overviews 2025-27 Biennial Budget Decision Packages & Agency Request Legislation

- Decision Packages are currently posted on DCYF's [Government Affairs webpage](#).
- One-page summaries of DCYF's budget requests and agency request legislation for the 2025 Legislative Session will be linked on the DCYF Government Affairs webpage.
- Please reach out if you would like more details.

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- > [Our Leadership](#)
- > [Mission, Vision, Values](#)

Government Affairs

The DCYF Government Affairs (GA) team works with agency leadership, staff, and community partners to advance agency priorities, building on...

Contact

- ✉ [Government Affairs](#)
- ✉ [Allison Krutsinger, Director](#)

THANK YOU

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

Thank you

Licensing Updates



Break



Early Care and Education Access and Living Wage Proviso Update

Status Update

December 2024



Washington State Department of
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Early Learning in Washington State

Our Vision

An integrated, mixed-delivery system of affordable, high-quality early care and education for ALL of Washington's children, to support child outcomes, school readiness, and family well-being.

Strategic Outcomes

- 80 percent of Washington children ready for Kindergarten
- High-quality early care and education available and affordable to all in Washington

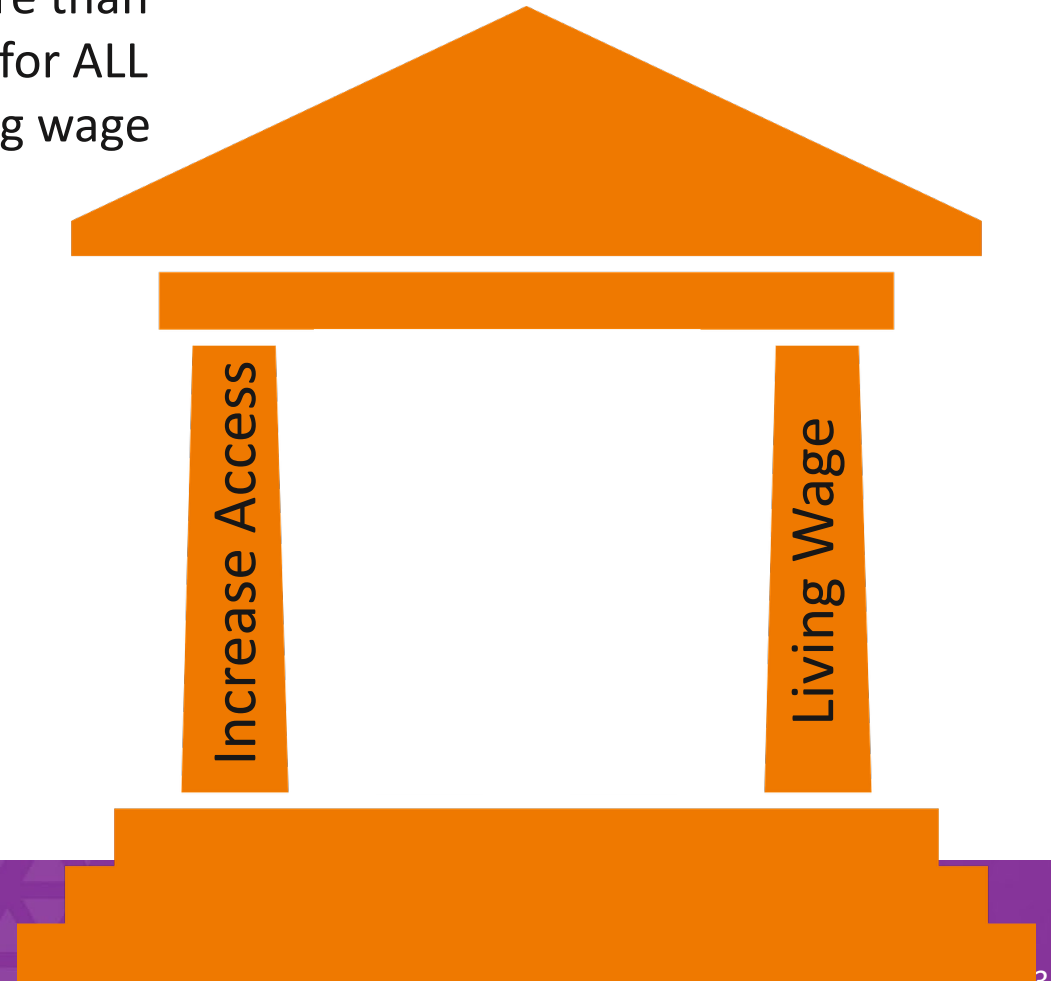
Eliminate racial disproportionality and advancing racial equity in early education



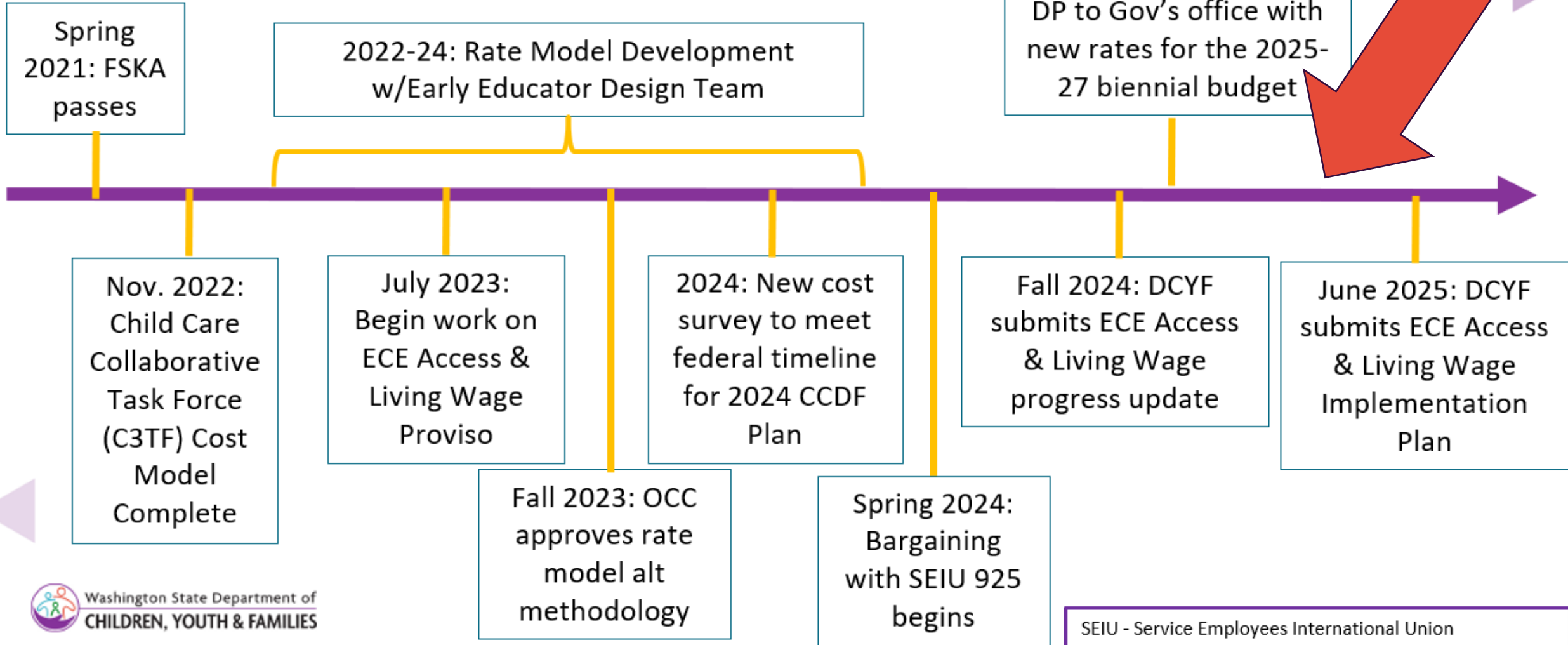
Universal Access and Living Wage:

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.



Timeline



Status Update

- Provides an overview of existing efforts in Washington that the Implementation Plan builds upon
- Highlights community engagement that will inform the development of the plan
- Includes high-level initial policy recommendations

Leveraging Existing Efforts & Frameworks

- Child Care Collaborative Taskforce
- Cost of Quality Care Rate Model
- Early Achievers
- Early Learning Coordination Plan
- Preschool Development Grant – Birth to Five (PDG)
- Racial Equity and Social Justice Framework



Near-Term Policy Recommendations

- Increasing base rates for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)
- Increasing family eligibility for WCCC up to 75 percent of State Medium Income
- Expanding access to ECEAP to reach entitlement in 2026
- Making improvements to WCCC in accordance with the 2024 Child Care Development final rule

Preliminary Long-Term Recommendations

- Ensure families have access to affordable, high quality ECE that meets their needs
- Support a thriving ECE workforce
- Leverage data and align systems to maximize equity and effectiveness
- Ensure adequate facilities for expansion of the ECE system



Implementation Plan – June 2025

- Maintain the foundation of our early learning system
- Options for distribution of living wage and benefits
- Eligibility options aligned to 7% income
- Operational needs
- Modeling
- Recommendations

In both: Cost of Quality Care Recommendations from Early Educator Design Team

Next Steps

What's Next?

- Analyze and discuss DCYF and Eco Northwest products
- Ongoing discussions with CCA of WA and SEIU 925 about Implementation Plan
- Exploring facility needs

Later

- Prepare implementation plan
- Phasing implementation



Exploring Facility Needs

Early Care and Education Facilities Exploration Project

- Supports the Early Care and Education Access and Living Wage Implementation Plan
- Examine the interplay of state, regional, and local zoning and building code regulations
- Implementation plan to include technical assistance, start- up supports, etc.
- Exploring other statewide early learning facilities research
- Evaluating needs for facilities across WA state and supports needed



QUESTIONS

Input from ELAC

Recommendation: Ensure families have access to affordable, high-quality child care that meets their needs

- Create a child care guarantee for all Washington families within Washington's mixed-delivery system.
 - Reduce copayments for all families through a graduated monthly copayment ensuring that families pay no more than 7% of their family income, including for families with annual household income of more than \$400,000.
 - Assume current WCCC copayment practice of one rate per family regardless of household size continues
 - Families below 150% FPL (or SMI equivalent) have no copay

What could this look like?

Income Range of State Median Income	150%-200%	200%-250%	250%-300%	300%-350%	350%-400%
Estimated Copayment	\$600	\$800	\$1,000	\$1,200	\$1,400
Minimum Monthly Income for Family of 4	\$16,383	\$21,844	\$27,305	\$32,766	\$38,227
Minimum Annual Income for Family of 4	\$196,596	\$262,128	\$327,660	\$393,192	\$458,724

- What are your initial reactions to these SMI groupings and assigned copayments?

Recommendation: Ensure families have access to affordable, high-quality child care that meets their needs

- Support inclusion of children with special needs.
 - As we consider special need rates:
 - What could this look like in terms of family eligibility?
 - How do we phase this?
- Ideas include:
 - Automatic WCCC eligibility for children with disabilities.
 - Simplified level 1 Special Needs Rates based on provider application.
 - Increased level 2 rates.



Thank You!

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