

Early Learning Advisory Council

Virtual Meeting

February 6, 2024



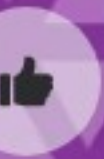
Welcome to today's webinar.
Please remember to mute your phone and computer upon entry.
We will begin shortly. Thank You!



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Virtual Meeting Protocols

Audio and Video Connection

- Throughout the webinar, please mute yourself unless you are speaking or responding to a question.
- We have Q&A portions dedicated throughout the meeting, but feel free to use the chat box to post questions or comments at any time.
- If for any reason you place the call on hold and music begins to play, your call will be disconnected. You are more than welcome to rejoin the meeting once you are available again.
- Individuals using a webcam or video option will be displayed throughout the meeting.

If you have any questions or technical difficulties, please contact us via the chat box or at dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov.



Introductions

Please share in the chat:

- Your name,
- Where you are located and
- Your role



Review of Meeting Minutes

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Feedback Loop

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State Agency/Partner and Regional Coalition Updates

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Legislative Update

DCYF Senior Policy Advisor Melissa Cheesman

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DCYF 2024 Early Learning Legislative Tracking

Melissa Cheesman

Government Affairs, Office of Public Affairs

February 6, 2024



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Agenda



- 2024 Legislative Session
- DCYF Asks in Governor's Budget
- Bill Status – Still Alive



2024 Legislative Session

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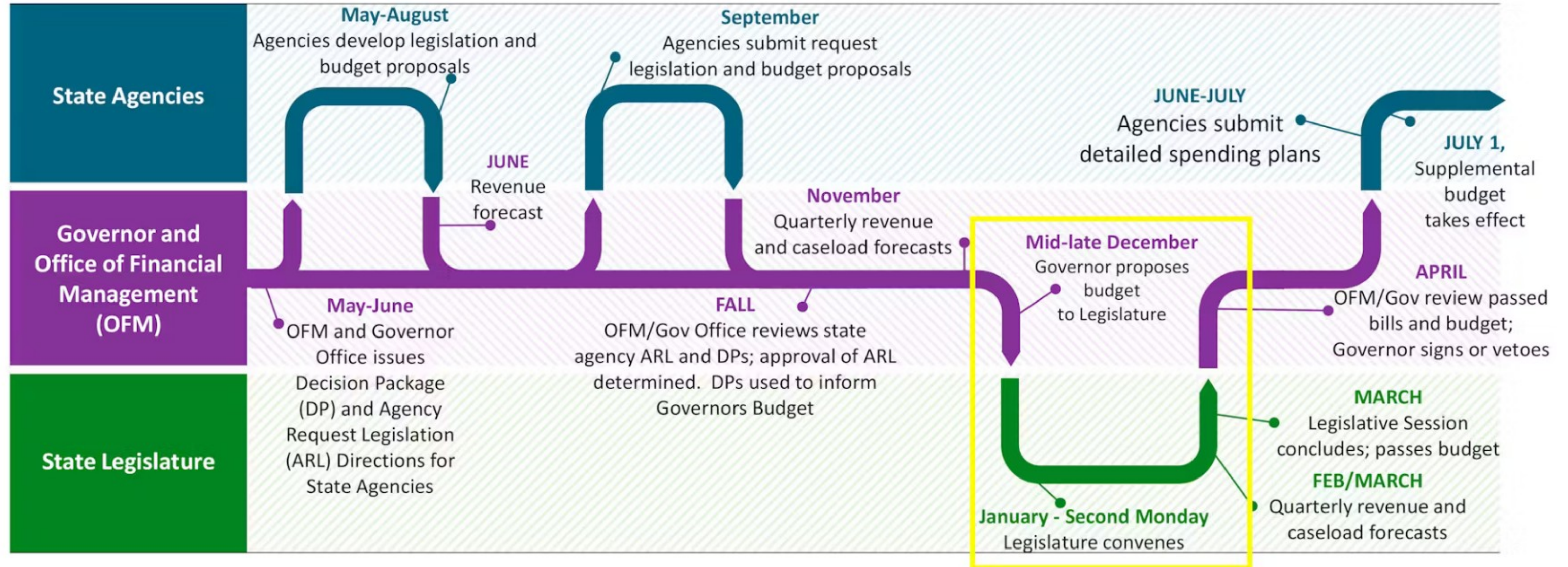


Realities

Supplemental budget year
+
DCYF implementing significant
investments and policy changes
+
Budget/Economic realities
=
Limited scope for requests next session



Supplemental Budget Year Timeline



2024 Legislative Session

- Fiscal Cutoff - February 5, 2024

Pending Milestones

- House of Origin Cutoff – February 13, 2024
- House and Senate Budgets – Mid-February
- DCYF Mid-Legislative Update Webinar – End-February
- Session Ends – March 7



Overview:

DCYF EL/CC Funding Requests Included in Governor's Budget

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ECEAP Entitlement

Decision Package

\$37,039,000

\$10,182,000

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- Create a high-quality integrated B-8 system
- Improve quality and intention of our practice
- Improve quality and availability of provider services

What?

DCYF requires increased investments to continue building a flexible, responsive, and robust system that better supports ECEAP and other early learning providers to meet entitlement.

Why?

- ECEAP is proven to get kids furthest from opportunity ready for kindergarten.
- Enables the next phase of ECEAP expansion toward meeting entitlement in the 2026-27 school year as required by FSKA.

Components:

- **Sustainable ECEAP Slot Rate:** A 6 ~~19~~% increase in School Day ECEAP slot rates and a 10 ~~28~~% increase in Working Day ECEAP slot rates to reach the full rate increase recommended in the ECEAP Cost Study
- ~~Expansion of Slots:~~ 200 School Day and 50 Working Day slots in addition to the 500 School Day slots already allocated in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget
- ~~Quality Supports Funding:~~ Funding to cover quality requirements related to expanding slots

Transition to Kindergarten Coordinated Recruitment and Enrollment

Decision Package

\$1,357,000

\$1,357,000

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity
- Create a high-quality integrated B-8 system
- Improve quality and intention of our practice

What?

This package will create a collaborative system of supports that includes integrated resources at the state, regional, and local partnership levels to coordinate the enrollment of early learning options in local communities.

Why?

- Currently families struggle to consistently find available services that best meet their needs because there is not a coordinated system in place to capture up-to-date options that list all programming availability.
- To meet the requirements in Coordinated Recruitment and Enrollment (CRE) with OSPI as required in 2HSB 1550 (2023) Transition to Kindergarten
- To support families in increasing access to inclusive Pre-K programming that meets identified needs and ensures consistent and informed parent choices.

Components:

- DCYF and OSPI will co-convene a statewide steering committee with representation from key state partners to determine the details of the structured approach to serving children and families in the programming they qualify for.
- Funding will be added to an existing contract with a key state partner to staff this work at the state and regional offices.

✓ Fully Funded 

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers

Agency Request Legislation
\$4,185,000
\$4,401,000

DCYF Strategic Priority Alignment

- Create a high-quality B-8 system

✓ Fully Funded + ARL Approved 

What?

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 eligible infants and toddlers.

Why?

- Current law limits DCYF and local ESIT provider agencies from counting eligible children for the full number of months they receive services.
- If this proposal is funded, ESIT providers will receive payment for the true amount of services they provide to eligible children and families.

Components Include:

- A request 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".



Relevant Other Agency Investments

State Board of Community and Technical Colleges

- **Workforce Education Investment Fund - \$2.4M**
 - Funding for community college staff to recruit, advise, and support Early Achievers scholars completing their early childhood qualifications.

Early Learning – Bills Still Moving

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Description
<u>SSB 6038</u>	Child care tax preference	Reducing the costs associated with providing child care by providing a tax exemption and waives DCYF initial and annual licensing fees.
<u>SSB 5774</u>	Fingerprint Background Check	Increasing the capacity to conduct timely fingerprint-based background checks for prospective child care employees and other programs.
<u>SHB 1945</u>	Food assistance access	Adds federal or state food assistance as income eligible for WCCC, ECEAP, and Early ECEAP.
<u>SHB 2124</u>	Child care program eligibility	Supporting and expanding access to child care and early learning programs by expanding WCCC approved activities.
<u>SHB 2322</u>	Child care/tax preferences	Creating a tax preference child care requirement.



Early Learning - Bills

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Description
<u>SHB 1916</u>	Funding for the early support for infants and toddlers program	Adjusts funding eligibility criteria to reflect a child is 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.
<u>SHB 2195</u>	Early learning facilities (ELF)	Removes award limits for pre-construction, includes translation services as an allowable cost, project priorities, and addresses grant and loan program funding for the Ruth LeCocq Kagi early learning facilities development account.
<u>HB 2111</u>	Reorg subsidized child care	This bill reorganizes several RCW pertaining to Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) Eligibility. These changes do not change the eligibility or requirements impacting WCCC.



THANK YOU

Melissa Cheesman

Melissa.cheesman@dcyf.wa.gov



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Thank you

Cost of Quality Care Rate Model Recommendations and Study

DCYF Federal Initiatives and Collaboration Administrator Matt Judge

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Cost of Quality Care Rate Model and Study

Matt Judge, Federal Initiatives and
Collaboration Administrator

February 6, 2024



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Today

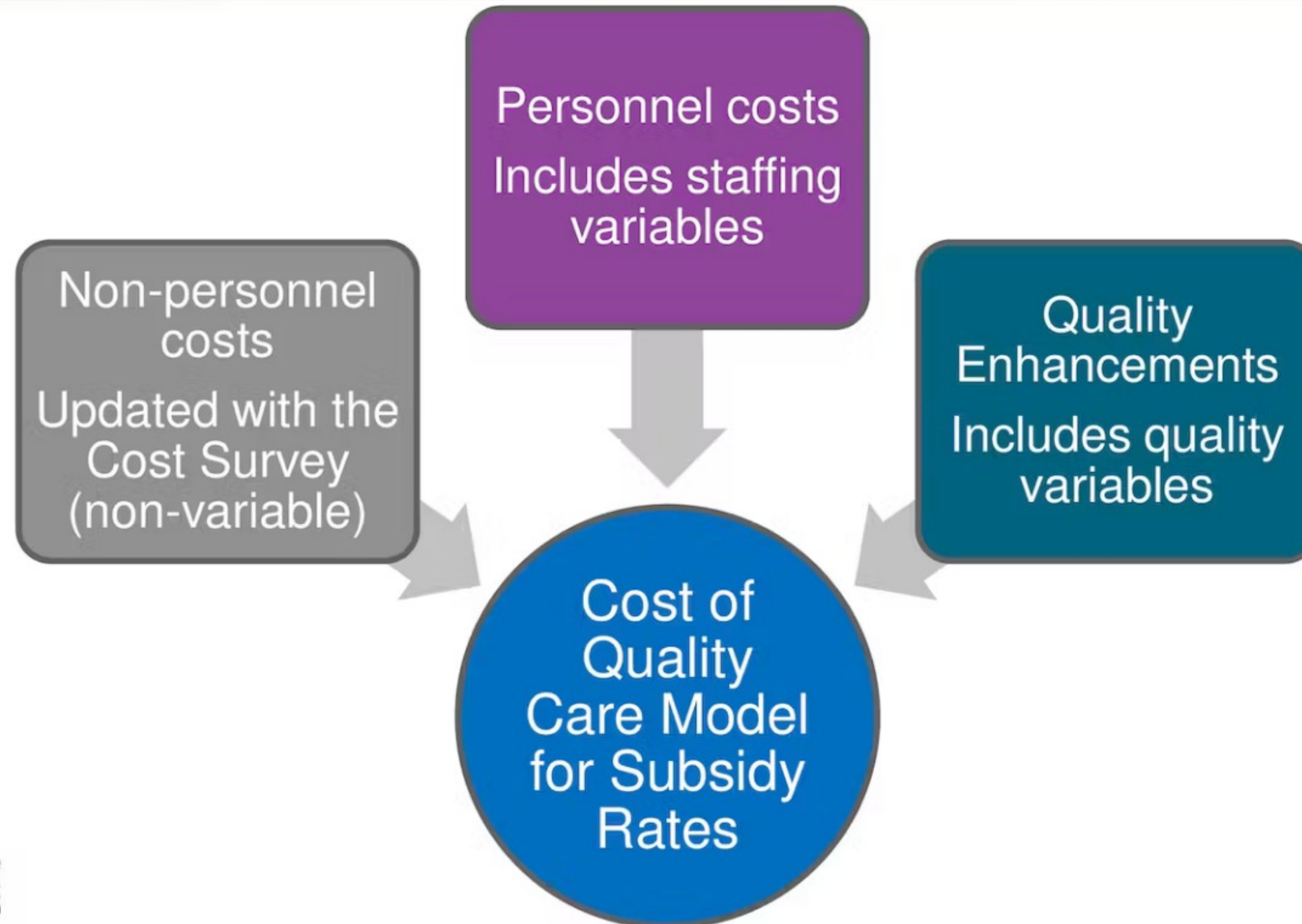
- Update regarding Cost of Quality Care Rate Model work and recommendations
- Update regarding Cost of Quality Care Study
- Feedback/advice on study outreach



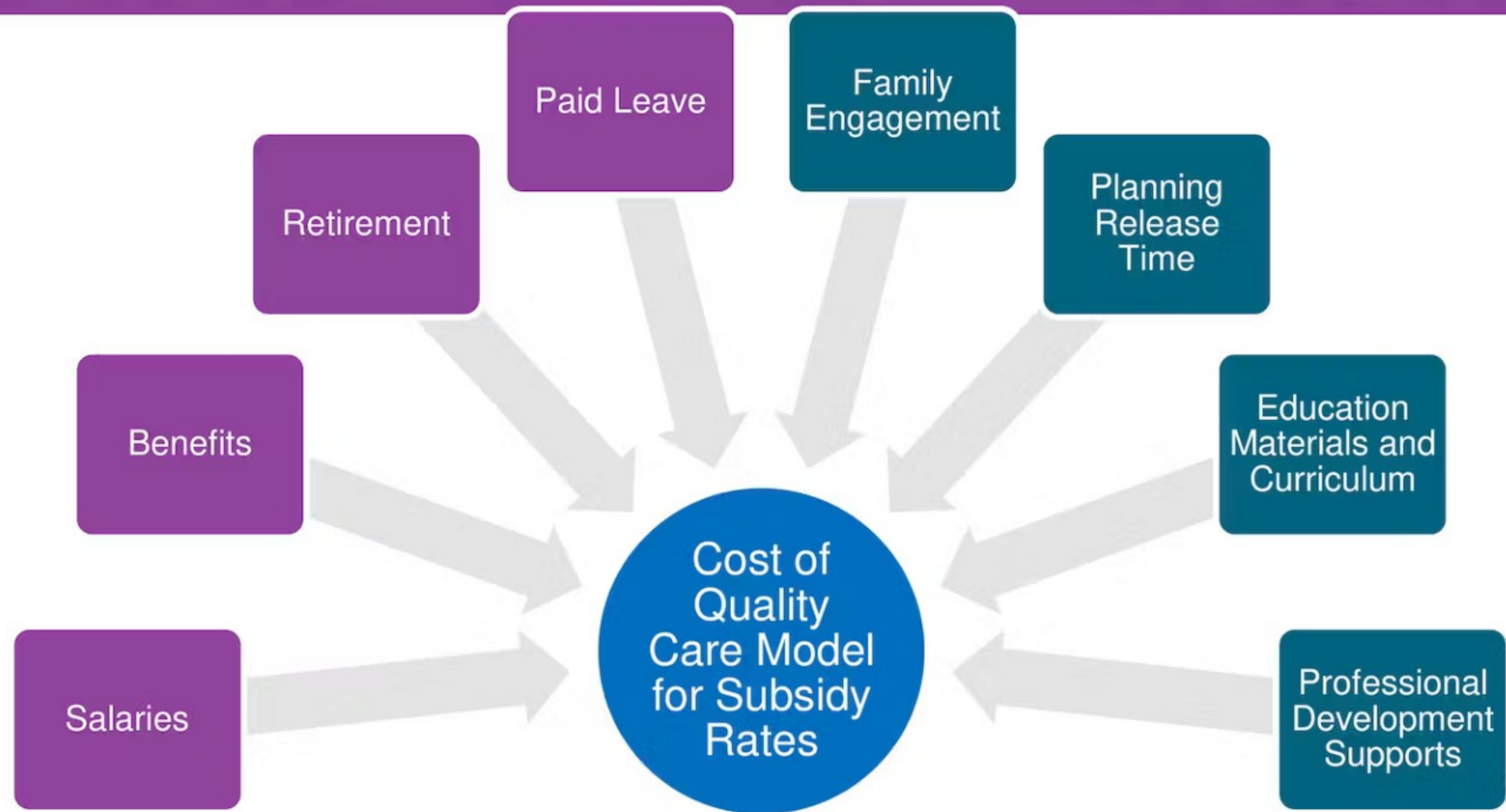
Background

- Child care is essential to Washington's economy, self-sufficiency, child outcomes
- Child Care Collaborative Task Force - stabilize child care, support continued economic recovery, pay providers based on the cost of quality care.
- Fair Start for Kids Act – 2021 – accessibility and affordability, Cost of Quality Care Model
- 2021-2023, 2023-2025 CBA with SEIU 925- Cost of Care rate enhancements.
- 2023 Early Educator Design Team – Cost of Quality Care recommendations
- 2025-2027: Cost of Quality Care, WCCC Eligibility Expansion and ECEAP Entitlement

Cost of Quality Care Calculator Categories

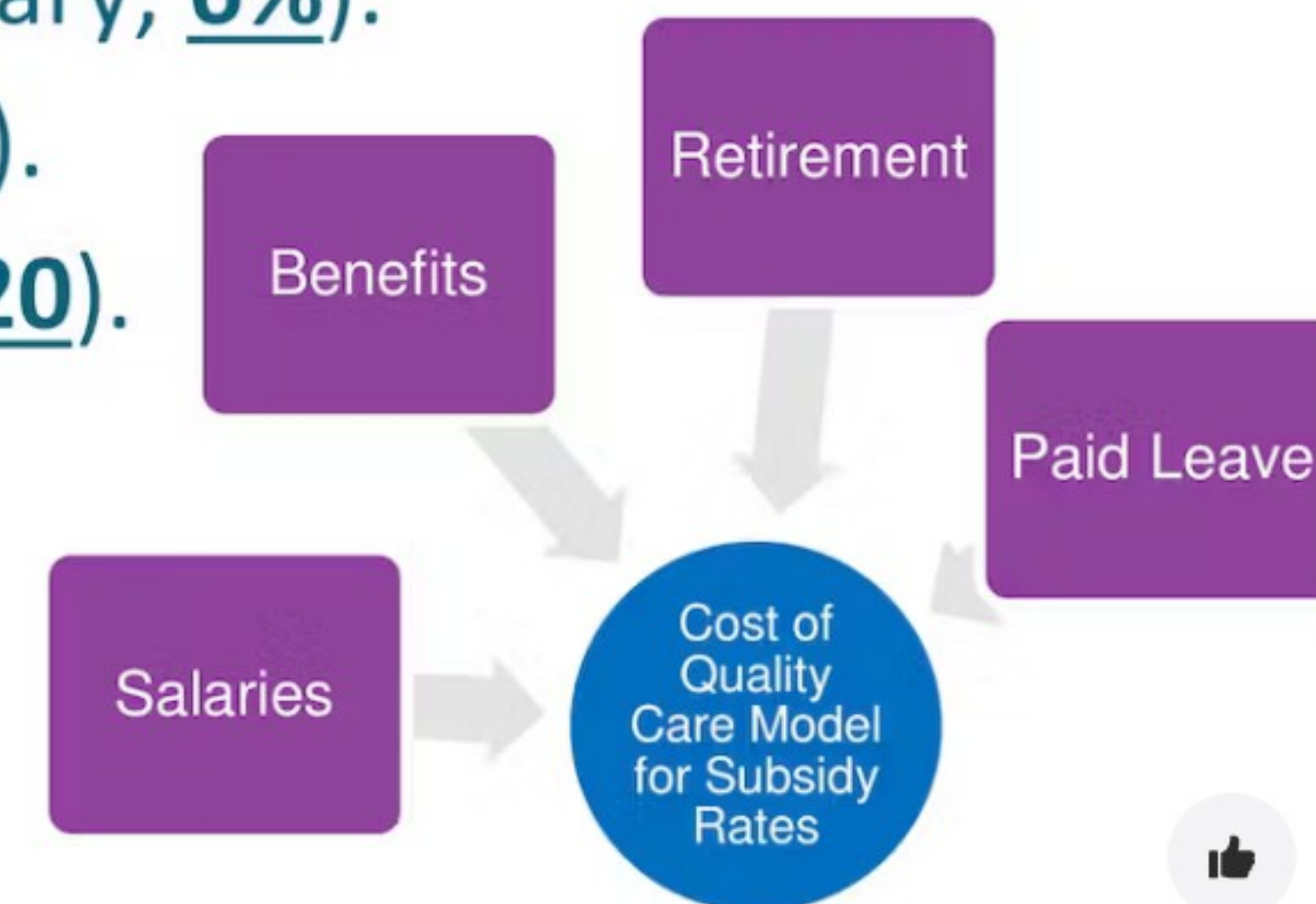


Cost of Quality Care Calculator Variables



Personnel Costs

- 5 Levers for personnel costs: (Design Team recommendation in **Bold**).
 - Salary (Current, ideal, Compensation Technical Work Group, **MIT Cost of Living**, K12 parity).
 - Benefits (\$0, \$3k, \$6k, **\$9k** per employee per year).
 - Employer sponsored retirement (a percent of base salary, **6%**).
 - Paid sick says (any number per employee per year, **20**).
 - Paid leave days (any number per employee per year, **20**).



Early Educator Design Team

- DCYF has partnered with CCA of WA's Early Educator Design Team to:
 - Develop variable recommendations that drive the costs used in the calculator.
 - Recommend new rate regions that better reflect cost of living.
- Consistent themes shared during the design team meetings include:
 - Providers must have a living wage and benefit package to attract and retain staff.
 - Providers deserve respect for the important work they do.

Personnel Costs Salary and Benefit Rationale

Design Team's Rationale Salary:

- Current low wages contribute to staff turnover and burnout which impacts availability of quality care.
- True Cost of Quality Child Care in Washington report also recommends adopting the MIT Living Wage Standard as the salary assumption for subsidy base rates.
- Using the MIT living wage scale aligns salary cost projections with real data about what constitutes a living wage across the state.
- The 2023 Proviso requires DCYF to explore paying providers a living wage.

Personnel Costs Salary and Benefit Rationale

Design Team's Rationale Salary:

- Adequate sick and vacation leave is essential to reduce burnout and retain staff. COVID-19 can result in significant sick time for staff.
- Retirement benefits are a critical component of early educator economic security.
- Many early educators lack essential health and life insurance due to cost. The assumed cost of \$9,000 per employee would be an improvement but even that may not reflect the true cost.

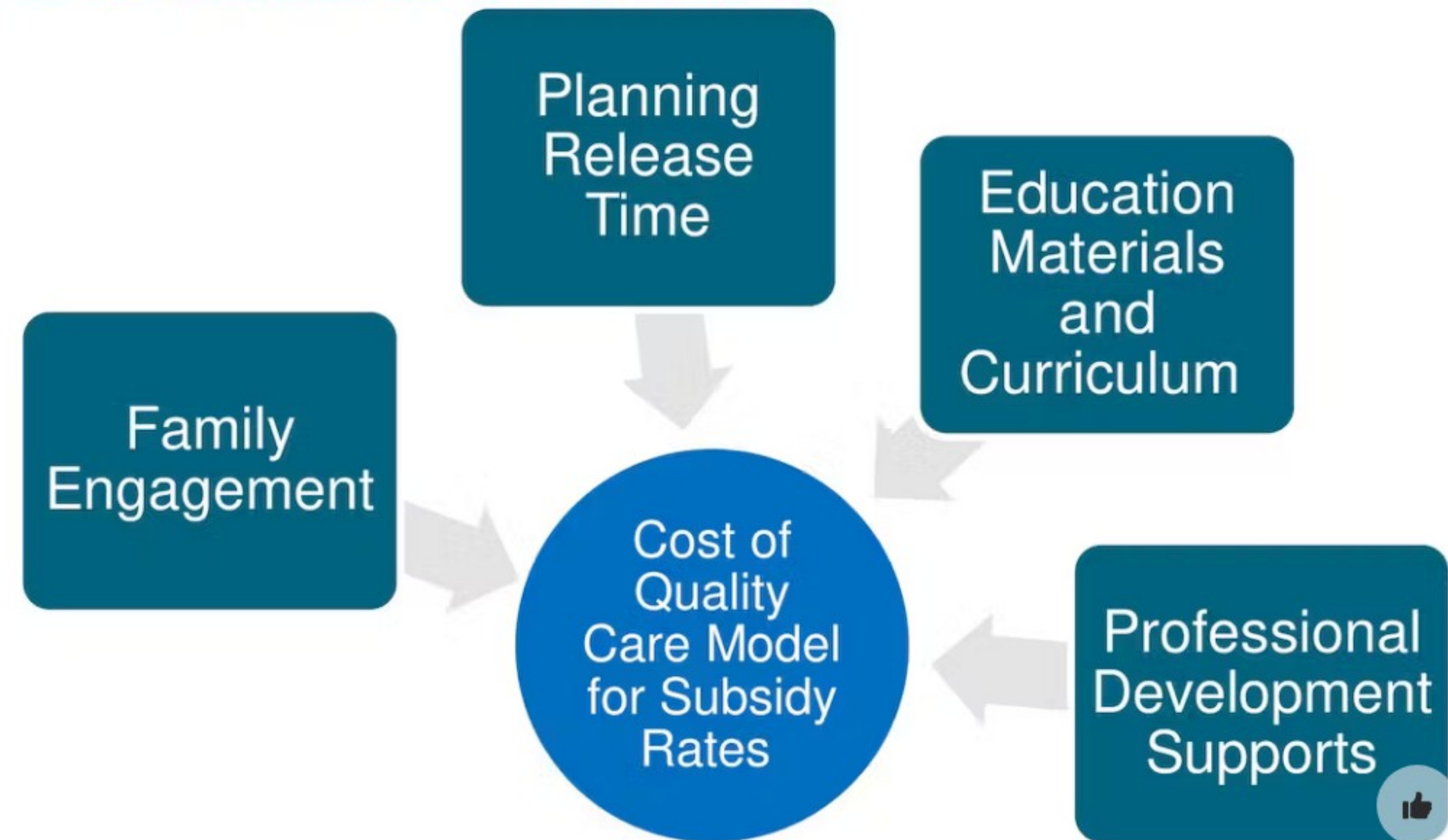
MIT Living Wage Table in the 2022 Cost Calculator

Table A4: MIT Living Wage salaries used in model

	Central WA	Eastern WA	King & Pierce	Northwest WA	Olympic Peninsula	Southwest WA
Program Director	\$85,245	\$86,041	\$106,257	\$96,248	\$91,075	\$90,857
Assistant Director	\$70,451	\$71,108	\$87,816	\$79,544	\$75,268	\$75,088
Admin Assistant	\$44,420	\$44,835	\$55,369	\$50,154	\$47,458	\$47,344
Lead Teacher	\$57,746	\$58,286	\$71,980	\$65,200	\$61,695	\$61,548
Assistant Teacher	\$44,420	\$44,835	\$55,369	\$50,154	\$47,458	\$47,344
Aide/Floater	\$44,420	\$44,835	\$55,369	\$50,154	\$47,458	\$47,344
FCC Provider/Owner	\$73,702	\$75,164	\$91,695	\$84,133	\$78,881	\$78,995
FCC Assistant Teacher	\$44,420	\$44,835	\$55,369	\$50,154	\$47,458	\$47,344

Quality Enhancements

- There are 4 levers for quality enhancements with the bulk of the costs coming by way of increased staffing to cover time dedicated to the activities.



Quality Enhancements

- 4 Levers for Quality Enhancements (Design Team recommendations in **Bold**)
 - Training and professional development hours per year (10 hours, 15 hours, **20 hours.**)
 - Educational materials (\$0, \$50 per child/year, \$75 per child/year, **\$100 per child/year.**)
 - Family engagement (1 conference, 2 conferences, 3 conferences, **3 conferences and staffing for family engagement specialist**)
 - Floater staff to support classroom needs - Planning release time –
 - Centers: (0 hours, 8 hours, **16 hours,** 24 hours)
 - Homes: (0 hours, **part-time assistant,** full-time assistant)

Quality Enhancements Rationale

Design team rationale:

- Early educator professional development activities support skills/engagement with the professional community.
- Quality child assessment tools and curriculum support high quality care and effective family engagement.
- Conducting family conferences can push teachers into overtime. We need staff capacity to support release time for conferences.
- Family engagement is an important component of high-quality care and we want to do more. A dedicated family engagement specialist would allow programs to engage with families more deeply
- Planning time supports high quality care but current resource limits mean this often happens off the clock.

How would this impact rates?

- Most recent data is from 2022 and is being refreshed
- 2022 data bases geography on Child Care Aware regions
- Once DCYF has fresh data we will determine costs of these recommendations
- Rough estimates indicate a rate increase 65% above current rates

Recommended Rate Regions

- The Early Educator Design Team recommends using a State Cost of Living Index (COLI) by county to create 6 rate regions lumped by COLI
- Western Washington University (WWU) provides the COLI data
- Area Median Income and Urban/Suburban designations do not correlate with COLI
- See county chart - [County Grouping Options COLI with potential groupings](#)

Sample Rate Grouping Map



COLI Value of 100 is state average, below 100 means cost of living in that area is less than average, above 100 means cost of living in that area is higher.

County Group "A" (COLI of 138.8) (King)

County Group "B" (COLI of 130.9) (Snohomish)

County Group "C" (COLI range of 110.9-118.7) (Lavender)

County Group "D" (COLI range of 103.6-109.8) (Purple)

County Group "E" (COLI range of 92.9-99.3) (Green)

County Group "F" (COLI range of 86.9-92.1) (Grey)

What is Next?

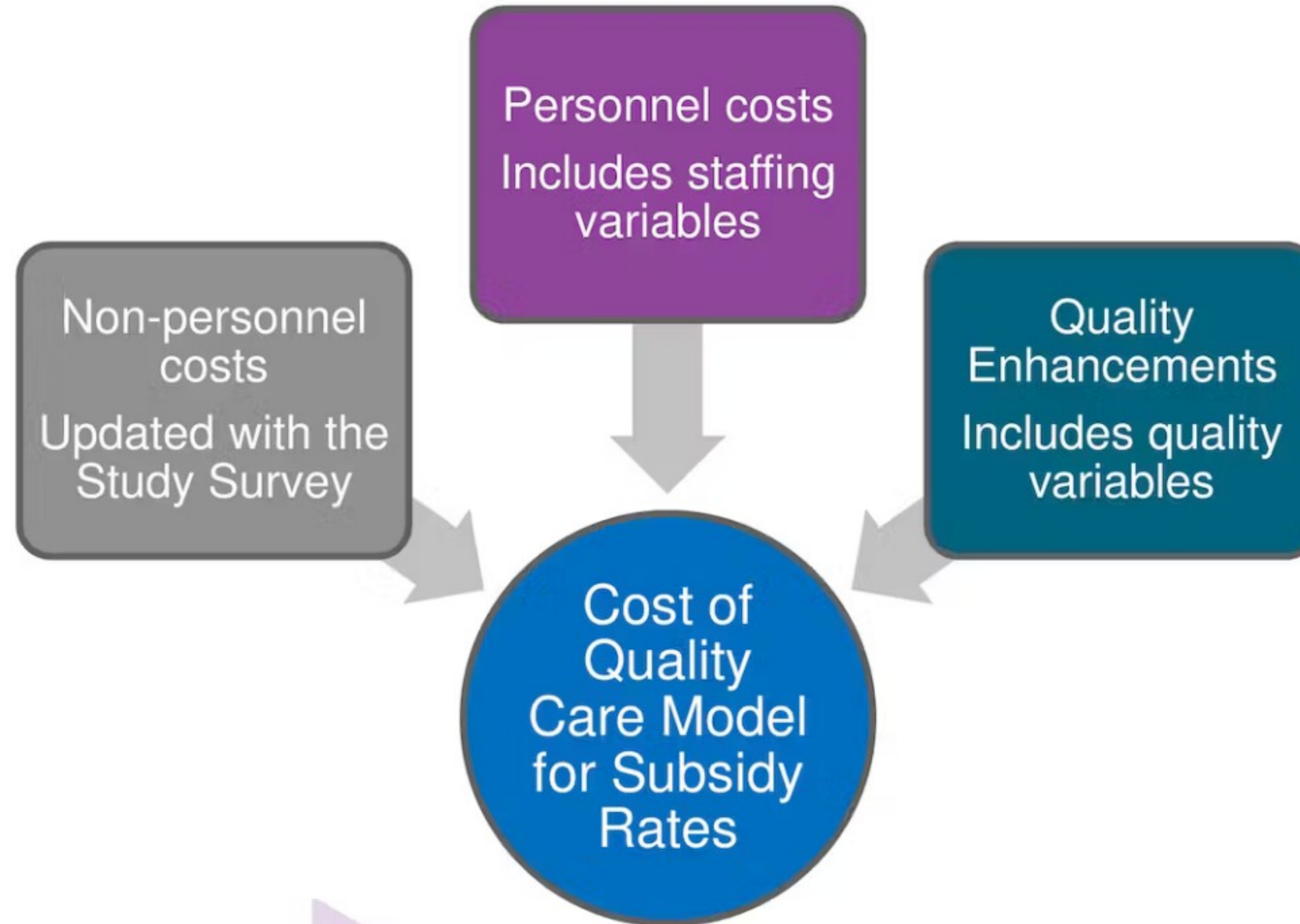
- Western Washington University completes the Cost of Quality Care Rate Study and updates the Cost of Quality Care Calculators.
- DCYF develops a Decision Package based on the new Cost of Quality Care data for the 2025 Session.

Cost of Quality Care Study

Background

- To date, DCYF set Subsidy base rates according to rates providers charge in the private market as indicated by the Market Rate Survey
- DCYF is moving to an alternative methodology based on the cost of care and has received federal approval
- A Cost of Quality Care study supplies data needed to base rates on cost
- The study was previously conducted in 2022; 2024 study updates the data with a focus on fixed costs

Study Goal: Update Fixed Costs Data



Study Progress To Date

- Goal: 2,000 responses
- WWU deployed Survey and sent flyers 1/8
- Sent reminder emails (1/18 and 2/1) and postcards (1/19)
- Began calling providers yet to respond 1/24
- DCYF sent an email reminder on 1/26
- 941 completed and 745 in process as of 1/26



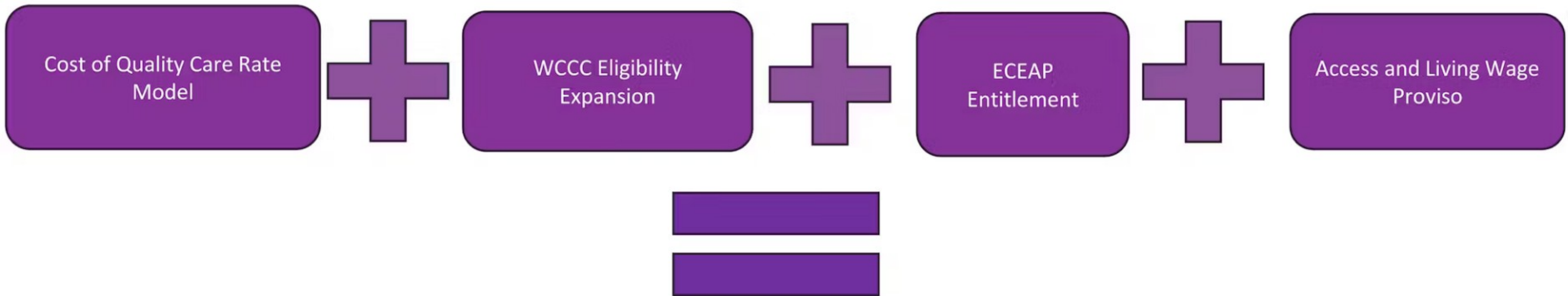
Cost Study Next Steps

- Second postcard mailing this week
- Second round of phone call reminders 2/12
- Survey closes 3/1
- Incentives disbursed 3/8
- DCYF incorporates survey data into Rate Calculators in Spring

Questions for Your Feedback

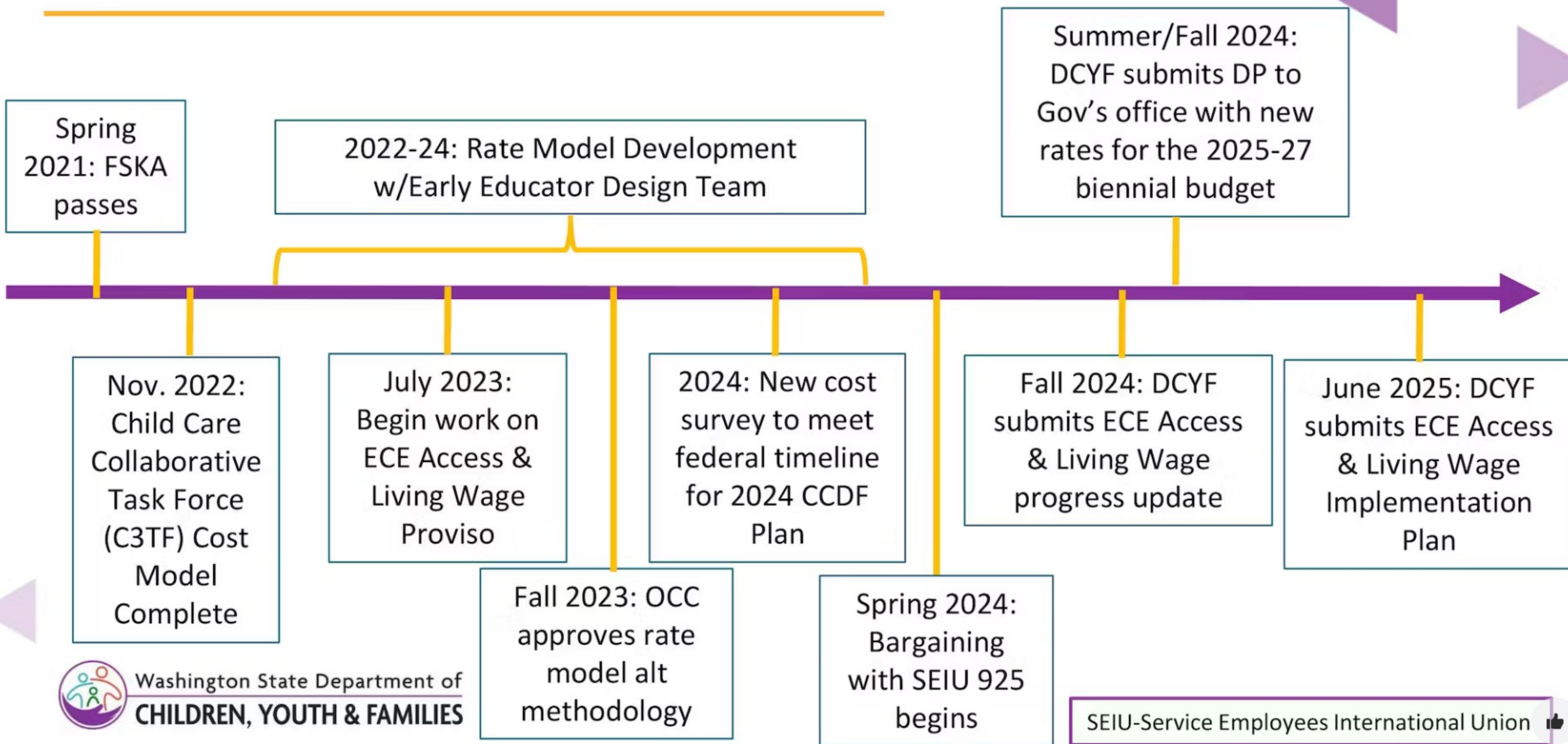
- If you encountered any issues in taking the survey, what were they?
- If you have suggestions for additional study outreach in the final stretch, what are they?
- How can DCYF support providers in spreading the word about the survey to those who haven't completed it yet?

Adding it All Up for 2025-27 and beyond



An integrated, mixed-delivery system of affordable, high-quality early care and education for ALL of Washington's children, birth to twelve years old.

Timeline



DISCUSSION

Break

The meeting will resume at Noon



DCYF Temporary Licensing Subcommittee (TLS) Recommendation Response

DCYF's Senior Childcare Administrator Travis Hansen,
Director of Early Care and Education Hunter Xtaba and
Assistant Secretary of Licensing Ruben Reeves

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DCYF Agency Response to ELAC Provider Supports Recommendations

Throughout 2023, DCYF continued partnering on a consistent quarterly basis with ELAC and Provider Supports regarding the Recommendations.

Today we will:

- Celebrate where improvements have been made in response to the TLS Recommendations.
- Inform ELAC and Provider Supports of the longer-term improvements that DCYF is committed to implementing, based on and related to the Recommendations, and
- Clarify which recommendations are not able to move forward, and why.

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Accomplishments

Recommendations

- *There should be a process where providers who don't speak any of those specified languages (English, Spanish, and Somali) can request translated information and documents in their preferred language.*
- *Schedule quarterly meetings between the Licensing Division, including leadership, and Washington State providers. These meetings should be an opportunity for providers to inform DCYF on what they are facing in the child care sector and include a question and answer session with concrete follow-through on unanswered questions.*

Responses

- As of September 2023, DCYF agrees that language access is an area for improvement and partnership. Licensing is also hiring multilingual licensors, and facilitating cross-unit support when there is a need. Licensing Division specifically has recently drafted a cover letter with instructions in 8 languages to be sent with legal letters and is exploring additional ways to make these instructions available at multiple points in the licensing and monitoring processes.
- Assistant Secretary of Licensing, Ruben Reeves, and Assistant Secretary of Early Learning, Nicole Rose have been collecting feedback from ELAC and PS to help inform stronger engagement with Licensing and the Early Learning Division and will be consistently engaging with ELAC and the PS subcommittee. Licensing hired an additional area administrator for King Co., which creates a better regional representation and regional conversations. Regional conversations will also take place at timing appropriate for regional partners. We are also exploring outreach and support sessions across all regions.



Accomplishments

Recommendations

- Providers should get a report of what feedback influenced policy decisions, funding requests, and programmatic decisions so that they can see how their hard work is affecting DCYF policy.
- Look at all of the Early Achievers requirements with an equity lens.

Responses

- Licensing is working with the DCYF community engagement office and across units within program teams to provide feedback loops often, such as this one. The Early Learning Division has adopted a human-centered design for policy changes which includes consistent feedback with contributing stakeholders, ally organizations and advisory groups. Examples include equity grants and the Early Educator Design Team providing recommendations on the Department's Cost of Care Quality Model. We are committed to providing more information to our advisory groups on feedback that we are able to act upon, or the reason why we haven't yet or can't act upon other guidance or suggestions, on topics as requested.
- The Early Achievers revision process brought the latest in-depth review of Early Achievers with an equity lens and redesigned the way providers interact with the Early Achievers quality rating cycle. This includes a provider-led approach to sharing about their early care and education environment, as well as opportunities to build quality over time. DCYF has incorporated the use of the Racial Equity and Social Justice framework over the years and used that in the revisions process as well. This work is ongoing.



Commitments

Recommendations

- Offer a survey so that providers can review the licensor after the licensing visit.
- Create a stipend program for mentor organizations to assist new providers. Basic health and safety needs should be in place upon opening a new center (First Aid/CPR, Food Handler Card, background checks).
- DCYF also needs to make funding more equitable between regions, as identified in the Cost of Quality Care study commissioned by the Legislature through the Child Care Collaborative Task Force.

Responses

- Licensing agrees but will need time to devote staff capacity to developing the survey, as well as the processes for analyzing and utilizing the information when gathered. This is being actively explored and initially developed, with diligence about what info is gathered and how to respond consistently across LD.
- Giving funding limitations, DCYF's current mentorship supports are limited to family home providers only, based on funding stream. DCYF has a unique opportunity through our PDG grant to explore some of these possibilities, watch for more to come on informing this approach.
- DCYF is currently in the process of examining the rate regions with the Early Educator Design team as part of the recommendations to move to a Cost of Quality Care Rate Model as required under RCW 43.216.749. DCYF plans to include the recommendations in a Decision Package for the January 2025 legislation session.



Clarifications

Recommendations

- Providers should be able to request a hard copy of the Child Care and Early Learning Licensing Guidebook in English, Spanish, Somali, Arabic, Chinese (simplified), and Russian, free of charge for each classroom in the program and administration.
- Use Quality Improvement funds to support the Early Achievers Review Process and develop a different avenue to demonstrate quality child care to receive subsidy, not Early Achievers as the only option.
- To incentivize all providers to accept WCCC subsidies, DCYF should increase subsidy payments to 100% now and identify a goal for family participation.

Responses

- The Guidebook is regularly updated online to be current with any updates to WAC or additional resources. Licensing does have concerns that because the Guidebook is updated routinely, the cost and need to send updated version would be ongoing and/or we may end up with outdated versions being used by Providers. Printing every year to accommodate updates is not within the budget.
- Providers receive Quality Improvement Awards once they have completed the ratings process. Needs Based Grants and the 2% tiered reimbursement prior to rating are meant as resources to support providers in readying for rating. RCW 43.216.135 Early Start Act put forward requirements around Early Achievers participation and rating in order for a provider to receive subsidy payments. Early Achievers revisions were informed by provider feedback, using a racial equity lens. The revised process measures the same quality standards and allows participants more ways to demonstrate and **highlight quality** in their program and get **strengths-based reflective feedback**.
- Child care provider base rates are currently paid at the 85th percentile of the 2021 market rate survey. Additional funding and authorization is needed to pay providers a higher rate. DCYF is currently in the process of examining rates with the Early Educator Design team as part of the recommendations to move to a Cost of Quality Care Rate Model as required under RCW 43.216.749. We are planning to include our recommendations to the Decision Packages for the January 2025 legislation session.





DCYF Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ)

DCYF's Deputy Secretary of Operations Frank Ordway and
Interim Director of Racial Equity and Social Justice Alice Coil

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About the Office of Racial Equity & Social Justice (ORESJ)

Early Learning Advisory Council Meeting
February 6, 2024



Opening Remarks

Frank Ordway
Deputy Secretary









Supporting + Protecting Children, Youth, and Families



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OFFICE OF EQUITY



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Equity and Justice for ALL

The Office of Equity is working to create a Washington State where everyone has full access to the opportunities, power, and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential, for the next seven generations and beyond.





INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN WASHINGTON STATE GOVERNMENT



Requiring formal education as a default is an inequitable hiring practice. Organizations cannot claim to promote diversity, inclusion, and equality when they require a college degree for non-specialized positions.





What might be included in the Governor's Executive Order to Increase employment Opportunities in State Government:

- Improve the On-Line Recruiting System for collection, reporting and tracking of demographic data,
- Improve access to state employment with competency-based qualifications and remove degrees as required qualification unless specified by law or industry standard,
- Improve recruitment and hiring processes with guidelines, toolkit, and training.

DCYF is committed to eliminating racial disproportionalities and advancing racial equity in our systems, workforce, programs, and services . *DCYF Policy 6.01*



ORESJ Staff



CAROL BYERS
(SHE/HER/HERS)

**EQUITY & COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS ADMINISTRATOR**



JAZZY JAMES
(SHE/HER/THEY)

**SENIOR RACIAL EQUITY
& SOCIAL JUSTICE SPECIALIST**



Alice Coil
(SHE/HER/HERS)

Interim Director



ALETA MAHONE
(SHE/HER/HERS)

**ORESJ ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT**



RAY SORIANO
(HE/HIM/HIS)

**RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL
JUSTICE ADMINISTRATOR**



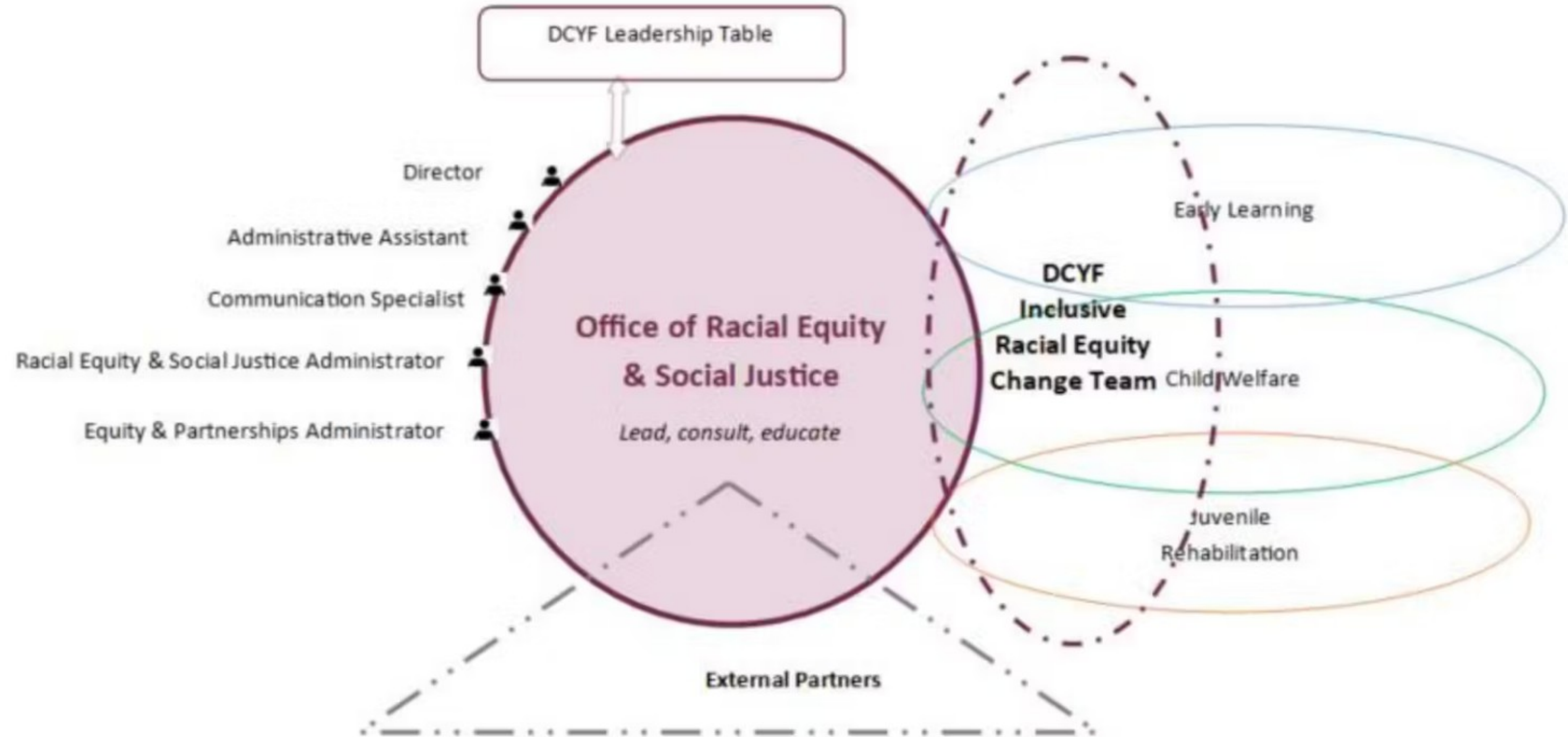
Our Purpose

Provide the vision, expertise, and accountability mechanisms necessary to make progress on DCYF's commitment to advance racial equity and reduce the impact of racial disproportionality.

ORESJ takes an *intersectional* approach, leading with race.



ORESJ Functional Chart



ORESJ engages across DCYF and in our communities

- Supporting and advising all DCYF Divisions (Early Learning, Licensing, Child Welfare, Juvenile Rehabilitation) in regions across the state
- Leadership in DCYF
- Workforce Development
- Partnerships – internal/external
- Collaboration with DCYF's Office of Tribal Relations and the WA State Office of Equity.



DCYF is one component of a complex system that contributes to inequity.



Identify areas where DCYF has the power, influence, and responsibility to enact disruptive and transformative changes.

In what ways is DCYF contributing to or perpetuating racial disproportionalities?

Fix the System
Not the Child



What would reducing the impact of disproportionalities look like at DCYF?

Who are the partners outside of DCYF that have a role to play in reducing the impact of disproportionalities?



ORESJ's collaboration with Early Learning

- Supporting Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA) activities and efforts
- Supporting the Early Learning workforce through advising, participation in workgroups, and professional development
- Promoting inclusive practices and accessibility
- Supporting and leading systems change



ORESJ Lunch & Learn



<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/black-history-month-2024>

Thursday, 2/22/2024

12- 1 PM, webinar



<https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/2024-whm-theme>

Thursday, 3/21/2024

12- 1 PM, webinar



Ways that you can help advance racial equity & social justice in your DCYF role

- Learn about how disproportionality and disparities impact the children, youth & families we serve
- Help create an inclusive and just work environment, where people belong
- Become aware of your own biases and how it affects your work
- Engage in training and ongoing conversations to advance racial equity and social justice



Any questions?



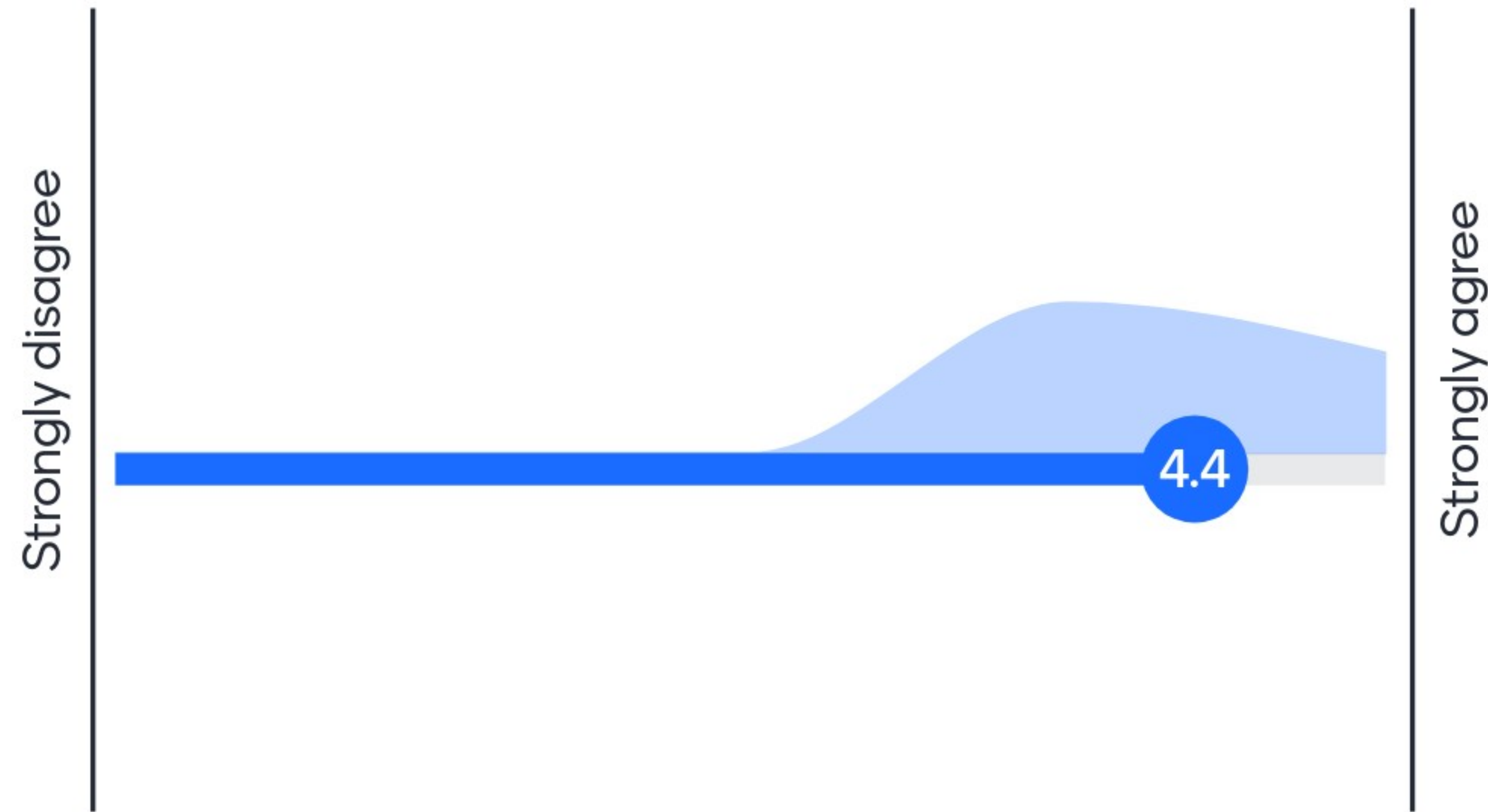
Thank you!

The Office of Racial Equity & Social Justice

dcyf.racialequityandsocialjustice@dcyf.wa.gov



Overall, I felt today's meeting was productive and a good use of my time.



Meeting Follow Up & Closing Remarks
Thank you for your participation today!

Next Meetings:

Report Development – March 5, 2024

Public Meeting – April 9, 2024

