



Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Meeting
February 6, 2024

State Agency and Partner Updates

Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Updates

Early Childhood Equity Grant Application Available Soon

The [Fair Start for Kids Act](#) directs DCYF to distribute Early Childhood Equity Grants to eligible applicants to help make Washington's early learning system more inclusive and equitable.

The Early Childhood Equity Grant application will be **available soon**. DCYF will notify providers by email when the application is available. DCYF will offer an application preview, so providers have extra time to see the application questions and plan their responses.

For more information, and to preview the application, visit the [DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant webpage](#).

Cost of Care Study

DCYF has partnered with Western Washington University (WWU) to conduct the Cost of Care Study. This study will gather financial and programmatic information from Washington state child care providers. DCYF will use this data to develop a model for Working Connections Child Care reimbursement, based on the financial support providers need, rather than market rates, to deliver high quality child care.

Your participation is very important! Please [click here](#) to access the survey. The survey will remain open through February and participating providers will receive a \$100 Amazon gift card, available when the survey period ends.

If you have questions, contact cebr@wwu.edu, or call (360) 650-3909.

Complex Needs Training Available

DCYF, in partnership with the University of Washington (UW) Haring Center, will offer training to support child care workers who care for children with complex needs. These trainings will focus on deepening the provider's knowledge in several areas related to individualizing instruction and supporting social-emotional learning.

Training sessions are free to providers. They will be held via Zoom. Training sessions are available in English and Spanish. Please see the flyer ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) to learn about the topics, dates, and to access the registration links.

If you have questions, contact Phoebe Yeung at pcyeung@uw.edu.

January is National Radon Action Month

Did you know that winter is the best time to test your child care facility for radon? Radon is a naturally occurring gas that comes from soil and rocks. When radon finds its way into your facility, it can collect and build up to unhealthy levels. Over time, exposure to unhealthy levels of radon can cause lung cancer. You can't see, smell, taste or touch radon, so the only way you know if you have it is to test.

The Washington State Department of Health is currently offering a limited supply of FREE radon test kits. To sign up for a free kit: [Radon Test Kit Access Form | Washington State Department of Health](#)
Want more info? Check out this website [Radon | Washington State Department of Health](#) or reach out to doh.radon@doh.wa.gov or wbsp@doh.wa.gov

Additional State Agency/Partner Updates

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

For more information, please contact Ryan Guzman at Ryan.Guzman@k12.wa.us

OSEP 2023 Early Childhood Transition Questions and Answers - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2023 Early Childhood Transition Questions and Answers document ([2023 EC Transition Q&A](#)) incorporates longstanding policy and provides further clarification on early childhood transition requirements for children transitioning from the IDEA Part C early intervention program to the IDEA Part B preschool program. This document updates and supplements OSEP's 2009 Early Childhood Transition Frequently Asked Questions (which addressed transition data reporting questions under State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR)) based on the 2011 IDEA Part C regulations. It also incorporates guidance from OSEP's 2011 Letter to Infants and Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) and National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), as well as OSEP's 2023 Letter to Nix.

OSEP POLICY STATEMENT: Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs (November 28, 2023) - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

All young children with disabilities should have access to high-quality inclusive early childhood programs that provide individualized and appropriate support so they can fully participate alongside their peers without disabilities, meet high expectations, and achieve their full potential. The responsibility to ensure that young children with disabilities and their families are included in high-quality early childhood programs is shared by federal, state, and local governments, early childhood systems, early childhood programs and providers, local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools. This [policy statement](#) from the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) (the Departments) builds upon our earlier 2015 policy statement with renewed commitment and urgency as children with disabilities continue to face significant barriers accessing and participating in inclusive early childhood programs.

Critical Questions for Addressing Racial Equity in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education

A new resource from the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) helps states examine equity issues when providing early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE) services. [Critical Questions for Addressing Racial Equity in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education](#) are policy and programmatic questions that help states identify disparities in their service delivery system. Many of the questions are also relevant at the local level. They are divided into these three sections: child and family questions; practitioner questions; and early intervention

service (EIS) program and lead education agency (LEA) questions. The answers to the questions support the long-term goal of equitable access, services and supports, and positive outcomes for all young children and their families, especially the historically underserved.

Think Inclusive Podcast: Inclusion in Early Childhood Education with OSEP Director Valerie Williams

Valerie Williams, Director of OSEP, discusses the importance of inclusion in early childhood education. She shares a personal story about finding the right preschool for her son with Down syndrome and highlights the need for a mindset shift among educators and administrators. Valerie emphasizes the importance of providing resources and technical assistance to support inclusive practices. She also discusses the current state of inclusive education in different states and the need for implementation and accountability. Listen to the podcast [here](#).

Department of Health (DOH)

For more information, please contact Astrid Newell and Angie Funaiole at astrid.newell@doh.wa.gov and angie.funaiole@doh.wa.gov.

The Universal Developmental Screening (UDS) program continues to roll out the [Strong Start UDS](#) data system statewide. The team is currently working with state and local early care and education (ECE) leaders to prepare for the addition of ECE providers as authorized Strong Start users. Currently, parents/legal guardians and licensed healthcare providers can access and enter screening records of children in their care. Once the system is expanded, ECE providers - with parent permission - will also be able to access and enter screening information. The expanded system will be better equipped to support shared decision making and connection to resources. For more information, contact the UDS program at strongstart@doh.wa.gov.

Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)

For more information please contact Olivia Burley at Olivia.burley@dva.wa.gov

The Department of Defense increased the provider rate cap used to calculate fee assistance for military families receiving childcare from civilian providers to \$1800 per month. Child Care providers interested in being a part of the military's referral and fee assistance system can confirm their eligibility and sign up for the program (Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood/Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS) at www.militarychildcare.com. In December, 1,647 military children in Washington received military fee assistance for childcare from civilian providers.

For more information, please contact Olivia Burley at Olivia.burley@dva.wa.gov

Department of Social and Health Services

For more information, please contact Christian Carvajal at Christian.carvajal@dshs.wa.gov.

No updates to share at this time