

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Date: April 14, 2026

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Regional Coalition Updates

Inland Northwest Early Learning Alliance, Northeast

INWELA continues to serve as a regional convener across the seven-county region advancing cross-sector collaboration to improve access, coordination, and sustainability within the early learning system.

Coordinated Recruitment & Enrollment (CRE) Initiative INWELA remains actively engaged with partners including Spokane Public Schools, Greater Spokane Inc., and Northeast Youth and Family Services to advance the Coordinated Recruitment and Enrollment system. Current efforts are focused on refining shared intake processes, improving family navigation tools, and supporting data-sharing agreements to better identify and connect children to available early learning opportunities. Beta development continues, with provider engagement shaping system functionality and long-term sustainability planning underway.

Child Care Voice & Provider Engagement INWELA continues to convene its Child Care Voice Panel, creating a consistent space for providers to share real-time system impacts, including ongoing concerns related to workforce challenges, licensing inequities, and the expansion of district-operated programs. These conversations are directly informing regional strategy, communications, and alignment with statewide advocacy efforts.

Regional Systems Coordination & Transitions INWELA is navigating recent staffing and partner transitions while maintaining continuity in core initiatives. Efforts remain focused on sustaining partnerships, advancing shared regional priorities, and ensuring continued momentum on collaborative projects such as CRE.

Looking Ahead INWELA is prioritizing:

- Continued development and implementation of the CRE system
- Strengthening provider engagement and shared messaging across mixed-delivery partners
- Supporting regional input into statewide policy and funding strategies
- Expanding cross-sector partnerships to better align early learning with workforce and economic development efforts

For more information, please contact: Colleen Condon, colleen@lilaccityelc.com



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Investing in Children Coalition: Central

In the first quarter of 2026, the Coalition focused on expanding collaboration across the Valley. We began the year with strong momentum, welcoming increased attendance and new connections from school districts throughout the region. As our outreach efforts continue, we are specifically prioritizing deeper engagement and a stronger Yakama Nation presence within the Coalition. Furthermore, in February, we participated in WCFC Advocacy Week, meeting with nearly all legislators from the 14th and 15th districts. These conversations were highly productive, with representatives expressing a genuine interest in continuing their support for early childhood initiatives.

For more information, please contact: Lindsay Bowsell, lindsayb@yakimavalleycf.org

Peninsula Early Learning Coalition

The Peninsulas Early Childhood Coalition (PECC) continues to convene themed monthly meetings aligned with regional priorities.

In February, PECC hosted a Liberatory Design-focused meeting, where members began identifying key internal decision points. This work will continue in April, as PECC advances updates to its charter, advisory and leadership structure, and membership options.

In March, PECC convened a data-focused meeting featuring regional and state data resources, including Black Infant Thrive's Kitsap County report, the State of the Children's North Olympic report, and DCYF's Need & Supply dashboard. PECC is working to strengthen shared understanding of available data, reduce duplicative data collection, and elevate regional data needs.

PECC leadership is also conducting a membership analysis to better understand engagement and identify gaps. Initial findings show that of 300+ email recipients, quarterly approximately 200 open emails, 40 attend meetings, and 20 respond to surveys. Participation spans Kitsap, Jefferson, and Clallam counties, across focus areas and sectors. A deeper gap analysis will follow this spring.

PECC is also partnering with members to support early learning providers. Recent efforts focus on identifying local professional development interests and aligning them with existing training opportunities, while simplifying communication and aggregating rural demand. Looking ahead, PECC is preparing for Provider Appreciation Month in May. The coalition is encouraging partners and community members to recognize child care providers by encouraging simple efforts such as social media posts, local media outreach, family-led thank-you notes, and business-supported discounts.

For more information, please contact: Kimberly Davies Lohman, Kimberly.davies@gmail.com

Southeast (SELC)

The Southeast Early Learning Coalition is running full force with our regional projects, including our work with WA Stem, ECCS, and a local project which aims to study the intersection of healthcare and childcare. Through our work we are engaging new partners across the region, discovering the gaps within our collective resources, and working together to create new resources that would support families with young children. Our next regional coalition meeting will be held on April 21st from 1-2:30 pm if local partners would like to join us.

For more information, please contact: Brittany Hartikainen, brittany@bh-consulting.org

Southwest Washington Early Learning (SWEL)

Over the past two months, the coalition has focused on regional outreach and relationship-building across Southwest Washington, with an emphasis on underserved communities. We are using Bazos survey data to identify gaps and guide site visits to rural and coastal areas, where we are building partnerships with local organizations and providers.

Coalition discussions continue to highlight key challenges, including affordability, workforce sustainability, and regulatory impacts. We have also engaged with elected officials to elevate early learning priorities across the region.

For more information please contact: Debbie Ham, Debbie.ham@selfwa.org

Visions for Early Learning, West Central

Lewis County Early Learning Coalition (ELC):

Lewis County's Early Learning Coalition (ELC) typically meets the 2nd Thursday of each month from 11:30 – 1:00 pm. Contact Juli Jager, lewiscountyelc@gmail.com, coalition lead to get connected.

ELC of Mason County:

The ELC of Mason County typically meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 8:30 – 10:00 am. Contact April Messenger, masoncountyelc@gmail.com, coalition lead to get connected.

Thurston Early Childhood Coalition (TECC):

The Thurston Early Childhood Coalition (TECC) typically meets the 4th Thursday of each month from 9:30 – 11:00 am. Contact Shawn Thurman, thurstonecc@gmail.com, coalition lead to get connected.

Pacific:

Know and Grow, North Pacific County's early learning coalition typically meets the 3rd Monday of each month from 2:00 – 3:30 pm. Contact Rhonda Johnson, knowandgrowpacificco@gmail.com, coalition lead to get connected.

For more information, please contact: Sheila Kavanaugh, kav.consulting231@gmail.com

Washington Communities for Children (WCFC) Updates

Stay in Touch!

Want to learn more about WCFC, be the first to hear updates, or get connected with your local early childhood coalition? Get in touch with us!

- Website: washingtoncfc.org
- Facebook: WashingtonCFC
- Instagram: Washington_cfc

For more information please contact: Rachel Hall, WCFC State Lead, rachelh@first5fundamentals.org

No updates currently from the following coalitions.

Pierce County Early Childhood Network

- For more information please contact: Muriel Herrera-Velasquez muriel@first5fundamentals.org

King County

- For more information, please contact: Logan Endres or Tristen Hall, kcelc@childcare.org

North Central

- For more information please contact: Nancy Spurgeon, nspurgeon49@gmail.com

Northwest

- For more information please contact: Breana Ramos, breana@nwelcoalition.org