



Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Feedback Loop

Date: June 3, 2025

Remarks from DCYF Secretary Tana Senn

- **I know a lot of organizations are working with lawyers individually, but wonder if there is a collective list to refer to?**
 - The [WAISN \(Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network\)](#) is a great resource. The [Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs \(CHA\)](#), is another great resource which has a resource hub broken down by county.
- **Can you share your goals for the remainder of your first 100 days?**
 - Has it been nearly 100 days already? Part of my goals for the remainder of my first 100 days is to continue to strengthen communications, support and service with DCYF staff and providers. As part of that, I will be sharing information and impacts of any new laws and budget cuts as the legislative session concludes at the end of April. As a state, all state agencies are facing budget reductions to help close a \$15 billion budget deficit over the next four years. Even as we anticipate unfortunate news of budget cuts, I do hope to help manage the changes with transparency, empathy, and efficiency.
 - I am also launching a new organizational leadership structure that provides more support to our Assistant Secretaries and Directors and adds transparency to leadership decisions, without adding any new positions. I look forward to continuing to work with the strong leaders in Nicole and Ruben!
- **Can you share the new dynamics between our new DCYF leadership and the Governor's Office new leadership? Would love to hear how new leadership hopes to work together to support children and families in WA State.**
 - I am pleased to say that we have a strong relationship with the Governor's Office. I served on his transition team before I was appointed Secretary and lead his workgroup on child care. We are also pleased that Mary Sprute-Galant, who used to work at DCYF in government relations, is now the Governor's government relations lead on our issues. That relationship is strong.

Early Learning Legislative Update

- **How did DCYF weigh in on each of these bills?**
 - DCYF weighed in on some of the bills depending on their impacts to children, families, and providers and whether certain provisions were deemed implantable.
- **Can you share projected dollar amount savings for each of these program cuts.**



Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

- Please refer to the End-of-Legislative Session Update Webinar from May 14, 2025. You can view the recording here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=200oBx-bAw>
- For a full list of legislative session updates, visit the [Government Affairs webpage](#). Scroll to the bottom of the page and look under “Updates and Webinars.”
- **Regarding Engrossed Senate Bill 5769 (relating to Transition to Kindergarten programs), which outlines priorities for expansion—what does collaboration between DCYF and OSPI on a recommended plan look like?**
 - The bill states that OSPI, in collaboration with DCYF, shall develop a recommended plan for phasing in the transition to kindergarten program. The recommended plan must consider plans for expansion of other state-funded early learning programs including, but not limited to, ECEAP, and prioritize expansion for:
 - Communities with the highest percentage of unmet needs;
 - Child care supply and demand;
 - School districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools with the highest percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch;
 - School districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools with high percentages of students with disabilities; and
 - School districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools with the lowest kindergarten readiness results on the Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills.
 - OSPI will submit a report to the legislature and office of the governor by December 1, 2027, outlining a proposed plan and recommendations for phasing in future TK programs beginning with communities with the highest need. There will be opportunities to bring updates to ELAC, though we don’t yet know what that will look like and the earliest for a joint conversation with ELAC may be fall.

Fair Start for Kids Act Evaluation and Analysis, DCYF’s Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA)

- **FSKA 2023 Evaluation Report: Do you have data on the reason given regarding why there is a stop in using the subsidy? Reason for restarting use?**



Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

- Once families stop using subsidy, our ability to collect data becomes very limited. Past academic research finds that caregiver employment loss/change and administrative burden as being some of the more common reasons for an interruption in subsidy use. In terms of returning for subsidy use, research cites that it could be seasonality (e.g., caregivers stop and start based on the school year calendar), or they switched providers.
- **Has Washington State's FMLA and PFML impacted the need for infant care? If yes, how?**
 - On average in 2021, people took 10 weeks of PFML. From that perspective, there would still be 9.5 months of care needed for a family choosing to access child care. Because we look at the data by age ranges, in this case 0-1, we may see a 2 month lag in accessing care but would see these families ultimately access the care system for the remaining 2/3 of the year. Income could be a factor as well (hourly doesn't have FMLA and PFML). Our preliminary results show more infants utilizing services post COVID.
- **From the chart, it looks like 54% has more than 1 span. So only 46% are in continuous care? Can you clarify?**
 - Our preliminary results show that:
 - ~51% of children had 1 span
 - ~35% of children had between 2-3 spans
 - ~9% of children had between 4-5 spans
 - Less than 5% of children had over 6 spans
- **When focusing on low-income populations and gaps, are you cross-referencing housing instability and how housing instability impacts stops and starts to using subsidies? This is an issue in enrollment shifts for K-12. It might also be a factor in the early learning sector.**
 - We know who applies with housing instability, we don't know if it's a factor of them leaving. According to research, housing is a factor. Something to explore in the '26 interim year