



## Early Learning Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2023 – 10:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting

### Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols and Introductions

ELAC Executive Committee member Enrica Hampton welcomed attendees and walked through virtual meeting protocols. Introductions were completed via chat.

### Review of Meeting Materials

ELAC Executive Committee member Enrica Hampton led the group in the review of meeting materials.

- [October 3, 2023, Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Feedback Loop](#)
- [State Agency/Partner Updates](#)
- [Regional Coalition Updates](#)

<b>Discussion</b>	<p><b>October Meeting Minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page one, last paragraph "women and many women of color." Suggest using "women of diverse racial and ethnics backgrounds" - in this way no one is othered.</li> </ul>
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### Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) Data Share

DCYF Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA) Senior Evaluator Adassa Budrevich-Ryan and FSKA Analyst Justin Seppi provided data updates and an overview of the key findings from the 2023 Legislative Evaluation Report.

- [OIAA Presentation](#)

<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any tracking of the reasons for "exiting"? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We look at it as whether they closed their license.</li> <li>○ The WA Compass Provider Portal does give some generic selections for why a license was closed. This is something we can look further into.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What is the number of childcare providers that exited? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ That can be found in the <a href="#">FSKA Evaluation Report</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In regards to Tribes, certified for payment only providers data wouldn't be captured in this data, is that correct? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any tribes that have a childcare license would be included.</li> <li>○ In the future we can disaggregate that data.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the data wasn't available, why was it used as a benchmark? Was the department trying to tie direct center monetary investments to kindergarten readiness? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We were just trying to use what was available. This report is a baseline of what were things like when FSKA was first initiated. Even if we did have the 2022-2023 data, it is a weak analysis. I want to focus on trying to show how systemic things are related to kindergarten readiness.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Can you expand on why access to healthcare was included? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In 2021 there was a new policy for workers eligible for healthcare. These workers needed to activate their accounts so we were able to treat 2021 as the true sample that we knew were active in that moment in time.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Isn't sharing race optional in MERIT? How is the data validated? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, it is optional. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is optional. Many diverse populations do not complete this information because it has been used against people who have applied</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<p>for mortgages, loans, etc. Something to consider as you share this information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are using MERIT as the source for staff data?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For workforce analyses, yes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the data wasn't available, why was it used as a benchmark? Was the department trying to tie direct center monetary investments to kindergarten readiness?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is another data set we'd like to use for future analysis which should tell us more. It is tough to impact kindergarten readiness.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There were only approximately 860 who accessed the premium free health care coverage for centers.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This data is about those who are eligible, not who actually received the healthcare coverage.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Race is not validated.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Correct. Validation is conducted whether an employee is at a particular facility. We do not validate or correct a person's self-identified race or ethnicity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are you able verify that the data in MERIT is current and accurate? I ask because the numbers don't reflect what's going on in the field.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There are numerous difficulties in verifying the MERIT data. If interested, in more details please email <a href="mailto:brian.seppi@dcyf.wa.gov">brian.seppi@dcyf.wa.gov</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please reach out to Adassa Budrevich-Ryan (<a href="mailto:Adassa.budrevich-ryan@dcyf.wa.gov">Adassa.budrevich-ryan@dcyf.wa.gov</a>) and Justin Seppi (<a href="mailto:brian.seppi@dcyf.wa.gov">brian.seppi@dcyf.wa.gov</a>) with any follow-up questions.</li> </ul>

**Transitional Kindergarten/ DCYF & OSPI Joint Presentation**

DCYF Director of Early Care and Education Humberto Cruz-Chavarria and Samantha Bowen from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provided an update on Transitional Kindergarten (TK).

- [Increasing Access to Early Care and Education Presentation](#)
- [Emergency Rules for Transition to Kindergarten](#)

<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All districts are PreK Inclusion Champions and have taken steps to ensure strong transitions 0-5 and beyond for children with disabilities, with the implementation of inclusionary practices, inclusion, and pyramid model.</li> <li>• Regarding eligibility, I'm concerned about the parity between public and private schools in offering TK. Many of our programs are worried about being left out. They informed OSPI who could and could not offer TK.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The legislature made that decision regarding eligibility.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• You mentioned stakeholders in the rules process, are Tribes a part of those stakeholders? Moving forward, how will Tribes be consulted about TK?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Absolutely. We have some process in place through the Office of Native Education for consulting with tribes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How will OSPI enforce the rules on districts? Particularly as it relates to the eligibility of children for TK.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ OSPI's job is to draft rules and it is the school boards that are responsible for local implementation.</li> <li>○ Bill 1550 does require OSPI to develop a process for site visits. OSPI will work with local Education Service Districts (ESDs) and DCYF on visiting TK sites. We are developing processes for site visits of all TK programs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Will the curriculum be required to be appropriate for 4-year-olds, or will districts be able to continue to teach a kindergarten curriculum to TK students?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Districts have local control over the curriculum that they adopt. OSPI will have a requirement for what we expect to be in a curriculum for TK students.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Developmentally appropriate curriculum is one of the areas that we are hoping to gather feedback on.</li><li>● Are they also utilizing Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Yes, they are.</li></ul></li><li>● I'd like to see teachers need an Early Childhood Education (ECE) degree rather than hold a teaching certificate.</li><li>● I'm concerned that the rules for TK are on the light side compared to the rules that licensed childcare providers have to comply with. How can we provide feedback?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ OSPI is happy to join any meetings for public comment and written comments can also be submitted.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ There are literally hundreds of pages of rules for licensed childcare. It's very frustrating that a 4-year-old in a license program today could move into a TK program and the standards are so vastly different.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● In addition to these rules that are specific to TK, any program operating in a school district would also be required to follow all of the facilities and health and safety rules of a school district. There's also rules around special education.</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li><li>● Please make sure alternative pedagogies such as Montessori are among the recommended curricula.</li><li>● Looking at the language around making a best effort to coordinate. How is that defined?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ That is one of the rules where we have proposed to change, and it has to go through the process for approval. That is an area we hope to strengthen; the requirement of that coordination and developing some sort of a needs assessment or demonstrating the need in the community to open a TK classroom.</li></ul></li><li>● Since this is draft language, when will there be additional guidance?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The timing is tricky. We need to publish our draft of permanent rules. However, we can't finalize guidance until we know exactly what the permanent rules will be so they're being developed at the same time.</li></ul></li><li>● Currently there is only one tribal compact school but perhaps in the future there will be more. Can the language be changed local, tribal and early learning providers.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Thank you for that feedback.</li></ul></li><li>● I'm concerned about the coordinated enrollment component because it's been referred to poaching kids from childcare to fill TK programs.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Our hope is that we will strengthen the understanding of the early learning system and include that coordinated recruitment enrollment piece.</li></ul></li><li>● Can you mark it "draft" prior before sending it out along with a date?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ As we launch the draft rules we will share the hearing date, a copy of the draft rules, and provide an opportunity for feedback through multiple avenues.</li></ul></li><li>● With this younger age group, will TK teachers have to meet the same health and safety trainings/fingerprinting, etc.?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Yes, TK teachers will follow the same protocols as all K-12 teachers and staff.</li></ul></li><li>● You might find this blog post I wrote during earlier this year informative - <a href="https://www.kidscompany.org/important-information-about-public-school-transition-to-kindergarten/">https://www.kidscompany.org/important-information-about-public-school-transition-to-kindergarten/</a></li></ul>
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**Next Steps/Follow Up**

● Please reach out to Humberto Cruz-Chavarria ([humberto.cruz-chavarria@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:humberto.cruz-chavarria@dcyf.wa.gov)) or Samantha Bowen ([samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us](mailto:samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us)) with any follow up questions.



**Early Learning Language Access**

DCYF’s Language Access Coordinator Cas Wilkerson, CCSP East Administrator Michele Larimer and Area Administrator Debbie Groff provided updates and gathered feedback on Early Learning Language Access.

- [Early Learning Language Access Updates Presentation](#)
- [Early Learning Division Updates](#)
- [Professional Development Engagement Webinars](#)

<b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please reach out to Cas Wilkerson (<a href="mailto:casandra.wilkerson@dcyf.wa.gov">casandra.wilkerson@dcyf.wa.gov</a>), Michele Larimer (<a href="mailto:michele.larimer@dcyf.wa.gov">michele.larimer@dcyf.wa.gov</a>) and Debbie Groff (<a href="mailto:debbie.groff@dcyf.wa.gov">debbie.groff@dcyf.wa.gov</a>) with any follow up questions.</li> </ul>
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**Closing Remarks/Adjourn**

<b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next ELAC Public Meeting will be on February 6, 2023</li> </ul>
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**Members in Attendance:**

Alexandra Martin-Truesdell, Astrid Newell, Cheryl Smith, Danielle Rasmussen, Debbie Carlsen, Debbie Ham, Deeann Puffert, Enrica Hampton, Gary Burris, Heidi Scott, Isis Lara Fernandez, Jen Sandvig, Kathy Carman, Lois Martin, Mary Rose Dewald, Mary Rulewicz, Nancy Spurgeon, Olivia Burley, Ryan Guzman, Samantha Bowen, Samantha Masters, Shereese Rhodes, Waylon Ballew

**Members Absent:**

Aida Rodriguez, Ami Magisos, Angelica Hernandez, Carlina Brown-Banks, Catherine Duffy, Claudette Lindquist, Colleen Condon, Deborah Sioux Lee, Jasmin Schmidt, Julie Rolling, Kathy Goebel, Katrina Peters, Kelly Saavedra, Kimberly Hoover, Leah White, Lola Moses, Luz Gomez, Michelle Perez, Milan Mulye, Nucha Isarowong, Representative Mari Leavitt, Sen. Claire Wilson, Susan Yang, Val Arnold, Valisa Smith