



Provider Supports Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2023 – 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Introductions, Virtual Meeting Protocols, and Meeting Material Review

Provider Supports Executive Committee Co-Chair Katie Hudkins welcomed members and completed introductions. The group reviewed the October meeting minutes and Agency Updates.

- [October 11, 2023, Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Agency Updates](#)

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The launch of the new training site DEVELOP was pushed back due to some work in the state. We had to do some remediation to be ready for another system.• What is the best source to find all of the statutes that authorize the powers and responsibilities of DCYF? I'm trying to get a better understanding of statute vs. Washington Administrative Codes (WACs) that apply to licensed childcare<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ DCYF will need to update its public facing site regarding our rules in licensed childcare along with the Revised Code of Washington (RCWs) versus WACs. We also have the Federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) requirements too.• I filed a petition to amend a WAC about the requirement that everyone have their high school diploma. I would hope that when the response comes they let me know if that's a federal rule.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ High School Diploma or equivalent.○ Providers are looking at WACs constantly and wondering if these rules are coming from the federal level or the state.○ Chapter 110-300 WAC: Foundational Quality Standards for Early Learning Programs○ Chapter 43.216 RCW: General Provisions• We still have not gotten paid for our trauma informed training.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We will look into this. |
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Licensing Division (LD)/ Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation FAQ Feedback & 2024 Meeting Planning

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| Discussion | <p><i>LD/CPS Investigation FAQ Docs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCYF should look to the foster side because there are options for foster families under investigations. There is a group you can contact to ask questions and be supported through that process which is not available under the childcare side.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The licensing division does have the First Program which is a third-party group that supports foster parents through the investigator process. It was a requirement that came out of RCW. DCYF does not have that resource for childcare.• Can you elaborate a bit about what the FAQs are in reference to?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The idea is to have two separate documents; one related to the licensing compliant process and the other referring to the LD/CPS side of investigations. The purpose is to be a helpful resource for childcare providers that are undergoing an investigation process. |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have these publications and brochures for alleged subjects of abuse and neglect, but we don't have anything for owners or directors. So that's what this FAQ is going to be all about.• There are instances of biases, discrimination, and no language support in CPS cases. Cases are deemed a miscommunication and closed by DCYF staff. This happens based on people's backgrounds and culture and so much damage happens when CPS enters a home. Teachers need to be held accountable.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Our CPS system is not perfect. We have 11,000 intakes a month and anyone can call CPS. When someone calls CPS, the allegations have to rise to the level of the law which is negligent treatment, physical or sexual abuse. If those allegations rise to the level of the law, then we are required to do an investigation. In a thorough investigation, sometimes we do find out the allegation is false. We do have the opportunity to refer to law enforcement about making false allegations about someone which is a misdemeanor. Then it is up to law enforcement to move forward on that.• DCYF should provide an automatic survey to a provider after a monitoring visit. That way they could see if there is a pattern or a problem area.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The survey is still in development. We see the value and are working on making that happen.• If there are issues that come up with licensors, providers need to contact their supervisor.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ You can search on the DCYF Employee Directory site - every employee is listed with contact info & their SUPERVISOR name.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Tacoma office has no active phone line any longer, and we have no idea who the director is over there. The websites need to be updated badly.• All licensors and investigators are required to do implicit bias training. However, just because they do the training doesn't mean someone isn't going to be biased. If there are any issues with intimidation or being unprofessional, please talk to their supervisor. If they refuse to give you their supervisor's name please contact Travis directly (travis.hansen@dcyf.wa.gov). <p>2024 Work Plan Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you become part of the Provider Supports subcommittee?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Recruitment for the committee usually happens around March and new members are seated in early summer.○ To get on the mailing list please contact the Community Engagement team (dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov).• Do you mean topics we would be informed about or topics that we get to take action on?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It would be both. |
| Next Steps/Follow Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please reach out to the Community Engagement team (dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions. |

Community Café Update

Provider Supports Co-Chair Julie Schroath provided an update on the recent community café and shared tips on hosting.

- [Early Learning & Child Care Offices](#)

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What locations have these been held at and how did they work? How was the venue found and is DCYF putting everything together or has it been providers? |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We're looking at an opportunity to try and reach all providers and organize these on a regional level. We're hoping to partner with providers to try and find venues. We do recognize that weekends are a priority and are trying to do this in a more systematic way.● I would love to see these gatherings happen in our community (Yakima/Benton County) and held in Spanish.● What is the plan going forward to getting the word out to providers? It would be nice if it came from a provider's direct licenser because we always read those emails.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ That is part of our conversation moving forward. We are working with early learning coalitions and childcare providers on the best way to communicate this out. |
| Next Steps/Follow Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Please reach out to Debbie Groff (Debbie.groff@dcyf.wa.gov) if interested in hosting a community café. |

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](#)

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Is this a pilot? There are more languages that need support.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We are language specific and currently only have the staffing for Spanish and Somali language access. We do recognize that need for more languages and DCYF is building out a language access team that will support other languages.● Is the language Access support only for providers or can families get the support as well?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Much of our website is delivered in three languages and parents have access to that. We would need to know what parents need. If a parent would want to talk to a licenser or if they have generic questions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ How do families know that they can request language support? Is it online or in a handbook?<ul style="list-style-type: none">● There is some information online for families. What I'm hearing is that providers also need that support when they're working with families and children for language access. |
| Next Steps/Follow Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Please reach out to Cas Wilkerson (casandra.wilkerson@dcyf.wa.gov), Michele Larimer (michele.larimer@dcyf.wa.gov) and Debbie Groff (debbie.groff@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow up questions. |

Background Checks

DCYF's Federal Initiatives and Collaboration Administrator Matt Judge and Provider Supports Administrator Meryl Stride provided an update and have a Q&A session about background checks.

- [DCYF Portable Background Checks Presentation](#)

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Without a cleared background check, they cannot be in the classroom, correct?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ They can't work in the classroom supervised or unsupervised.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ And that is for 2024?<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Correct, January 1.● Can you provide clarity around "training"? Can they work directly with another staff if they are not included in ratio?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It depends on if you have space in your facility where they could do training. They can't be counted in ratio. |
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- So, you're saying no interaction with kids?
 - Correct.
- There's a difference between training under a staff person and not being in ratio. You want your new hire to be able to shadow the lead teacher and see what the procedures are. Is that allowed?
 - No, it is not allowed. They have to have a cleared background check.
- Which of those checks are NOT required for public school teachers?
 - They require the fingerprint check but they do not require the other components, including the child abuse neglect check or the interstate check.
 - [RCW 46.82.325](#): Background Check for school personnel
 - Providers have been frustrated by that inequity.
- What percentage of checks for childcare are not cleared?
 - The average from all of last year's background checks that didn't pass was 7% and that includes suitability assessment denials and the permanent disqualifiers.
- Who reviews and makes the decisions about suitability?
 - When results come in, background check specialists review the criminal history and negative action information and they compare it to the DCYF Secretary's list. If there is a crime that requires a suitability assessment, they will refer it to our suitability assessment unit. Those specialists gather collateral information and police and court reports if needed. The most important piece is the interview with the applicant. We want to see rehabilitation. The assessments really focus on evidence of changed behavior. They can provide references, certificates of completion of services and rehabilitation. After all of that is consolidated and a decision is made to approve, it then goes to their supervisor to review. If the supervisor feels the applicant should be denied, they will take it to the background check manager to approve. If they deny it, it gets sent to Meryl.
 - Is there an appeal process then?
 - Yes, after the suitability assessment, they can go through the appeal process and are sent a letter with detailed instructions.
- Is there a plan to get more vendors/partners to take fingerprints? It's getting the fingerprint appointment that is a challenge in my area. Sometimes that can take up to a week or two.
 - Yes, that is a part of proposed [Senate Bill 5774](#) to expand fingerprinting services to DCYF offices.
 - How long does it take for a bill like this to pass?
 - This is a short session and I believe most bills will take effect July first starting the new state fiscal year.
 - There is an emergency clause in the bill so if it passes then it can go into effect as soon as possible.
- What would it take to return to rules that allow our industry to have a new hire work under supervision?
 - A change to federal law. This is required for all new staff.
- Our state was non-compliant with subsidy rates for years. Was the state fined by the Feds?
 - We were non-compliant for a much shorter time frame than we are currently for the background checks. Being fined was on the horizon.
- What does DCYF expect of licensors if/when they encounter a new hire working under supervision?
 - We're going to handle it the same way as we handle compliance agreements.
 - What is the risk level attached to that and expected in the moment?



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- To come into compliance, the new staff would need to be offsite or be in an unlicensed space until they have a cleared background check.
- Classroom closures will occur as this is implemented. Is that what licensors will be telling providers to do? And if the center does not comply with closing classrooms?
 - That's going to be an individual basis. We will work with providers on how to get staff and keep classrooms operating.
- Who's pushing back on the federal law? Who's advocating for us? How is DCYF supporting providers?
 - There was a question about who advocates about the federal law/rule. DCYF has advocated in several instances up to our agency leadership level to Office of Child Care (OCC), in writing and in meetings. I've repeatedly argued this with OCC.
- Wasn't it only a portion of the background check that was required by the feds and Washington State's portion was actually longer? Why can we not do the fed portion which I believe aligns with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and allow people to be training while we wait for the Washington State portion to be back?
 - Currently if an applicant is completing an end state check and a fingerprint check, those go through DSHS, Washington State Patrol, and the FBI and then comes back to us.
 - That is something we could explore but would take other agency involvement.
 - The other components of the background check, the interstate and the child abuse and neglect, as soon as the forms are received, we submit the request for clearance.
- Is there a way that a provider can be updated throughout the process for an applicant during their background check?
 - We can look into that.
- If an in-home childcare provider has a child with severe disability, and they are unable to psychically do the fingerprint background check but have done the regular background check, what accommodations can be made?
 - We work through those on an individual basis. We can do waivers.
 - They can always reach out to dcyf.backgroundcheck@dcyf.wa.gov.
- The way the slide is presented, it places the responsibility squarely on the individual for the eleven day time frame. To fairly represent that, please include the barriers that contribute to that time frame.
 - We will definitely update the slide to reflect the different variables outside of applicant control.
- One way to mitigate the staffing crisis being impacted further by the change is for DCYF to fund providers to pay new staff while they are waiting for clearance.
- What about parents that come in and tour, or spend time in a classroom trying to get a feel for the program, visiting, getting their child used to it?
 - There is some federal guidance that points to volunteers. As long as the contact is irregular/infrequent then the background check requirement doesn't apply.
- Can my employee start immediately, and work supervised until their background check clears?
 - No, Effective Jan. 1, 2024, fingerprints must be completed and cleared before staff may:
 - Be in licensed child care space
 - Work with or around children



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be counted in ratio▪ Interact with children▪ Be unsupervised with children• When someone is working with children I think backgrounds are important! I don't hire anyone until that background returns clear. I would rather be safe than sorry later.• Looks like we need to use an alternate background check before we invest two weeks time in a hiring / training process in a potential employee while we wait for WA to clear them.• If licensors are not required to go through the same background checks as providers and be on site, it doesn't make sense that staff cannot be onsite while waiting for the background check to clear.• Does OSPI fingerprints meet the federal requirement for us?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Unfortunately, no it doesn't include a couple elements CCDF requires.• One way that some centers can help themselves would be to have an extra worker so that when they need teachers they have that extra person and thus do not have problems waiting for criminal records and fingerprints.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Washington's Early Care and Education Substitute Pool• WA State Patrol has a system at watch.wsp.wa.gov that public schools use to clear volunteers with a quick state clearance. How useful would that be as an initial check for employers prior to training time?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ WA's congressional delegation are now the folks who need to hear about this. |
| Next Steps/Follow Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please reach out to Matt Judge (matt.judge@dcyf.wa.gov) and Meryl Stride (meryl.stride@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions. |

FSKA WAHBE Child Care Worker Premium Assistance Program

DCYF's Assistant Secretary of Early Learning Nicole Rose and Joan Aultman from WAHBE provided an update on the Washington Healthcare Benefits Exchange (WAHBE) Child Care Worker Premium Assistance program, including the legislative report, data, and next steps.

- [WAHBE Child Care Worker Report](#)

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the union had medical insurance, it was more beneficial for us providers. Now that it is controlled by the state, it is a bit worse, it has less coverage. If you had a physical check-up and had analysis expenses, you didn't pay, but now you pay part of the analysis costs. I find it has less coverage and higher co-payment costs.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Those health plans for licensed family home providers are actually negotiated with the health benefits trust. The State does not negotiate those plans. If there are things that you would like to see differently about those health plans, that's a great conversation for you to be having with the Union.• Do you have data about the childcare providers covered by employer sponsored health insurance?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We do not have that data.• Is there any movement at all to look at going towards the State Median income? It's a huge difference between Federal poverty level. Our State has the highest minimum wage in the country. Yet we're still using the Federal poverty level to determine whether they get healthcare or food assistance. Is there anybody I can advocate to?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We pass these issues along to legislators.• We've been hearing a lot of misinformation about the funds running out and people not being qualified. Can you elaborate?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The funding for the program, runs through December. If someone is signing up now for coverage starting in January, it's correct that the additional financial |
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| | <p>assistance through this program won't be available. The program was specifically for any employee of a license childcare facility in the state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This benefit was for childcare facilities, but what about home care providers? If there is future funding, could homecare providers be added?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ There have been several groups that have reached out to the legislature in the wake of this program about being left out. But yes, that is something that we're always happy to support. |
| Next Steps/Follow Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For questions regarding WAHBE please contact Yakima Neighborhood Health Services (YNHS) at 509-574-0826 or ccnavi@ynhs.org.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If you have questions about information you are getting from YNHS, please contact Genevieve Arredondo (genevieve.arredondo@wahbexchange.org).<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Including the application ID is the most helpful. |

Closing Remarks/Adjourn

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| Next Steps/Follow Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2024. |
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