



# Joint Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), Provider Supports Subcommittee and Parent Advisory Group (PAG) Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2021 – 9:00am – 2:30pm  
Zoom

### Welcome & Introductions

- Provider Supports Subcommittee Co-chair, Julie Schroath, welcomed attendees and initiated introductions.

### Feedback Loop & State Agency/Partner and Regional Coalition Updates

- [Feedback Loop](#)
- [State Agency/Partner Updates](#)
- [Regional Coalition and Washington Communities for Children \(WCFC\) Updates](#)

<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am a foster parent and for early learning childcare, one of the barriers I've had is having children from hard places, having hard behaviors, and then being sent home from childcare and having no other support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ That is a great callout. We have been talking with our partners internally, and are making sure we are having more conversations about the trauma and mental health piece.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We need to build better bridges between child care, school and other providers, so that children can receive the support that they need while they're younger. If we can provide services at that younger age, they'll have a better life in the long run.</li> <li>• I've been having a difficult time finding any providers that have staff that can work with special needs. I tried reaching out through different programs, through my doctor, but no one knows where to start. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Kids with disabilities should have the same access to childcare as non-disabled kids. Accessibility should not be an issue.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Many daycares are also not accessible for kids with mobility limitations. They're not wheelchair accessible.</li> <li>• There's a significant gap in childcare availability for kids with disabilities that is not spoken about enough.</li> <li>• This is a gap that we see in Child Care Aware (CCA), too, helping refer families to child care. We regularly receive call-backs from families who have visited child care and found that providers are not willing to take children with special needs.</li> <li>• This seems like an opportunity for the state to provide some additional resources and supports for private providers to be able to do this work. There is essential training to do, as well as potentially additional staffing which increases costs.</li> <li>• Complex needs funding is vital, but if we can't train and retain high quality staff, how are we actually serving these children and families?</li> <li>• Providers want to care for all kids, including those with special needs. The Department needs to provide more resources and support to providers, so these children aren't getting left behind.</li> </ul>
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### Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA) Temporary Licensing Subcommittee

The Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) Director of Government Affairs and Community Engagement Allison Krutsinger and Quality Assurance/ Continuous Quality Improvement Program Manager Aliza Yair provided details



about the legislation, defined the scope and shared an engagement timeline for this work. Members also participated in an activity to provide guidance on next steps.

- [FSKA Temporary Licensing Subcommittee Presentation](#)
- [FSKA Temporary Licensing Subcommittee Feedback](#)

<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why is a subcommittee or our group with volunteers assigned work that should be paid service by DCYF?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The state does need to begin compensating people for their experience. Parents need to be seen as experienced partners in this work and that requires compensating them for their engagement.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Is it possible to add that to your 2022 legislative packet? Providing a stipend is a way to have more community engagement. Maybe DCYF can lead the charge to make a statewide change.</li><li>▪ We're seeing other industries move in that direction when seeking parent engagement. It would be good to see the state take a step in that direction as well.</li></ul></li><li>○ We have do have challenges with compensation for folks who are on advisory bodies and work groups. We are prohibited by state law from compensating members of advisory bodies for their time. We do recognize that this prohibits authentic engagement, and we are working with the governor's office on this topic.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Would appreciate having you come back on the stipend topic, and how we can support this effort.</li><li>▪ Not seeking compensation, just would like DCYF provide resources requested by providers and use our role as advisors to that planning.</li></ul></li><li>○ So you are talking about resources to providers for their work as providers. I hear you.</li></ul></li><li>• Unnecessary and inefficient to build a new group. Incorporate more stakeholders to the group that has been established.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Include affected parent and grandparent community members in the committee.</li><li>○ Utilizing the Parent Advisory Group (PAG) seems like an easy way to include parents</li></ul></li><li>• Why is DCYF deciding who the workgroup will be when the law reads "ELAC will convene"? Should it not be up to the members of ELAC to make this decision? I agree it should be Provider Supports, but am confused about where the decision lies.</li><li>• It seems like having another subcommittee is reinventing the wheel.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The legislation is specific and says the words temporary subcommittee. We've made some decisions based on conversations with providers and internally that this work is going to be embedded in the Provider Supports subcommittee and not establish a new group.</li></ul></li><li>• The input we received from the Provider Supports subcommittee in August was to include various kinds of providers and to ensure diversity of input.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ That wasn't the only feedback you received from us. The legislation says convened by ELAC, so why is DCYF running this? This is a report to DCYF, so why would it be led by DCYF staff?</li><li>○ DCYF has fiduciary responsibility, and the outcome of this legislation will fall back on DCYF to implement.</li></ul></li><li>• Honestly it seems like ELAC should be having a discussion about how to proceed, led by their co-chairs. Instead DCYF is saying "this is how we see this going forward".<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ It is not our intention to dictate membership or decide who has a seat at the table. We are here to ask for your feedback on these topics today and in between these meetings.</li></ul></li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It feels like rather than seek input and collaborate, DCYF seeks to control and dictate.</li> <li>○ After years of being involved in DCYF controlled policy changes providers in our region don't trust the results. Yet they have to live with the consequences.</li> <li>● I'm not even sure why DCYF was asked to present at Provider Supports. Why is DCYF assuming the lead on this?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DCYF received resources and direction of a Full Time Employee (FTE) to staff the work by supporting facilitation of the conversation, report writing, etc.</li> <li>○ ELAC and the DCYF Community Engagement (CE) team should be the lead on this work. The outcomes are clear, so I am confused why anyone outside of CE is facilitating this work.</li> <li>○ That's great that DCYF received resources, but those resources should be offered to ELAC to use at their discretion.</li> <li>○ ELAC has been given work to accomplish in FSKA and we should be the decision making group and presenters of this, not DCYF.</li> <li>○ This isn't support - this is DCYF taking on the role of leading and deciding</li> <li>○ The licensing team should not be leading this work. It should be supported and facilitated by CE since that is the team that supports ELAC.</li> <li>○ DCYF should not be leading work around recommendations to their own department. ELAC has very specific membership and is capable of doing this work independent of DCYF.</li> <li>○ I guess the question might need to be asked to the CE folks, why was DCYF asked to present as leaders of this work?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● ELAC's authorizing statute also says that the department is responsible for providing staff support for ELAC.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ELAC is staffed by DCYF staff via CE. Having licensing staff facilitate this workgroup is problematic.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● It feels important to acknowledge that this is a symptom of a problem that we have experienced for years which is why folks are having such a big response. This feels like an important place to engage in this way to reorient systems to be driven by families and providers. Power needs to shift.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This conversation and planning process will be paused to give the co-chairs the opportunity to meet with DCYF and discuss next steps.</li> </ul>

**OIAA Early Learning Data, Analysis and Reporting**

DCYF's Assistant Secretary of the Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) Vickie Ybarra provided an overview and gathered feedback on data, analyses, and reporting related to FSK and federal childcare stabilization from the Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA).

- [OIAA Early Learning Data, Analysis and Reporting Presentation](#)
- [OIAA Feedback](#)

<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One of the areas that would be helpful is an evaluation of the DCYF website. I have heard from many providers there is great difficulty in finding information.</li> <li>● Are you able to share information on the big picture of early learning providers in Washington State that is inclusive of all segments: public, Head Start, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), private licensed providers, unlicensed preschools/providers, Family Friends and Neighbors (FFN), etc. I am wondering if this data exists in a meaningful way to help decision making. I suspect that it must (or should) and am hoping it can be shared.</li> </ul>
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- Where can we find on the DCYF website answers to frequent questions, such as the number of active providers, or the number of providers by county? Can you share that link?
  - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/early-learning-dashboards/child-care-need-supply-data>
- Why isn't there any data for school age care? Child care data for school age kids is as important and necessary as early learning.
  - We do have a plan to rollout school age data. Those estimates are less precise, but we do plan to expand the dashboard in 2022 to include school-age.
- When it says "children eligible" hovering over a region in the legislative district dashboard, I'm wondering if all those kids are on some kind of wait list?
  - No, that means that they have a need. That the population-based estimates indicate they have a need for care based on the fact that all adults in the household are employed full time.
- So that would not take into account unlicensed care or relying on family members to care for the child?
  - Correct.
- We don't have a full picture because we don't see private care data, correct?
  - Yes, they are estimates, not counts.
- The only true count we have is actual child data and who is in care for the families who are receiving some kind of state assistance. So we have to use estimates?
  - Yes, that is correct.
- The percent of the children not in formal early learning is similar to what is known in other parts of the country. Indeed, up to 75% of children birth to five are in sole care of a parent or FFN care.
  - I don't know that I have seen that number in our DCYF data. We do know that younger children and infants, toddlers are more likely to be in informal care than our preschoolers who are more likely to be in a formal setting.
  - Parents tell us they're challenged to find adequate infant/toddler care, both those on subsidy and private pay.
- So does it include or exclude parent provided care?
  - It excludes parent provided care.
- How is extreme child care desert defined? How is child care desert defined?
  - We use the definition used in Massachusetts, where this extreme access desert methodology was developed.
- How big might those bounded areas be? could it be as large as a county?
  - We use zip codes.
- So looking at this really great tool, what do you feel is still missing from it that you would like to capture? What do you need to make that happen?
  - We have some barriers sharing data among systems. Not because we don't want to work together with other agencies, but because of laws limiting and increasing wait time for data sharing. We think we can work on some legislative changes in this area if there is support for that.
- What about "access deserts" within higher access areas? So, for children with disabilities who lack access to childcare opportunities. For them, even otherwise "high access" areas are made into "extreme access deserts" for their population.
  - It is not sensitive enough to capture those issues, you are correct and that is a good point. If you know of a methodology to capture that, please let me know and we can explore it.



- Attendees split into small groups to review FSKA objectives and discuss important pieces of the objectives to keep in mind as DCYF develops indicators of success.

**Background Checks**

DCYF’s Director of Eligibility and Provider Supports Nicole Rose and Provider Supports Administrator Chris Parvin will provide updates on the updated rules for background checks, and provide time for Q&A.

- [Background Check FAQ](#)
- [Background Check Feedback](#)

<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New hires need to get fingerprints, but long as the background check application has been submitted, they can continue to work on site.</li> <li>It has been stated that we are now out of compliance with the feds. How long will DCYF continue to be out of compliance and what consequences will there be?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are not sure what the corrective action will be from the feds, and are not sure how long this process will be in place as it currently is.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Will being out of compliance result in loss of funding for families and Early Learning organizations who depend on Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We do not anticipate that this will result in a loss of funding for families, but it is a possibility.</li> </ul> </li> <li>What is the solution to move forward in addressing a more efficient problem? I.e., eliminating the department wording to allow any portal to complete background checks.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That would require legislative action.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Is there any movement from states around the nation to push back on the federal rule collectively to allow for supervised work while awaiting full clearance?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are not the only state that is having issues with the Background Check rules. Many states are having similar issues. A big piece of it is the interstate component.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Nobody wants to be in a situation where they are not in compliance, but we do need this fix. What will the long term solution be? Or next step?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next step may be to the provisional hire where you have to have cleared fingerprints to be on premises. That is not something that takes nine months, but does impact your hiring time frame. One of the other things we have is data systems and the time it takes to move those things through, but we would make some other steps before we get to that point.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The statement “upon hire” and not allowed on premises. Can you please direct me to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) that states this?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We did not put anything about that in our rules. We may at some point, but we are holding off to see what the fallout will be considering other states are also having difficulty.</li> </ul> </li> <li>I imagine the quick information turnaround is due to DCYF holding out hope for a positive federal response. If the state is out of compliance, how does this impact CCDBG funding? Do the feds charge fiscal penalties and if so, what bucket of money is it deducted from?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We do not know exactly what the response will be at this point.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Aren't we still using Identogo (on a month-to-month contract)?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes, Idemia (formerly Identogo) is our current vendor, they have gone through a few name changes. We anticipate that they will step up and increase their service hours.</li> </ul> </li> <li>I am interested in opening a new business; a mobile fingerprint service. How do we apply for a contract?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I love the idea of a mobile fingerprinting service. How could something like that be put into place for rural areas especially?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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- How complex is it to become a finger print vendor? What are the barriers to adding more?
  - If you were to do this it would be a startup cost of \$20,000 you would get trained, you would have the services. You would need a maintenance plan and to lease the equipment. It does require contact with the system integration through our contractor provider, that's already connected to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) as well.
- Can you please connect me to the company that I can contact for becoming a vendor?
- Any vendor is still going to be challenged to provide the same level of appointment availability, similar to the next day appointments available in urban areas. What could be done to utilize fingerprinting with orgs located all over the state - school districts, State Patrol, Sheriff depts., post offices?
- Could DCYF specify that integration with these types of local agencies is part of the contract?
  - The fingerprints have to make to the state patrol regardless, and connecting those dots is an IT issue and needs an IT approach.
- Then we should solve our own IT issues and just get the information firsthand.
  - We are looking at the procurement process that DSHS has and we are going to be a part of that.
- Can we have multiple vendors in the same system?
  - That is a possibility. We are not discarding it, but the difficulty is trying to think through how does the system activate multiple fingerprint accounts. There may be a cost associated with having multiple vendors, even if you only use one.
- Couldn't the unique identifier be assigned to people through the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT). When an applicant goes and gets fingerprinted, they receive an email confirmation. What if a copy of that confirmation was uploaded into MERIT?
- I work with providers every day and uploading the fingerprint confirmation in MERIT when completed would be great.
- I thought the Secretary's List was part of the state check, not the federal requirement?
  - The Childcare Development Fund requires states to complete background checks, set the rules for background checks, and actually list in the code of federal regulations the qualifying crimes. The Secretary's list is really taking a look at the federal requirements.
- Why can't I go through the lists and compare the background check and make a decision about what is best for the children I provide care for? I'm failing to see why the department is the only entity qualified to go through these lists?
  - I understand what you are saying. There are requirements that DCYF be the one obtaining the background check. Your question does highlight the need for alternate solutions, like maybe a Revised Code of Washington (RCW) change.
    - What RCW is that? I do think that is needed.
      - <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=43.216.270>
- This goes back to fiduciary responsibility. I believe what we can do is work on changes to this process. We can also advocate on a federal level. Where do other DCYF staff members go for background check clearances? Do they take this long to turn around? How does their staff work - supervised, can't go on site, etc.?
- Do public education teachers go through the same process with all of the checks? If so, how are they able to complete the process so much quicker? Can we meet with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to learn more about what they do?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ That gets tricky when you are a subcontractor of ECEAP services - and they have volunteers with OSPI background checks, which we do not accept...things get difficult.</li> <li>○ Since public education and child care teachers all work with kids, why are the background checks different. Why aren't public education backgrounds checks as stringent as child care?</li> <li>○ It's just so interesting since a person can get hired at the school district and begin working right away. It doesn't make sense that the rules are so different.</li> <li>○ Children can spend all day in a school, but the requirements for licensed childcare after-school programs operating in the same school are much more stringent and make it extremely challenging for school age providers.</li> <li>○ Wouldn't it be great if we could do one background check and it would tell us what department we are cleared for? Child Care, Foster Care, OSPI, K-12 education and so on.</li> <li>● Keep in mind all that people want is the allowance of supervised access while the entire background process is going on. If statute currently allows supervised access upon application, it should also allow supervised access if a provider has completed an FBI or state fingerprint check.</li> <li>● I am wondering if we need to involve our U.S. congressional senators and representatives and fill them in about this issue. As there is much discussion of early learning nationally, there needs to be common sense ways to ensure child safety while still allowing the industry to hire new staff into our programs and keep classrooms and programs open.</li> <li>● Background checks should clear in 48 hours or less in order to not impact the ability to hire             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is adding to our child care deserts</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Just wanted to mention that we're grateful for the short-term relief, but wanted to make a note that it does not apply to Head Start             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The feds have let us know that this is not efficient, and that we will not be able to utilize the fix.</li> <li>○ How does that work with the contracted providers at the center?</li> <li>○ You could not pay someone with head start dollars on this provisional fix. We could get a finding from the feds if we went with the Washington State fix.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Providers are also interested in ensuring proper clearances are done. It would be a huge liability on the business if we didn't have background checks. We want them. We just want them faster.</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 advisory group meeting will be On December 7, and the next Provider Supports Meeting will be on December 1. The next PAG meeting will take place in early 2022, date TBD.</li> </ul>
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