

April 2024 SICC Table of Contents

Agenda & Draft Meeting Minutes

[April SICC Meeting Agenda](#)

[February SICC Meeting Minutes](#)

Committee Reports

[Personnel and Training Report](#)

[Service Delivery Committee Report](#)

Agency Reports

[Early Support for Infants & Toddlers \(ESIT\) State Lead Agency Report](#)

[Special Education Updates \(ECSE/OSPI\)](#)

Presentations

[PAVE Programs](#)

[Toddler AAC: What I Wish Our Early Supports Team Had Known](#)

[About How 'Early' AAC Can Help Families Thrive](#)

Upcoming 2024 SICC Meeting Dates

- **July 17 Combined PIE-SICC Meeting | Colville WA**
- **October 16 | Virtual**



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Original Date: Feb. 16, 2024 | Revised Date: Feb. 21, 2024

Early Support for Infants & Toddlers | Approved for distribution by ESIT State Leadership Team

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) | Virtual Meeting

Date: Wednesday, Apr 17, 2024

Time: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Role & Purpose

In order to carry out its mission, the Council shall advise and assist the State Lead Agency, and the other participating state agencies, on a broad range of policy and coordination issues. The SICC will promote an appreciation for the needs of children that have or are at risk for developmental delays or disabilities and will gain an understanding of the services required to address those needs.

Group Agreements

- State your name each time you speak,
- Speak slowly– this helps our note-taker and interpreters,
- Avoid using acronyms and jargon,
- Be patient with one another as we practice Robert’s Rules of Order,
- Teams Do’s and Don’ts (Will),
- For Technical Assistance, please text Will Moncrease, Jr. at 564-999-0449, or email will.moncrease@dcyf.wa.gov.

Agenda

Native Land Acknowledgement

9 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. | Welcome & Introductions, SICC Chair Danna Summers

Welcome members, review and approve previous meeting minutes and today’s agenda.

9:30 a.m. – 9:50 a.m. | Parent Stories: (Parent Speakers TBA)

Families will share their experience with receiving ESIT services during the COVID-19 pandemic with the council. Members will have an opportunity to ask questions and gain additional insights.

9:50 a.m. – 10 a.m. | SICC Member Spotlight: Michelle LaMotte | Co-Owner, Pediatric Occupational Therapist at Stepping Stones Pediatric Therapy, PLLC

10 a.m. – 10:10 a.m. | Break

10:10 a.m. -11:30 | What I wish our Early Supports Team had known about robust high-tech AAC

Cass Griffin Bennett is an autistic and ADHD self-advocate. She is a parent of multiple autistic children, including a young multimodal communicator. She knows firsthand that AAC can change lives. Cass started her youngest child on robust high-tech AAC at age 2. She stepped into the Outreach Coordinator role because she wishes she had known about NWACS when first



embarking on this AAC quest. She hopes that sharing her family's Toddler AAC experience will decrease gatekeeping. Cass wants to empower parents to take an active role in their child's AAC journey.

Cass is passionate about early access to robust high-tech AAC, collaborative problem-solving, equity, neurodiversity, and inclusion. Her guiding goal in parenting is to raise her children to be their own best self-advocates. Cass has a career background in professional services business development and a degree in Psychology.

11:30 a.m. – 11:40 a.m. | Break

11:40 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. | PAVE, Yasmeen Butler, Dee Bosworth & Minah

Learn about [PAVE](#) services, supports and trainings for family, youth groups and programs.

PAVE Team Bios

Dee Bosworth (she/her) is a dedicated military spouse and the mother of a twice-exceptional child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). Her personal experience and passion for supporting military families led her to join STOMP (Specialized Training of Military Parents) at PAVE, where she now serves as the Assistant Program Director. In this role, Dee develops and delivers comprehensive training that promotes military cultural competence and equitable access to support through state, federal, and community-based programs. In addition to her work with STOMP, Dee serves as the PAVE Helpline Coordinator, connecting individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals with essential support and resources.

Dee is deeply involved in her community and state as a NAMI Homefront Teacher and State Trainer, a graduate of Florida Partners in Policymaking, and a Community Leader for American Military Families Autism Support. She has also served on local educational and policy advocacy boards fostering meaningful community participation for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities and improving access to care for persons living with mental illness. Dee earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, focusing on Legal Studies, and a Paralegal Certificate from California State University, Chico.

Minah (she/her) has professionally worked in early childhood development for over 29 years in teaching families & children (aged birth to five), coaching for parents/caregivers and early learning professionals, training in Universal Developmental Screening (UDS), child development program creation, and facilitation of parent education programs. She is dedicated to family support services for underserved and marginalized communities, with an emphasis on Black and African American families in King and Pierce counties, with and without disabilities. At PAVE, Minah serves as the Pierce Parent to Parent(P2P) Coordinator where she delivers support services to parents and caregivers of children with a developmental disability and/or

special healthcare needs. As the P2P Coordinator, she provides community education, emotional support groups, trainings, and opportunities for parents/caregivers and self-advocates to connect with local resources.

In addition to her role at PAVE, Minah created the ICCFS 1..2..3 Jump Kindergarten Readiness Program generously funded by Best Starts for Kids. This program helps parents successfully transition their 3–5-year-olds into kindergarten by providing early intervention and school readiness home visiting services to underserved Black/African American and Spanish speaking families, with and without disabilities. Minah holds a M.Ed. degree in Curriculum and Instruction- Early Childhood Education and is mother to four outstanding children, two with autism, sensory processing disorder, and ADHD.

12:20 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. | Public Comment

This time is set aside for the audience to state comments and share feedback on the SICC meeting overall. If the individual providing comment would like their comment to be included in the meeting minutes, they must provide a written summary to Community Collaboration Coordinator, E Renae` Antalan erenae.antalan@dcyf.wa.gov

12:30 p.m. -1: p.m. | Lunch

1 p.m. - 1:50 p.m. | Committee & Agency Updates

This is an opportunity for SICC state agency representatives to share insights, request advice/assistance from the council, and make announcements of upcoming events/activities.

1:50 p.m. – 2 p.m. | Break

2 p.m. – 2:40 p.m. | Legislative Update & Celebration, Stephanie Budrus

2:40– 2:45 p.m. | Public Comments

This time is set aside for the audience to state comments and share feedback on the SICC meeting overall. If the individual providing comment would like their comment to be included in the meeting minutes, they must provide a written summary to Community Collaboration Coordinator, E Renae` Antalan, at erenae.antalan@dcyf.wa.gov.

2:45-3 p.m. | Evaluation & Wrap Up | SICC Chair Danna Summers

Council Members will have an opportunity to share their input on the day and make recommendations for future meeting topics.

Next SICC Meeting:

Wednesday, July 17, 2024, | In-Person Colville, WA

Dept. of Children, Youth & Families

Early Support for Infants & Toddlers (ESIT) Program

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) | Virtual Meeting

Date: Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Time: 9 a.m. – 2:44 p.m.

Draft Meeting Minutes

9 - 9:22 a.m. | Welcome, Land Acknowledgement & Introductions | SICC Chair, Danna Summers

- ✚ The first 3 minutes were reserved to let members and attendees join the meeting.
- ✚ **Meeting Role & Purpose** statement and meeting agreements reviewed by SICC Chair, Danna Summers.
- ✚ SICC Chair, Danna Summers, gave her visual description and welcomed meeting attendees.
- ✚ Will Moncrease, Jr., ESIT Partnership & Collaboration Manager, shared his visual description and the *Zoom Meeting Dos and Don'ts and Keyboard Shortcuts*.
- ✚ Valerie Arnold, ESIT State Administrator, welcomed everyone and gave her physical description.
- ✚ Brian Frisina, Tribal Program Consultant, held a moment of respect leading a meaningful Land Acknowledgment.
 - [Native Land](#) is an app to help map Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages.
 - [The Office of Native Education \(ONE\)](#) aids school districts in meeting the educational needs of American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) students.
- ✚ **Motion:** Mary Cline Stively moved to approve the *February 21 agenda*, the previous *October 2023* and *January 2024 meeting minutes*, Shellea Quillen seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
- ✚ SICC Chair, Danna Summers, conducted SICC member roll call. SICC members each gave land acknowledgements, physical descriptions and brief introductions.

9:22 - 9:44 a.m. | Parent Stories: ESIT Services & PIE Cohort 6 Introduction

Vanessa Allen, ESIT Family Engagement Coordinator, introduced parent and PIE member, LoAn Nguyen. LoAn highlighted an important perspective that many Vietnamese families in the United States have a history of mistrust toward the US government, and then shared her journey of how that trust was built as she and her family were introduced to services for her son. LoAnn detailed their experience with Birth to Three early support services, occupational therapy, drop-in services, and the home visit program.

- ✚ **Question:** Thoughts and suggestions about improving services?
- ✚ **Recommendations:** Upon reflecting, LoAn was unsure how she got referred. She does remember that the *drop-in play time program* was helpful; there were stories and snacks, and her son benefited from learning routines. More spaces like this can help promote Birth to Three programs exist. A flyer is not enough. It's important to communicate with providers to share the play sessions as a resource for families. When realizing your child needs services, it's not that easy for families to access those services, even with *Child Find*. It's even more difficult for families with who may not speak English as a first language, and those with limited language skills. Verbally sharing about play group resources with community spaces, religious, community centers, for example, where Somalian and Spanish-speaking families spend time, is more effective to spread the word, versus a flyer that will get overlooked.



9:44 – 10:03 a.m. | Early Childhood Transition Parental Opt-Out Policy | Tammy McCauley, ESIT Accountability & Quality Improvement Manager

Tammy McCauley, ESIT Accountability & Quality Improvement Manager, gave a brief introduction, physical description, and updated the SICC council on the status of the development of the new Parental Opt-Out Policy. The policy was created in response to requests made by families. Over the last several years, many families have asked to have the option to decline having their child's name, birthday, parent name, and contact information shared with the public school district, when their child may be potentially eligible for special education preschool services under Part B of IDEA. Family Resources Coordinators shared these requests, and the ESIT State Leadership Office responded. Members had the opportunity to ask questions and share input on key elements of the Communication Plan.

Questions

- ✚ If a parent opts out, it may not happen in a timely manner. Would that supersede the state's timeline for referral and evaluation?
- ✚ Any insight why families are opting out?

[Parental Opt-Out Policy: For Those Children Potentially Eligible for Part B Special Education Preschool Services Presentation](#)

Send thoughts and comments to Tammy McCauley, at tammy.mccauley@dcyf.wa.gov or jessica.baffoe@dcyf.wa.gov.

10:03 – 10:13 a.m. | Break

10:13 a.m. – 11:32 a.m. | Listen and Talk: Tara Ellis, Birth to Three Program Director | Maura Berndsen, Executive Director | Spokane HOPE: Danette Driscoll, Executive Director
Understanding the Listening and Spoken Language Approach

Tara Ellis, Dannelle Driscoll, and Maura Berndsen, from Listen and Talk, gave brief introductions before their presentation: A Listening and Spoken Language Approach for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children.

The purpose of this presentation was to equip Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) professionals and families in Washington State with a better understanding of the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) approach, a set of strategies and principles designed to help children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH.) This presentation explored the effects of diminished hearing sensitivity and discussed how the LSL approach can empower children and families to establish a robust language base, using the primary language spoken in their household. This presentation also offered a broad overview of Part C processes, pertinent for families who have newly discovered their child's differing hearing levels. A key point that was emphasized was the crucial role that family participation plays in cultivating a child's listening and spoken language abilities. Additionally, the presentation provided insights into two Listening and Spoken Language programs that are available within Washington State.

Council members had the opportunity to share their insights, express their gratitude for the presentation and ask additional questions:

- ✚ Acknowledging that there are also other ways for families to explore than the listen and spoken approach.

- Other options are available to families who choose ASL.
- Listen and Talk, Spokane HOPE *educators* and FRC *educators* have the same title and very different roles. Listen and Talk, Spokane HOPE “educators” are more of “therapists” for deaf and hard of hearing kids and have more specialized training.
- Access and finding deaf mentors is a challenging issue across the state.

[A Listening and Spoken Language Approach for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Presentation](#)

11:32 – 11:42 a.m. | Break

11:42 a.m. – 11:54 a.m. | [Overview of Federal IDEA Part C Grant Application Process](#) |
Lauren Thompson, ESIT Resource Allocations Manager

Lauren Thompson gave a brief introduction before presenting the Overview of Federal IDEA Part C Grant Application Process.

The federal IDEA Part C grant application is an annual application prepared and submitted by DCYF to the federal Office of Special Education Programs, typically due May 1. The SICC has an important role in the development of the federal grant application, specifically to advise the State Lead Agency (DCYF) in making financial and programmatic decisions that support a coordinated and effective statewide early intervention system. Council members will learn about the overall expected timelines including public posting, public commenting period, and public hearing activities.

[State Considerations for IDEA Part C Subgranting](#)

[SICC Feb 2024 Grant Overview Presentation](#)

Questions? lauren.thompson@dcyf.wa.gov.

11:54 – 11:56 p.m. | No Public Comment

11:57 – 12:28 p.m. | Lunch

12:28 – 1:06 p.m. | [Committee Updates & Agency Updates](#)

Council members shared available reports from the State Leadership Agency, Chairs of the six Sub-Committees. Chairs shared motions to recommend for Council consideration and action. Tribal partners and state agency representatives serving on the SICC were invited to share updates.

- Valerie Arnold, Early Support for Infants & Toddlers – [ESIT State Lead Agency report](#)

- Brayde Willson, Chair, Public Policy Committee – [Finance & Public Policy Joint report](#)

Motion: Brayde Wilson, Chair of the Public Policy Committee, moved to approve the distribution of *The COVID Impact Survey*, SICC Member, Michelle La Motte, seconded the motion. Approved unanimously by council members.

- Julie German-Murrey, Chair, Personnel & Training Committee – [Personnel & Training report](#)

- ✚ **Ryan Guzman, Chair, OSPI** - Sharing the most recent February monthly updates here: [OSPI Special Education February 2024 Update \(govdelivery.com\)](#) and well as the most recent [data-specialeducation-walredatatrends2023.xlsx \(live.com\)](#).

1:06 – 1:30 p.m. | Introduction & Orientation to the OSEP Differentiated Monitoring System 2.0 | Valerie Arnold, ESIT Administrator

Valerie Arnold introduced the council members to the new federal Differentiated Monitoring System 2.0 conducted by the Office of Special Education Programs. Information included: the purpose of the review, a description of the key stages of the comprehensive process, the role of the SICC, Parent Training & Information Center, and local parents and program leaders, as well as the date recently set and confirmed for the onsite monitoring visit for DCYF.

[Introduction & Orientation to the OSEP Differentiated Monitoring System 2.0 Presentation](#)

[NCSI SAP SICC flyer](#)

1:30 - 1:40 p.m. | Agency Updates continued & Legislative Update | Allison Krutsinger/Stephanie Budrus

- ✚ **Sheryl Fryberg, Tulalip Tribes** – No official updated to share currently, it has been a challenging transition from 2023 to 2024 and getting their feet back on the ground. Feeling the impact of lack of staffing and decrease from 14 to 12 facilities.
- ✚ **Stephanie Budrus** – An update on [HB 1916 – 2023-24 Concerning funding for the early support for infants and toddlers program](#) (Companion Bill SB 5933) will be provided by leaders from the DCYF Office of Public Affairs. Information about the overall legislative process and annual timelines will be shared and there will be opportunities to ask questions.

[2024 Session Cutoff Calendar](#)

1:40 - 1:50 p.m. | Break

1:50 - 2:23 p.m. | Systems of Payments & Fees (SOPAF) | Tammy McCauley, Accountability & Quality Improvement Manager

Council members learned about the SOPAF Technical Work Group, a joint endeavor through the Public Policy Committee & Finance Committee, sessions held to date, and emerging recommendations for improvements. There was time to ask questions, advise and consult on next steps.

[SOPAF Revised Policy Presentation](#)

Question:

- ✚ **How do families from Tribes access services?** Shery Fryberg, Tulalip Tribes Representative, shared the critical perspective of the Tribes, of there being a history of mistrust toward the US government, and how important it is that families receive support to build that trust, so families can access the and information and services they need.

2:23 - 2:30 p.m. | Public Comments

This time is set aside for the audience to state comments relevant to the role and purpose of the SICC and provision of early support services and share feedback on the SICC meeting overall. If the individual providing comment would like their comment to be included in the meeting minutes, they must provide a written summary to the ESIT Community Collaboration Coordinator, E Renae` Antalan, at erenae.antalana@dcyf.wa.gov.

Public Comment #1: Please publish on the DCYF website, and route copies of the agenda and companion materials to those pre-registering for the SICC meetings, as early as possible. This will help local leaders know ahead of time if additional staffers may benefit from and can be encouraged to attend planned presentations.

Public Comment #2: Please consider developing and rolling out training and technical assistance materials to help families access secondary Medicaid coverage.

2:30 p.m. – 2:44 p.m. | Evaluation & Wrap Up | SICC Chair Danna Summers

SICC Members shared their reflections for today's meeting, and recommendations for the direction of our future work, to wrap up the meeting. Danna Summers, SICC Chair, gave closing remarks and adjourned the meeting.

Next SICC Meeting:

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 | Virtual, Teams Meeting

State Interagency Coordinating Council Committee Report

Personnel & Training Committee Report

Date: 4/11/2024

Chair/Vice Chair: Julie German-Murrey and Amy Baker

DCYF ESIT Staff Liaison: DeEtte Snyder

of Members: 15

Recruiting: No Yes

If yes, please describe type of membership recruiting: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

of Meetings Since Last SICC held on February 21, 2024 – we have had two meetings since February 21, 2024. Meetings were on: March 11, 2024 and April 8, 2024

Topics Covered: In March, the committee's regular meeting was replaced with participation in the Initial ESIT FRC Credential Webinar. In April, DeEtte Snyder provided an update on the Initial ESIT FRC Credential, reporting that 129 credentials have been issued so far. Adrienne O'Brien also gave a presentation on the revision process for mandatory trainings for ESIT professionals. She shared data on the feedback collected leading into the process of updating the training modules and introduced new software that allows for ongoing updates to these modules, unlike the static ones created previously.

Our next meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2024.

Committee Progress to Date:

Committee Challenges or Obstacles:

Motion(s):



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Finalized Date: April 11, 2024
ESIT State Interagency Coordinating Council
Approved for submission by: Julie German-Murrey and
Amy Baker

State Interagency Coordinating Council Committee Report

Service Delivery Committee Report

Date: 4/11/2024

Chair/Vice Chair: Ryan Guzman

DCYF ESIT Staff Liaison: Laurie Thomas

of Members: 8

Recruiting: No Yes

If yes, please describe type of membership recruiting: Parent Representatives

of Meetings Since Last SICC held on INSERT Date 3

Topics Covered:

Focus Areas

- Infant-Parent Mental Health Capacity Building
- Recruitment & Retention (Focus areas; Protection from Harm & Mattering at Work)
- Effective Early Childhood Transitions
- Materials review
- Working with childcare

February: Current review of ESIT forms – Consent to Evaluate, orientation of new SDC members.

- **March:** Public Policy Request; Safety and Code of Conduct needs related to the impact of the [Plan of Safe Care](#) . Discussed specific challenges providers have experienced and framing this within the priority area of staff retention in alignment with the [Surgeon General’s Framework on Workplace Mental Health and Well-being](#); the tool being used to support staff retention.
- **April: Staff Retention Priorities;**

Focus Area #1

Protection from Harm; prioritizing safety and wellness for staff working in home and community settings.

Safety: Workplace safety means all workers are in a safe and healthful work environment, protected from physical harm, injury, illness, and death. This is done through continued efforts to minimize occupational hazards and physical workplace violence, as well as psychological harm such as bias, discrimination, emotional hostility, bullying, and harassment.

Security: Security builds on safety to include financial, and job security, given the negative effects that layoffs and job loss can have on the workers and their families.



Focus area #2

Mattering at Work; addressing salary disparities, recognizing ESIT provider agency and individual provider contributions, and elevating mission and core principles as drivers of quality services.

The SDC continues to assess the impacts of current existing and planned legislation, and will review and make recommendations for specific support strategies and a robust stakeholder engagement plan to include a range of engagement opportunities with other committees and an emphasis on promoting equity and addressing potential bias in decisions related to services in the child's natural environment.

Committee Challenges or Obstacles:

There is a need for more parent representation on this subcommittee

Motion(s): **None at this time**



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

**Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council
April 2024 Quarterly Meeting
State Lead Agency Report**

New Law Allows ESIT Providers to Receive More Funding

March 26, 2024



Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) providers will now receive payment for the true dollar value of services they provide to families thanks to a bill signed by Gov. Jay Inslee today.

Inslee signed [House Bill 1916](#) into law, which will permit the full use of ESIT State Special Education 0-3 funding for the full months of service. Prior to the bill signing, DCYF and local ESIT provider agencies were prohibited from counting eligible children for the full number of months they receive services.

“The referral and intake process sets the tone for our relationship with each family and can take up to 45 days to complete,” said Colleen Fuchs, executive director at Joya Child and Family Development in Spokane, who supported the bill. “The month that requires the most resources is the month ESIT doesn’t currently fund. One additional month of funding means we can serve more families!”

[HB 1916 will go into effect July 1, 2024.](#)

Date: April 17, 2024 | Partnership, Prevention & Services Division
Submitted by Valerie Arnold, ESIT State Administrator



Celebrations! Bill Signing for SHB 1916



There is much to celebrate in the successful passing of SHB 1916 and the Bill signing! We are so blessed to have Representative Senn as the Bill's legislative champion!

Appreciation and gratitude is plentiful and includes all of the individual, small, and large group activities undertaken throughout the legislative process ---from preparation and planning, ongoing discussions and clarifications,

testimonies, amendments, and all the way through to successful conclusion and then implementation!

There are so many voices that united to make sure this important legislation crossed the finish line --- parents, practitioners, administrators, advocates, policy analysts, state funding partners, and of course our legislative sponsor, newest member seated on the State Interagency Coordinating Council. The witnesses gathered around Governor Inslee as he signs the Bill in this photograph, proudly represent the multitude of influencers, both those out front and those behind the scenes. Together, united in service to improved outcomes for children and their families, influencers can now catch their breath, stand back and say "Together we can do hard things and together we did this!".

ACORN Progress in Motion



We continue to be excited with the positive momentum garnered through the design and development nearing completion for ESIT's new statewide data management system, dubbed ACORN by local program constituents. The project continues to be driven by extensive collaboration with partners at all levels of the system as we move into the final steps of transitioning from the obsolete Silverlight Data Management System (DMS) to the new ACORN DMS.

As consistently messaged by Kim Hopkins, Data Systems & Analysis Manager through ongoing communications to the field, we have established a 90-day advance notification period leading up to the final launch. As a reminder, the final launch date will not be established until the final work product has been completed by the Public Consulting Group, including successful



maintenance of the data exchanges that are currently in place and data migration testing has concluded.

As a reminder, once the final product is ready, we will implement the 90-day advance notification safeguard by announcing the final launch date and begin implementation of an advanced three-tiered training framework to be available during the 90-day active training environment. Please continue to reach out to Kim with questions or reflections at kim.hopkins@dcyf.wa.gov.

Three-Pronged Approach for Vision and Hearing Screening

DeEtte Snyder, Workforce Development Manager, is pleased to share exciting news. Starting July 1, 2024, the Three-Pronged Approach (TPA) will be the required protocol to gather information for vision and hearing as a part of the creation of the present level of development (PLOD) in every initial IFSP and annual review. The TPA was developed by the Washington Sensory Disabilities Services (WSDS) and is a comprehensive protocol to identify risks factors for a child's vision and hearing to lead to possible referral for medical evaluation and/or to Blind/Low Vision and/or Deaf/Hard of Hearing ESIT Providers. The protocol includes a summary form to document all screening activities including tools to 1) review medical records and interview parents, 2) identify developmental skills related to vision and hearing, and 3) observe physical and behavioral characteristics. Training modules on conducting the TPA are available now in the [DCYF Training Portal](#) for all ESIT Professionals. Please feel free to reach out to DeEtte with questions or share reflections at deette.snyder@dcyf.wa.gov.

Joint Collaboration Across SICC Public Policy Committee & SICC Service Delivery Committee: Centering Child & Family Focused Opportunities in Response to E2SHB 1227 Keeping Families Together Act

A focus on the Keeping Families Together Act (E2SHB 1227) has been elevated to joint planning for two of the SICC Sub-Committees. Both the Public Policy Sub-Committee, chaired by Brayde Willson and the Service Delivery Sub-Committee, chaired by Ryan Guzman are turning attention to needs and opportunities voiced by local ESIT Provider Agencies. To help set the stage, in 2022 the Washington State Legislature passed [E2SHB 1227](#) - the Keeping Families Together Act. The act made several changes to RCW 13.34, the Juvenile Court Act, regarding child dependency cases.

The intent of the act was to safely reduce the number of children placed into foster care, reduce racial disproportionality in the child welfare system, and support relatives to take care of children when they must be placed out of home to protect their safety. As noted on the agencies [Thriving Families](#) webpage, early data show the new law is having its intended impact. There has been a 30% reduction in the number of children coming into care between July 1, 2023 and September 30, 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. It was also noted on the webpage that the largest reductions in out-of-home placements are among infants.

Date: April 17, 2024 | Partnership, Prevention & Services Division
Submitted by Valerie Arnold, ESIT State Administrator



Together, with support from the ESIT State Leadership Office and the Family and Community Supports Section under the Prevention, Partnership, & Services Division, the two sub-committees are actively seeking training and technical assistance resources to support development of safety-related policies, procedures, and/or practice precautions for ESIT practitioners as they continue to provide family-centered services in natural environments. Updates on progress and next steps will be made available as new developments unfold. Please feel free to reach out to me at valerie.arnold@dcyf.wa.gov or preferably (360) 485-7773 with input and/or reflections.

Announcing Family Resources Coordinator ESIT Credential

Family Resources Coordinators (FRC) in Washington State can now receive the Initial Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) Credential once they complete their Initial Training Requirements and complete a credential application. The credential signifies the FRC is fully qualified to provide service coordination. The first round of credentials were issued starting in February for newly hired FRCs completing training. Currently, any FRC can apply for a credential as training records are reviewed to ensure all previous training requirements are met. The intention is for all FRCs to hold a valid credential by July 2024. As of April 16th, the DCYF/ESIT Workforce Development Team has issued 154 credentials. For more information, please feel free to contact Lori Holbrook, Workforce Development Specialist at lori.holbrook@dcyf.wa.gov.

IDEA Part C Dispute Resolution Requirements & Methods for Identification of Non-Compliance Clarified

[OSEP Memorandum 2023-01](#) titled *Guidance on State General Supervision Responsibilities* published by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) on July 24, 2023 provides clarification and expectations for a number of Part C of IDEA requirements, including the [Dispute Resolution](#) requirements under Sec 303.340. In addition to tracking and reporting on compliance activities related to formal dispute resolution mechanisms, State Lead Agencies are also expected to track, resolve, and report on informal inquiries related to potential areas of concern and/or non-compliance. This includes informal family inquiries received by the ESIT State Leadership Office. Prior to OSEP making available these published interpretations, inquiries from families were not consistently tracked and recorded by the ESIT State Leadership Office and would be processed based on individual family circumstances and communication with local provider agencies, always in the pursuit of a satisfactory resolution.

OSEP defines an “area of concern” as a credible allegation regarding an IDEA policy, procedure, practice, or other requirement that raises one or more potential implementation or compliance issues, if confirmed true. Such credible allegations (e.g., information and awareness) may come from integrated monitoring activities, data reviews, grant reviews, stakeholder calls, media reports, dispute resolution systems, or other mechanisms that relate to IDEA implementation (see Question B:1). When the State Lead Agency (SLA) is made aware of a credible allegation, it



Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

must engage in due diligence activities in a timely manner and reach a conclusion regarding compliance in a reasonable amount of time. If non-compliance is confirmed, then the SLA must issue a finding of non-compliance and all of the related requirements for timely correction are effectively in play.

Again, prior to OSEP making available these published interpretations, findings of non-compliance were generally limited to and issued as a result of a formal monitoring component being implemented by the ESIT State Leadership Office. Be sure and watch for upcoming invitations to participate in multiple circles of engagement opportunities to develop written protocols, statewide communication plans, training and technical assistance materials related to these new OSEP published interpretations. To share reflections and/or ask clarifying questions, please reach out to Tammy McCauley, ESIT Accountability & Quality Improvement Manager at tammy.mccauley@dcyf.wa.gov.

Equity in Access-Technical Work Group (EIA-TWG) Ready to Soar

We have a total of 12 Influencers who have volunteered to engage, influence and support the drafting of equity-based metrics that can drive the local decision-making process for the use of the *IDEA Part C Equity in Access Funding Set-Aside*, totaling \$500,000 statewide.

Remember the goal of the EIA-TWG is to create a quantifiable set of equity-based metrics that can drive the local decision-making process for the use of the federal set-aside funds. The hope is that the metrics will involve data sets local programs already have available or can readily gain access to. Examples of metrics include geographic distinctions, travel time and/or distances, disproportionality in enrollment levels (calculation of the degree to which children from a specific racial/ethnic group are more likely (over-representation) or less likely (under-representation) to be enrolled in the program than children from all other racial/ethnic groups combined), percentage of enrolled children who are Medicaid-eligible, or percentage of traditionally underserved children including wards of the state and children who are unhoused.

Much appreciation and gratitude are extended to these volunteers who include local administrators, business and finance managers, Family Resources Coordinators, policy advisors and analysts, and a current ESIT parent. Influencers represent both County Lead Agencies (CLA) and Non-CLA Affiliated ESIT Provider Agencies. The 12 member EIA-TWG recently received a Doodle Poll to set the initial 90-minute work session in mid-to-late April. Follow-up work sessions will then be established by the EIA-TWG to engage two or three more times, for 60–90-minute segments, between April-May 2024.

--END REPORT--

Special Education Updates

April is Autism Acceptance Month

April is Autism Acceptance Month which provides another opportunity for us to acknowledge and celebrate the diverse experiences and contributions of individuals with autism. By celebrating and acknowledging neurodiversity, we can challenge stereotypes and misconceptions. This month encourages schools, districts, and the larger society to embrace the unique perspectives and strengths of individuals with autism, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all. This month is just one reminder to reflect on how our schools and communities are fostering a culture of acceptance, understanding and appreciation for diverse learners. We invite you to join us in celebrating Autism Acceptance Month by participating and engaging in events and discussions aimed at promoting acceptance and inclusion.



To learn more about students with autism, visit the [OSEP Fast Facts: Children Identified With Autism \(Updated 2024\)](#).

For digital materials and resources, please visit the [CDC website](#).

Integrated MTSS Conference: Call for Proposals and Registration Open Now



WASA and OSPI are excited to announce the 2024 Integrated MTSS Conference. This year's conference, Empowering Excellence: Co-Designing Systems through Instructional Leadership, will be held on the campus of Washington State University (WSU) in Pullman, Washington from July 31– August 2.

With our theme of Empowering Excellence: Co-Designing Systems through Instructional Leadership the focus of the conference will be on best practices and approaches that address the strands listed below:

- Family, Student & Community Engagement
- Reducing Restraint & Eliminating Isolation
- Student Well-being & Mental Health
- Tiered Academic Supports

You and your school district teams will not want to miss these dynamic three days of impactful learning. We encourage prompt registration as we expect this conference to fill quickly!

Conference dates and times:

July 31, 2024 | 8:30 am–4 pm

August 1, 2024 | 8:30 am–4 pm

August 2, 2024 | 8:30 am–2 pm

Registration is \$199 per person. Up to 11 Washington state Approved Clock Hours are available (dependent on your participation in individual sessions) and are included in the registration. Register [here](#). Questions? Contact Ryan Hickerson at [Ryan Hickerson - WASA](#) or 360-489-3640 with registration questions.

Call for Proposals

Deadline: April 18, 2024

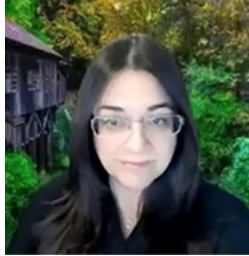
With our theme of Empowering Excellence: Co-Designing Systems through Instructional Leadership, topics of interest to the Conference Committee include best practices and approaches that address the strands listed below:

- Family, Student & Community Engagement

- Family, Student & Community Engagement
- Reducing Restraint & Eliminating Isolation
- Student Well-being & Mental Health
- Tiered Academic Supports

Click [here](#) for the presenter application and more information about the call for proposals. Contact [Amy Wright at WASA](#) with questions about the proposal process.

Reminder: Notice of Public Comment Period for Annual State Application of Federal Year 2024 of the IDEA Federal Grant



Washington state's annual application for federal IDEA funds for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024 has been posted and will be available for public review for 60 days, with a comment period of 30 days, prior to final submission to the US Department of Education (DOE) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) by May 31, 2024. Check out this overview video about the application process, from Dr. Tania May, OSPI Assistant Superintendent of Special Education.

- [Review the Annual State Application for FFY 2024](#)
- [Review the Annual Budget \(called the Interactive Spreadsheet\) for FFY 2024](#)
- [Review the General Education Provisions Act \(GEPA\) form for FFY 2024](#)

Two virtual/online Public Comment Hearings have been scheduled. One was already held in March, but there is still one more opportunity for Public Comment:

- Wednesday, April 17, 2024, from 9–10 am | [Zoom link](#)

All members of the public are invited to attend the Public Comment Hearings and provide verbal or written comment on the annual application for IDEA funds and the proposed budget. The Public Comment Hearings are posted to the [OSPI Rulemaking and Public Comment](#) website. Comments may also be submitted in writing to [OSPI Special Education](#) no later than May 8, 2024.

Note that each scheduled meeting has a separate Zoom link. If participants need accommodations beyond closed captioning, please contact the OSPI Special Education division at [OSPI Special Education](#) or call 360-725-0725.

Program Improvement Updates

[Click here for this month's Program Improvement updates](#) on the following topics:

- Disproportionality Workbooks due May 1 from Identified Districts
- Special Education Data, Fiscal, and Program Office Hours

Fiscal and Data Updates

[Click here for this month's Fiscal & Data updates](#) on the following topics:

- Data Reporting for Students with IEPs: End of Year Federal Special Education Data Reporting
- Excess Cost
- Safety Net Updates

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Updates

[Click here for this month's ECSE updates](#) on the following topics:

- OSPI Resources to Braiding Federal and State Funds to Support Early Learning Programs
- Biden-Harris Administration Releases Resources to Support Preschool

Expansion and Early School Success

- ECSE Inclusion Champions' Featured Resources
 - Reminder: ECSE Office Hours
 - Key Strategies for Recruitment and Retention of Personnel Serving Young Children with Disabilities
 - Transition to Kindergarten
 - Professional Development Opportunities
-

Tips from the Special Education Division



Scheduling Annual IEP Meetings and Parent Participation

Tip of the Month!

How can school districts ensure parent participation at the annual IEP meeting?

Information from Our Partners

Click here for this month's updates from the following partners:

- 2024 Community Summit
- Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB): Teacher of the Visually Impaired Update
- Department of Health Releases Updated COVID-19 Guidance
- Webinar: Learning Standards Review Project Update

Professional Development & Conferences

[Click here for professional development opportunities and resources](#) including:

- Save the Date: Prepping for PROGRESS 2024
- Behavior Supports in Schools Conference
- Graduation Equity Webinar - Systems & Interventions for Attendance & Reengagement

Reminders!



This section includes hyperlinks to important information shared in previous monthly updates.

Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network (IPTN) website is LIVE!

The IPTN recently launched its website, offering insights into its vision for improved access to rigorous instruction and enhanced postsecondary outcomes for all Washington state students. Explore our evolving [IPTN website](#) and reach out to [IPTN](#) for questions.

Special Education and Institutional Education Directory

The [Special Education and Institutional Education Directory](#) is posted on the OSPI website. The directory is updated monthly, on the first working day of every month. Submit changes to the [Special Education email](#).

Please note, that districts must update their contact information with the Special Education office to receive emails sent out from the Special Education office. Updating your district's contact information in the Special Education and Institutional Education Directory does not update your district's information in EGMS or GovDelivery.

eLearning for Educators: An OSPI Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network (IPTN) Partner

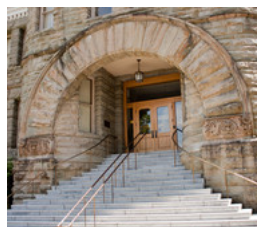
The [eLearning for Educators Project](#) offers affordable online courses in addition to no-cost mini-training modules and technical assistance trainings. Designed for busy educators, our online courses are offered asynchronously, available to all educators, and accepted by OSPI for certificate maintenance (clock hours). There are no registration deadlines. Register online via our [website](#) and you will have three months to complete the course and/or other offering. Questions? Contact us: [eLearning for Educators](#)

Got questions? Ask OSPI!

OSPI has launched a new publication that invites all Washington residents to ask OSPI questions directly and get answers publicly. Named, The Study Session, this publication is an opportunity for families and community members to engage with OSPI on all things public education. It is published once per month on the OSPI Blog. [Click to learn more about The Study Session](#), including how to submit questions.

ALL STUDENTS PREPARED FOR POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS, CAREERS, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

Led by State Superintendent Chris Reykdal, OSPI oversees K-12 public education in Washington state. Our mission is to provide funding, resources, tools, data and technical assistance that enable educators to ensure students succeed in our public schools, are prepared to access post-secondary training and education, and are equipped to thrive in their careers and lives.



STAY IN TOUCH

[Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Contact Us](#)

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

Update your subscriptions, modify your password or email address, or stop subscriptions at any time on your [Subscriber Preferences page](#). You will need to use your email address to log in. If you have questions or problems with the subscription service, please visit [subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com](#).

OSPI provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director, P.O. Box 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200, 360-725-6162 (TTY: 360-664-3631), equity@k12.wa.us.

This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider.



wapave.org

Partnerships for Action Voices for Empowerment

Our mission

- PAVE provides support, training, information and resources to empower and give voice to individuals, youth and families impacted by disabilities.

Our vision

- We envision an inclusive community that values the unique abilities, cultures, voices, contributions and potential of all individuals.

Our values

- Collaborative Partnerships
- Compassionate Co-Conspirators
- Equity
- Opportunities and Choice
- Valuing Diversity and Inclusion

What We Do

- Empower parents and caregivers with the skills to ensure their children receive an appropriate education and health care.
- Offer emotional support and information to families of children with special needs.
- Connect families with health care resources and support for children with special health care needs.
- Provide specialized training for military parents navigating the unique challenges of raising children with disabilities
- Provide vital support to family caregivers by offering information on various respite care options and financial assistance programs.

PAVE is the Parent Center for Washington



Empower parents and caregivers with the skills to ensure their children receive an appropriate education and health care.

Parent Training and Information (PTI) helps Washingtonians support students with disabilities.

PTI does this by providing information, training, resources, and technical assistance to help family caregivers, students and professionals understand rights and responsibilities within education systems. Examples of technical assistance include guidance about how to seek an evaluation for special education services or how to organize concerns for a meeting with the school.

PTI empowers families with basic principles and vocabulary from federal and state disability laws to further understanding about how students access their right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

www.wapave.org



Pierce County parent and family connection resources, DDA, services available, training, and events.

1. **Coffee and Tea with P2P:** Meets online 1st and 3rd Friday of each month from 10 - 11 am PT
2. **Black/African American Family Support Group:** Meets online on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month from 10 - 11 am PT
3. **Spanish Speaking Family Support Group:** Meets online 3rd Tuesday of each month from 6:30 - 7:30 pm PT
4. **Awesome Autism Parent Family Support Group:** Meets online 2nd Wednesday of each month from 12 - 1 pm PT
5. **Parent to Parent Lunch and Learn:** Meets online 1st Thursday of each month from 12 - 1 pm PT
6. **Youth Advocacy Support Group:** Meets in person at University Place Library, last Friday of each month from 5 – 6 pm PT

[P2P Padlet](#)

To register: <https://www.tfaforms.com/5080337>



Connect families with health care resources and support for children with special health care needs.

The Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2FHIC) is dedicated to assisting families of children and youth with special health care needs and the professionals who support them in securing healthcare funding.

- Navigating Complex Needs: Recognizes the chronic and complex challenges faced by parents and caregivers in financing their children's health care.
- Resource Provision: Offers advice, multiple resources, and access to a supportive network of families and professionals for support and information.
- Family Voices Collaboration: Works with Family Voices and the National Center for Family / Professional Partnerships to provide technical assistance and training.
- Building Partnerships: Creates connections with other Family-to-Family organizations for enhanced support and resource sharing.



Provide specialized training for military parents navigating the unique challenges of raising children with disabilities

STOMP's mission continues to be in service to military families by providing information and resources that empower military families to access services for their children with disabilities.

STOMP has been serving thousands of military families with children, offering both in-person workshops at various military installations and virtual workshops.

April is the Month of the
Military Child



Go to wapave.org and type "STOMP workshops" in the search bar for information on upcoming workshops!



Provide vital support to family caregivers by offering information on various respite care options and financial assistance programs.

PAVE's Role:

- Hosts Lifespan Respite Washington (LRW) in collaboration with Washington State's Department of Social and Health Services.
- Manages the Lifespan Respite Voucher program, aiding unpaid, unserved family caregivers statewide.

Lifespan Respite Voucher:

Voucher Purpose: Lifespan Respite WA provides a financial voucher to unpaid caregivers for respite services.

Voucher Services: in-home services, recreation, camps, day services, educational classes, retreats, and 24-hour care.

Voucher Value: \$1,000 per household annually, prorated if caring for more than one person, and must be used within 90 days of issuance.

lifespanrespitewa.org

Applying for a Voucher:
<https://www.tfaforms.com/4694142>

Toolkits Ready for You!



[Where to Begin When A Student Needs Help](#)
[Ages 3-5 Transition Toolkit](#)
[Early Learning Toolkit](#)
[School to Adulthood: Transition Planning Toolkit](#)
[Behavioral Health Toolkit](#)



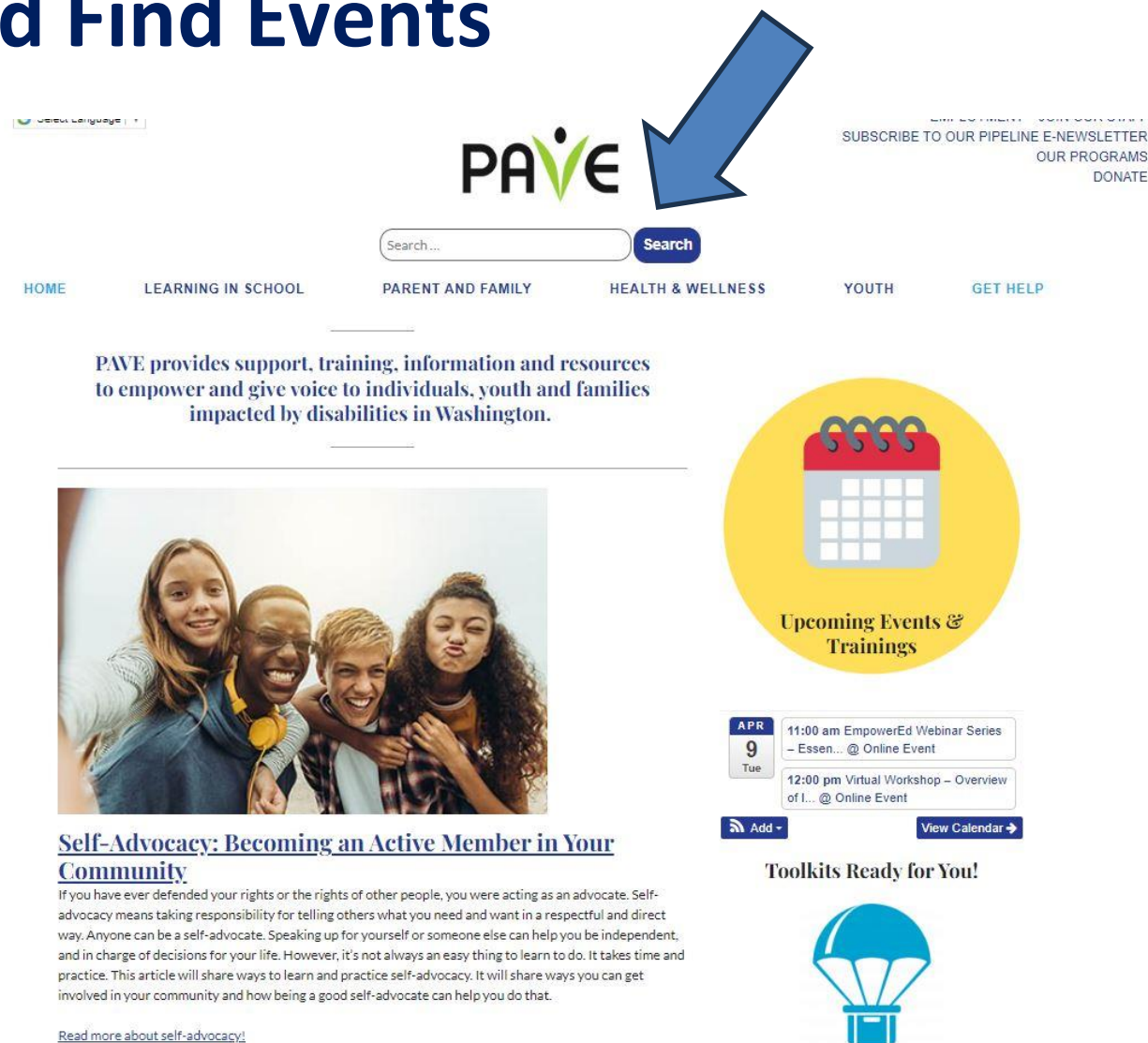
Upcoming Events & Trainings

APR	11:00 am EmpowerEd Webinar Series – Essen... @ Online Event
9 Tue	12:00 pm Virtual Workshop – Overview of I... @ Online Event

 Add  View Calendar 

Search Article Topics and Find Events

- COVID
- IEP
- Child Find
- Down Syndrome
- Respite
- DDA
- Self Advocacy
- Healthcare
- Evaluation
- Bullying
- Behavior




The screenshot shows the PAVE website homepage. At the top right, there is a navigation menu with links for "SUBSCRIBE TO OUR PIPELINE E-NEWSLETTER", "OUR PROGRAMS", and "DONATE". Below this is a search bar with a "Search" button. The main navigation bar includes "HOME", "LEARNING IN SCHOOL", "PARENT AND FAMILY", "HEALTH & WELLNESS", "YOUTH", and "GET HELP". A central banner reads: "PAVE provides support, training, information and resources to empower and give voice to individuals, youth and families impacted by disabilities in Washington." Below the banner is a photo of four diverse young people smiling. To the right of the photo is a yellow circular icon with a calendar, labeled "Upcoming Events & Trainings". Below this is a calendar snippet for April 9th (Tuesday) with two events: "11:00 am EmpowerEd Webinar Series - Essen... @ Online Event" and "12:00 pm Virtual Workshop - Overview of L... @ Online Event". There are "Add" and "View Calendar" buttons. Below the calendar is a section titled "Toolkits Ready for You!" with a blue parachute icon.

PAVE

Search...

HOME LEARNING IN SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY HEALTH & WELLNESS YOUTH GET HELP

PAVE provides support, training, information and resources to empower and give voice to individuals, youth and families impacted by disabilities in Washington.



Self-Advocacy: Becoming an Active Member in Your Community

If you have ever defended your rights or the rights of other people, you were acting as an advocate. Self-advocacy means taking responsibility for telling others what you need and want in a respectful and direct way. Anyone can be a self-advocate. Speaking up for yourself or someone else can help you be independent, and in charge of decisions for your life. However, it's not always an easy thing to learn to do. It takes time and practice. This article will share ways to learn and practice self-advocacy. It will share ways you can get involved in your community and how being a good self-advocate can help you do that.

[Read more about self-advocacy!](#)

Upcoming Events & Trainings


APR 9 Tue

11:00 am EmpowerEd Webinar Series - Essen... @ Online Event

12:00 pm Virtual Workshop - Overview of L... @ Online Event

Add View Calendar

Toolkits Ready for You!





We Are Here To Help You

Helpful tips while you wait:

- Share the best phone number and time of day to reach you.
- Your request may generate referrals to more than one program of PAVE! This is to better serve you and your family's needs.
- Please check your email and voicemail if you have not heard from us.
- For emergency issues please call 911 and to protect vulnerable children and adults:
 - Child Protective Services [1-866-ENDHARM or 1-866-363-42760]
 - Adult Protective Services [1-877-734-6277]
 - Nationwide [Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) [call or text 988]

Completing the help request:

All fields marked with an asterisk* are required.

1. Choose your role
2. Fill out your information
3. Check the box that you are not a robot
4. Click submit and we have received your form!

Essential information is your name, a phone numbers and email address. What if you don't have all of three of those? Please call 1-800-572-7368 and follow the prompts to leave a message.

Help Request Form

Please fill out the information below:

Click your role below *

Parent/Caregiver Youth Self-Advocate Adult Self-Advocate Professional

It is the policy of PAVE to provide support, information, and training for families, professionals and interested others on a number of topics. In no way do these activities constitute providing legal advice. PAVE is not a legal firm or a legal services agency.

Phone interpretation available – Interpretación telefónica disponible – 電話通話サービスあり – Доступна телефонна интерпретация – Waan kuu nei kamaa turubaan telefon ah – Có sẵn dịch vụ thông dịch qua điện thoại – 電話通話サービスあり

Go To:

[WAPAVE.ORG/
GET-HELP!](https://www.wapave.org/get-help)

Fill out an online request.

Or Call Toll Free: 800-572-7368
(800-5PARENT)

Find us on Facebook



PAVE - Partnerships for Action Voices for Empowerment

4.8K likes • 5.2K followers



[Learn more](#)

[Liked](#)

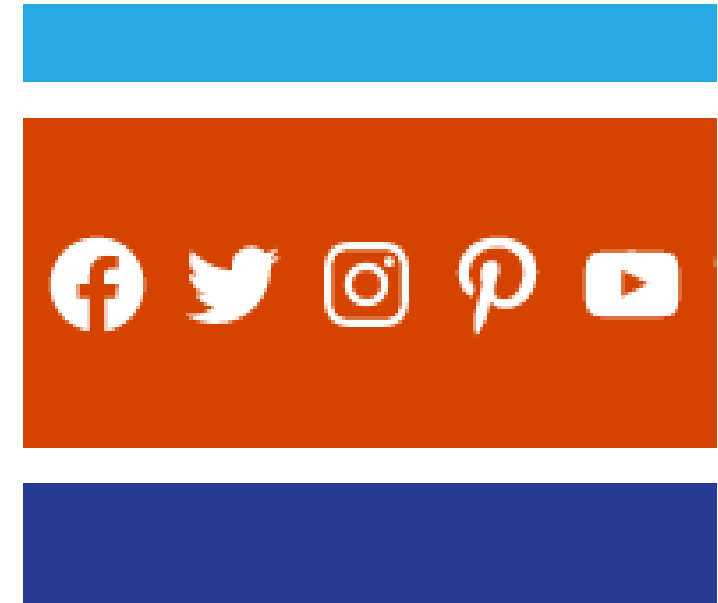
[Message](#)

[Posts](#) [About](#) [Mentions](#) [Reviews](#) [Reels](#) [Photos](#) [More](#) ▾



Pave Social Media

- facebook.com/PAVE.WA/
- twitter.com/pave_org/
- instagram.com/pave_empowers/
- pinterest.com/wapave/_created/
- youtube.com/user/waPAVE/featured



Disclaimers

PAVE is a nonprofit organization that provides information, training, individual assistance, and resources. PAVE is not a legal firm or legal service agency, and as such the information contained in this presentation is provided for the purpose of informing and should not be considered as a means of taking the place of legal advice that must be obtained through an attorney. PAVE may be able to assist you in identifying an attorney in your area but cannot provide direct referrals. The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



reminder:

✓ take care
of yourself!

THANK YOU...AND REMEMBER SELF-CARE!!!

“ Self-care is not selfish
or self-indulgent. We
cannot nurture others from a
dry well. We need to take care
of our own needs first, then we
can give from our surplus, our
abundance.

Jennifer Louden

thepeopleproject.com



NOTE: Handout Edited/Redacted for Privacy of a Minor. Please feel free to Contact Cass Griffin Bennett at cassia.griffin@gmail.com.

STATE INTERAGENCY
COORDINATING COUNCIL
APRIL 17, 2024

Toddler AAC

What I Wish Our Early Supports Team
Had Known About How 'Early' AAC Can
Help Families Thrive

CASS GRIFFIN BENNETT

NOTE: Handout Edited/Redacted for Privacy of a Minor. Please feel free to Contact Cass Griffin Bennett at cassia.griffin@gmail.com.

Today's Presentation

About Us & Our AAC Experience via Videos & Facebook Posts

INCLUDING

Biggest Effects

Why? My Felt Safety Premise

What? When? How? Strategies & Parent Pro-tips

Why 2 May Actually Be Easier

Biggest Takeaways

NWACS Resources

What I've Been Up To & My Ask

Questions & Discussion



What is AAC?

AAC stands for augmentative and alternative communication. It refers to tools and strategies that can enhance speech or provide a completely different means of communication.

AAC can be aided (i.e., using a tool) or unaided (i.e., no tool needed), such as sign language or gestures. The truth is we all use some AAC. We text, type, write and use gestures. Additional tools, such as communication devices, books or apps, can provide a means of communication for individuals who are unable to speak or for whom speech is not always their primary mode.



@the.aac.coach



CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

My Why

THIS IS NOT ABOUT ME

DOCUMENTARY FEATURING JORDYN ZIMMERMAN



CAME OUT IN LATE 2021

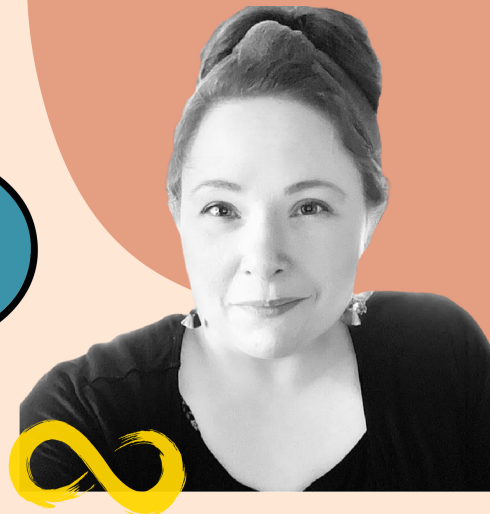
CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

CASS GRIFFIN BENNETT

NOTE: Handout Edited/Redacted for Privacy of a Minor. Please feel free to Contact Cass Griffin Bennett at cassia.griffin@gmail.com.

MY GUIDING PARENTING GOAL

To raise my daughters to be their own best self-advocates



NOTE: Handout Edited/Redacted for Privacy of a Minor. Please feel free to Contact Cass Griffin Bennett at cassia.griffin@gmail.com.



“JUST A MOM” DISCLAIMER

BA from Smith College
NWACS Board Member
AASR Volunteer



1

KIDS ARE INTRINSICALLY MOTIVATED TO CONNECT

2



Why? My Felt Safety Premise

MORE RELIABLE ROBUST COMMUNICATION

leads to

INCREASED FELT SAFETY

leads to

MORE STABLE REGULATION FOUNDATION

leads to

MORE FREQUENT ABILITY TO ENGAGE, PARTICIPATE, STRETCH & DEVELOP & LEARN

My Own Evolution:

Two is not too early to start
TO
Two is a great age to start

Why?

- Brain development in early childhood
- Less communication trauma
- Developmentally-appropriate topics are easiest for adults to learn modeling on too!

& Remember These Effects?

PREPARATION & TRANSITIONS & NEW EXPERIENCES & PREDICTABILITY & SELF-ADVOCACY

COMMUNICATION

SHARED MEANING
MAKING

BONDING

SENSORY VALIDATION

CONNECTION

REPAIR FOR
MISCOMMUNICATIONS

FAMILY LIFE

FUN & JOY

REGULATION

BUILDING PROBLEM
SOLVING SKILLS

LESS FRUSTRATION

Why Wait?

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

NWACS

NorthWest
Augmentative
Communication
Society

Community, Education & Support



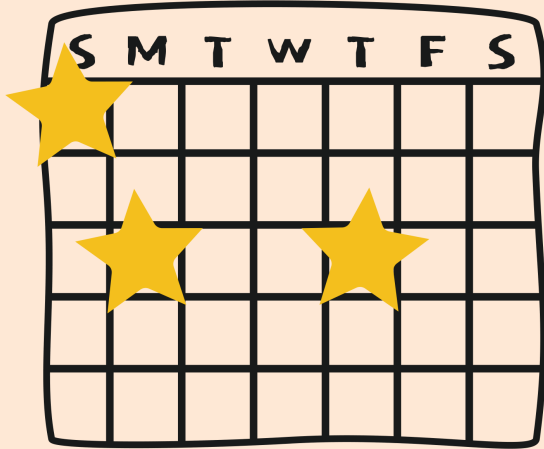
“FAMILY AAC (HOSTED BY NWACS)”

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

NWACS

NorthWest
Augmentative
Communication
Society

Community, Education & Support



Annual Conference

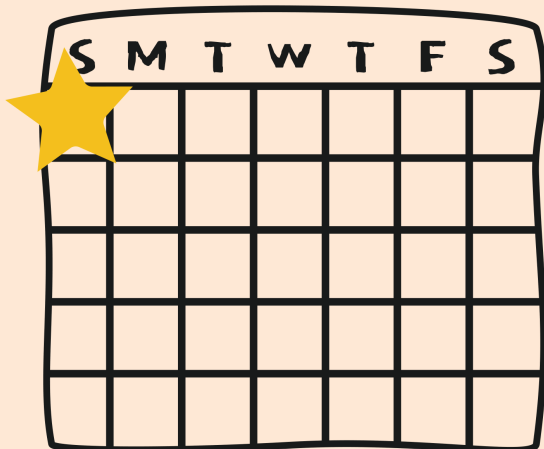
Monthly Events

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

NWACS

NorthWest
Augmentative
Communication
Society

Community, Education & Support




NWACS CAREGIVER MEETUP

Zoom Meeting

Target audience: Parents/guardians of AAC users who are gestalt language processors

Sunday, March 3, 2024
3:00pm - 4:30pm Pacific

 nwacs.info/outreach-committee

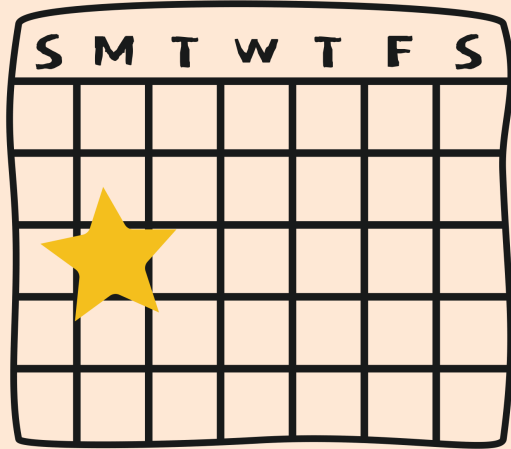
1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

NWACS

NorthWest
Augmentative
Communication
Society

Community, Education & Support



NWACS Study Buddies

An AAC-related virtual "book club" type meeting. Anyone interested in deepening their knowledge of AAC is welcome to attend! Discussion will be on self-selected materials from the NWACS Website.

Monday, March 18th, 2024
6pm Pacific / 9pm Eastern
Zoom Meeting

NWACS logo and website URL: nwacs.info/outreach/committee

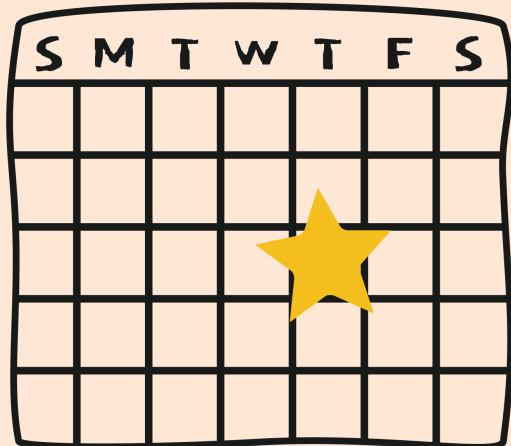
3RD MONDAY OF THE MONTH

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

NWACS

NorthWest
Augmentative
Communication
Society

Community, Education & Support



NWACS AAC LEARNING NETWORK

What is Comprehensive Literacy and Ideas for Literacy at Home
with Marci Revelli

Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 7pm Pacific
(Zoom meeting)

NWACS logo and website URL: https://nwacs.info/overing/learnnet

3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
RECORDED

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

NWACS

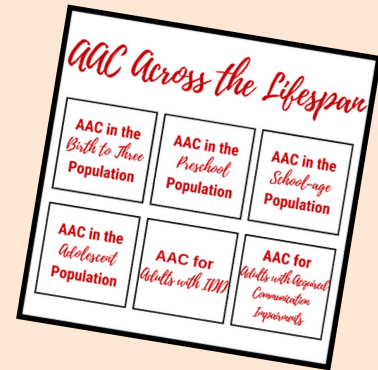
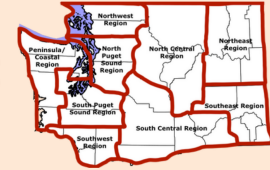
NorthWest
Augmentative
Communication
Society

Community, Education & Support

<https://nwacs.info/for-parents>

<https://nwacs.info/for-providers>

<https://nwacs.info/for-educators>



CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

NWACS

NorthWest
Augmentative
Communication
Society

Community, Education & Support

You got an AAC device!
WHAT DO YOU DO AT HOME?
1 All The Words
Your child needs full access to a robust language system. They can't learn or use words if they do not have access to them! Let your child explore all the words on their AAC device. So much learning will happen during the time they spend exploring and experimenting!
2 Model Without Expectation
An Important Step to learning to use an AAC system is seeing and hearing it being used. A lot! Use your child's AAC system to talk. Point to touch symbols on the AAC system during routines and authentic interactions. Do not expect or require your child to repeat or respond to what you say. Talk about what is happening. Describe what you are doing. Narrate your thoughts, feelings, and problem-solving. Talk about what your child is interested in, doing, and expressing in other ways. Start with saying 1 or 2 words at a time using the AAC system as you verbalize your complete statement.
Your child might not appear to pay attention to your modeling. That is okay. Keep modeling anyway! You might touch the AAC system more than your child at first. That is okay. Keep going!
Check out this video on Modeling Without Expectation from the AAC Coach (4 minutes): bit.ly/ModelWithoutExpectations
3 Find A Community
Get connected with a support network
On Facebook:
• NWACS Family AAC Group
bit.ly/NWACSfamilyAACgroup
On the NWACS website (www.nwacs.info):
• NWACS Outreach Committee
• AAC Information for Parents

WHAT TO EXPECT
Your child may...
• "Play" with the device.
• tap buttons to explore
• open folders in the device
Explore the words in the device.
• tap buttons to hear what they say
Experiment with the device.
• tap buttons that make strings of words; they may not make a lot of sense
• play with language - this is babbling, studying, and learn
Repeat on the device.
• find a favorite word they think sounds funny
• find a word they think sounds interesting
• press this word over and over again
You may see this in the first few days/weeks. And also over many months: child may not use their AAC device in a traditionally expected way. They may not suddenly up communicate in a complex way. They are learning and communicating!
It is a process and takes time!
All these things are normal and are part of the learning process.
NWACS is the oldest and longest-running in the Pacific Northwest for the support of complex communication needs. It is a completely volunteer organization that was founded in the late 1970s. We focus on educating and raising awareness about augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).
Learn more: www.nwacs.info

Getting Started with AAC? Family Handouts
Four of our new handouts are for families with a new AAC device. Find more info on:
• What to do at home
• Teaching Requesting
• Teaching Refusing
• Teaching Commenting
<https://nwacs.info/for-parents>

AAC Tip of the Week:
Model Without Expectation
Model language for a variety of communication functions, for example: request, protest, label, ask/answer questions, inform, state emotions/ideas/opinions, agree/disagree, and debate.
This is the post helpful!

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

Toddler AAC

What I Wish Our Early Intervention Team
Had Known About How 'Early' AAC Can
Help Families Thrive

Presenting to Early
Support Teams!

Deeper Dive on
Hows

Early Supports Staff
Drop-in with Cass &
NWACS

Many one-on-ones,
small groups, large
teams

Deeper Dive on Supporting
Gestalt Language
Processors

Family Presentations

Agency Board of Directors
Presentation

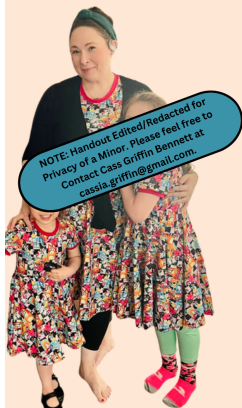
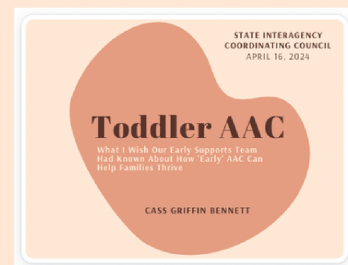
AAC Resource Fair

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

Thank You

My Asks

Tell your families and teams about NWACS!
Would you like me to present to your teams or families? How can I help?
Consider how SICC may help increase access more broadly.



NOTE: Handout Edited/Redacted for
Privacy of a Minor. Please feel free to
Contact Cass Griffin Bennett at
cassia.griffin@gmail.com.

Contact

Email: cassia.griffin@gmail.com

FB: "Cass Griffin Bennett" in Mukilteo (send message for context)

Questions & Discussion

- Presenting two sessions at the IECC Conference Monday, May 6
- May 18 Snohomish County FICC Toddler AAC program (flyer, next)

CASSIA GRIFFIN BENNETT 2024

FAMILY AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL (FAMILY ICC)

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S COMMUNICATION WITH AAC

Join us to learn and ask questions about Augmentative and Alternative Communication

CASS GRIFFIN BENNETT WILL SPEAK ON HER AND HER FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE WITH AAC, DISCUSS THE BENEFITS, AND PROVIDE AAC RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES TO TRY AT HOME!



Saturday: May 18th, 2024

Cass Griffin Bennett



11:00AM - 1:00PM

For language interpretation, please RSVP by Friday, May 10th

REGISTER FOR ZOOM LINK



Is a parent of multiple autistic kids, including a 4-year old who started robust high-tech AAC at age 2. She is passionate about empowering parents around AAC and educating providers and educators about the benefits of starting AAC early. Cass also serves on the board of the Northwest Augmentative Communication Society (NWACS).

NWACS info and resources:
[NWACS Family Facebook Page](#)
[NWACS Info for Parents](#)

For Snohomish County families participating in this event, we are offering gift certificates to Sensory Tool House.

This event is coordinated by the Snohomish County Family and Interagency Coordinating Council
[Click this link to learn more about FICC](#)