



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

WASHINGTON STATE'S RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE

Year 2 progress report | 2014

INTRODUCTION

As we wrapped up the second year of implementing our four-year, \$60 million Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, we are proud of how much we have accomplished. While the first year was largely focused on planning and getting the systems in place, this second year was all about action in the three key RTT-ELC initiatives:

- Early Achievers, our state's quality rating and improvement system, is now available statewide.
- The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) is now available to nearly half of incoming kindergarteners.
- Thousands of early learning professionals are taking advantage of scholarships, training and incentives to improve their training and education.

All three of these initiatives are being measured and tracked through Gov. Jay Inslee's [Results Washington program](#), because our state recognizes how instrumental they are in producing strong child outcomes.

We are succeeding in this race to the top for children because of partners who are helping us ensure that all children in Washington have access to high-quality early learning opportunities that get them school-ready.

Read on for more information about year 2 of this effort!



On July 1, 2013, Early Achievers achieved full, statewide implementation with all 39 counties in the state participating.

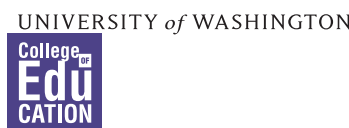
Accomplishments

- ✓ By Dec. 31, 2013, 2,011 programs had registered with Early Achievers, including 754 child care centers, 1,042 family homes, and 215 Head Start (HS) and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) programs, in total serving 60,719 children.
- ✓ Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA) used statewide outreach tools to reach 2,650 individual providers in 2013 (about half of the total licensed provider population) with 1,881 hours of individual outreach services.
- ✓ Completion of the HS/ECEAP Early Achievers pilot, and development and implementation of [the HS/ECEAP and Early Achievers Reciprocity Plan](#).
- ✓ “Rating Readiness Consultation” is now offered to facilities that have completed the Level 2 Professional Training Series and self-assessments, and have achieved a designated Level 2 status. CCA offers this consultation that is tailored to meet facility’s unique needs, focused specifically on the Environment Rating Scale (ERS), the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), or both.
- ✓ CCA has built an Early Achievers work force of more than 125 individuals, including seven Regional Coordinators, 55 TA Specialists, 15 Trainers, and 11 coaches across seven regions.
- ✓ DEL, CCA and the University of Washington have committed to ensuring that all Early Achievers participants—including technical assistant specialists, coaches, program leaders and classroom teachers—get ongoing training and support. The University of Washington facilitated two, four-day Early Achievers Institutes for more than 450 Early Achievers participants.

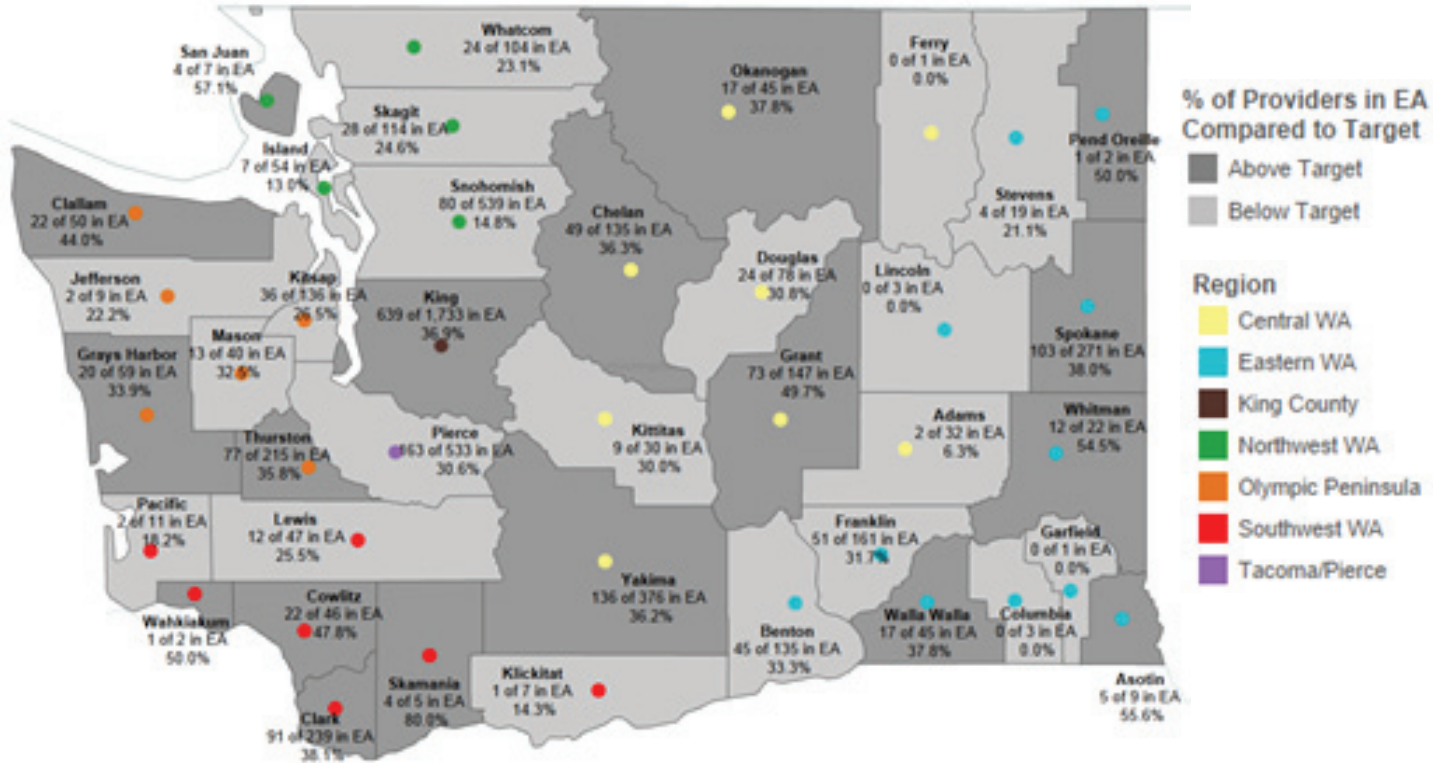
Challenges and lessons learned

- Programs were moving through to full ratings more slowly than anticipated, requiring policy changes and incentives to encourage programs to move through to the rating process.
- The enrollment data system continued to be a challenge, particularly for Head Start and ECEAP participants. Ongoing enhancements and modifications have been required and new enrollment of additional HS/ECEAP programs outside of the pilot participants was not opened until October 2013.

**KEY PARTNERS IN
EARLY ACHIEVERS**



WASHINGTON EARLY ACHIEVERS



Washington's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Performance Tracker

EARLY ACHIEVERS: LEVELS 2 TO 5

As of December 31, 2013	Registered in EA	2013 Year End Targets	2013 Year End Progress
Total # of Programs	2,011	2,227	90%
Head Start and ECEAP Sites	215	388	55%
Licensed Child Care Programs	1,796	1,839	98%
<i>Family Home Child Care</i>	1,042	1,291	81%
<i>Child Care Centers</i>	754	548	137%
Total Children Served by EA	60,719	53,324	114%
Head Start Sites and ECEAP Sites	11,118	13,640	82%
Licensed Child Care Programs	49,601	39,684	125%
<i>Family Home Child Care</i>	7,111	8,282	86%
<i>Child Care Centers</i>	42,490	31,403	135%

The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) reached nearly half (47 percent) of kindergartners in the state in school year 2013-14, implementing the three elements of the kindergarten transition:

- A whole child assessment using Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD as the assessment tool.
- A family connection between teachers and parents
- An Early Learning Collaboration between early learning providers and kindergarten teachers.

Accomplishments

- ✓ During the 2013-14 school year, 1,800 teachers in 187 districts participated in WaKIDS. This includes 550 schools (97 of which volunteered) with 38,443 incoming kindergartners. This is almost 17,000 more kindergartners (an increase of 76 percent) than were assessed in 2012-13.
- ✓ A total of 1,318 teachers were trained on TS GOLD and the WaKIDS process in 2013. This included two days of required training for 1,008 new teachers implementing WaKIDS for the first time, and one day of optional refresher training for 310 returning teachers. Kindergarten teachers receive training on TS GOLD before the beginning of the school year.
- ✓ 888 teachers have earned their interrater reliability certification on TS GOLD since July 1, 2013.
- ✓ Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) children received unique student identification in the 2013-14 school year. This unique identifier will allow the transfer of spring ECEAP TS GOLD scores to WaKIDS kindergarten teachers in the form of an Individual Child Report.
- ✓ As part of our Early Learning Partnership priority strategies, DEL and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in collaboration with the Education Research Data Center, will continue efforts to link children who participated in state-funded early learning programs with their K-12 education experiences. The initial focus is on identifying kindergartners who had formerly participated in ECEAP.
- ✓ Results from the fall 2013 administration of TS GOLD have been available to teachers, principals, and school district administrators through the TS GOLD website since early November. TS GOLD data is used to inform instruction, share information with families during conference time and track individual child progress over time.
- ✓ The Legislature increased the number of children eligible for state-funded full-day kindergarten from 22 to 44 percent. This led to an increase in the number of participating districts, schools and children.
- ✓ View statewide WaKIDS results: www.k12.wa.us/WaKIDS/Data/default.aspx

Challenges and lessons learned

- While the percentage of participating districts implementing WaKIDS rose successfully over the last year, RTT-ELC targets continue to lag due to the slower than anticipated roll-out of state-funded full-day kindergarten.
- The Legislature has mandated state-funded full-day kindergarten by school year 2017-2018, and it is expected that numbers will rise throughout the grant period with expansion and volunteer schools participating in WaKIDS.

KEY PARTNERS IN WAKIDS



We continue to build a professional development system that acknowledges early learning professionals' education and training to date, and encourages them to identify and pursue a career pathway.

Accomplishments

- ✓ 532 scholarships were offered through the Early Achievers Opportunity Grants and Washington Scholarships for Child Care Professionals.
- ✓ As of January 2014, 486 individuals have become state-approved trainers. This is an increase of 288 additional trainers from this time last year. Both state-approved trainers and Early Achievers participants complete an online training in the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals. At the end of December, 4,346 professionals had completed this training.
- ✓ In January 2013, early learning professionals became eligible to receive professional development incentives for participating in and completing the educating verification process in Washington's workforce registry, Managed Educational Registry and Information Tool (MERIT). Professionals receive awards for participating in the Registry, for existing educational accomplishments, and for moving up the Career Lattice.

At the end of December 2013, 3,839 participation incentives were distributed and 2,316 professionals earned education awards tied to the Career Lattice.

- ✓ Colleges that adopt the statewide certificates and the Core Competencies are eligible to offer Early Achievers Opportunity Grants. Nineteen colleges (more than half) are currently offering these grants to early learning professionals who are employed at Early Achievers programs.

Challenges and lessons learned

- The complexity of the education verification process—in combination with required technical assistance for early learning providers on MERIT—has resulted in a slower drawdown in professional development funds than originally planned.
- Washington has seen a huge influx of education applications for review due to the incentives as well as increasing participation in Early Achievers. This has created technical bottlenecks that will be addressed with policy changes to the Career Lattice and education verification process in July 2014.
- In addition to implementing a new Career Lattice, Washington plans to develop a "career portal" for early learning providers in 2014. This portal will complement the new Career Lattice and career guidance opportunities already available through Early Achievers technical assistance specialists, coaches and points-of-contact in higher education settings. The career portal will contain information on Washington's colleges and universities, and will be designed for professionals to use independently as well as collaboratively with an advisor or coach.

KEY PARTNERS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



	2013 Budget versus Expenditures		RTT Funded		Other Sources	
	Budgeted	Expended	Budgeted	Expended	Budgeted	Expended
Early Achievers	30,372,270	30,243,193	12,841,215	9,981,109	17,531,055	20,262,084
WaKIDS	2,711,726	2,270,949	1,168,112	535,039	1,543,614	1,735,910
Professional Development	3,814,614	1,288,019	3,632,692	1,093,031	181,922	194,987
Grant Management	1,240,124	644,741	1,109,678	519,958	130,446	124,782
Total	38,138,734	34,446,902	18,751,697	12,129,137	19,387,037	22,317,764

LOOKING AHEAD

Moving into year three, the RTT-ELC effort will shift toward refinement and improvement of the new systems and processes. For example:

- Strengthened alignment between Early Achievers and Washington’s Pre-K program
- Evaluation and assessment of the Level 2 components to ensure that they are in full alignment with the rating process, giving providers the greatest opportunity for rating success
- Assessment of the ratings process to identify opportunities to streamline and simplify
- WaKIDS will continue to expand to additional schools, and will refine its processes as scale is reached
- Continued improvements of the data systems needed to support the work at scale
- Moving to a longer day/year mixed-delivery model focused on quality

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Early Achievers and professional development

- ▶ **Department of Early Learning:** www.del.wa.gov
- ▶ **Child Care Aware of Washington:** www.wa.childcareaware.org
- ▶ **Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges:** www.sbctc.ctc.edu

WaKIDS

- ▶ **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:** www.k12.us.wa
- ▶ **Thrive by Five Washington:** www.thrivebyfivewa.org

