



Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Date: April 1, 2025

Time: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Welcome, Online Meeting Protocols and Introductions

DCYF Community Engagement Manager, Marlene White, welcomed attendees and introductions were completed via chat.

ELAC Executive Session

- ELAC Charter
- FSKA Recommendation Report Survey

DCYF Community Engagement Manager Marlene White and Community Engagement Administrator, Erin Kerrigan gave an update on the ELAC Executive Committee, Provider Supports Subcommittee Charter, and the FSKA Recommendation Report Development.

ELAC Executive Committee Update

- The new executive committee consists of ELAC Member Andrea Carrillo and Regional Advisor Representatives Hanna Bruning and Tanya Hutton.
- There is still one co-chair position open, and elections will be held at the next ELAC meeting on June 3rd.
- If you are interested in serving on the Executive Committee, please email the Community Engagement Team (dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov)

Provider Supports Subcommittee Charter

- Provider Supports is currently in the process of putting together the foundational documents. Typically, recruitment for Provider Supports membership would begin in April. However, since the development of a new charter will likely impact membership requirements, recruitment will be paused until the charter is finalized.
- Who is serving on the Provider Supports charter subcommittee?
 - Right now, we're working with the ELAC Executive Committee, if they choose to move forward with a special workgroup for the Charter, we'll share that opportunity and details ASAP.
 - It should contain the Provider Supports executive team as well or at least members of Provider Supports. Should not be just the ELAC executive team
 - Yes, Provider Supports will be included in the review/feedback process, with ELAC having ultimate say over the final product.
- Will there be space for ELAC to provide feedback on the charter and if so, how?
 - Yes, there will definitely be space for ELAC to provide feedback on the charter. Right now, we're working with the ELAC Executive Committee to figure out the process.

FSKA Recommendation Report Development

- What is the timeline that you want everyone to submit their vote?
 - We can be flexible but are hoping to have responses within a week.
- Will you be emailing the draft and the survey?
 - Yes, the survey will stay open for a week, and we will email out the draft.

Remarks from DCYF Secretary Tana Senn

DCYF Secretary Tana Senn shared remarks and engaged in a large group discussion with Members

- While a lot of the proposed budget cuts came from the early learning space, they were cuts to growth.
- If the capital gains tax continues to show higher revenues than projected, is there a chance this can be course corrected next session, even if it isn't a biennium budget?
 - The capital gains tax is used for early learning and K-12 education and there's a lot of pressure right now to increase funds to K-12. My guess is if there was additional money it would go to K-12 education. When we get additional revenue from the capital gains tax, the more positive impacts would be in the early learning facilities fund in the capital budget. That's where we could see more investment in the early learning facilities, funds.
- Is there future possibility of expanding the capital gains tax?
 - Conceptually, absolutely but that would be something you'd have to ask the legislature.
- Secretary Senn is leading the Family Separation Response Task Force in response to Governor Ferguson's Executive Order 2504, to ensure no young people are left alone and without services.
- Secretary Senn asked Members: Have you had Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or any federal officials come to any facilities?
 - I sit on the board of a local community health clinic, and they have experienced it which has now resulted in a drop in undocumented families obtaining health and dental care services. There is big concern around health and job fairs as well.
 - We have seen ICE in our Yakima community. What do we do if children are separated from their parents? What steps do we take?
 - Calling emergency contacts is the immediate response. Next you would need to call law enforcement or Child Protective Services (CPS) and DCYF will try and find kin.
 - The Family Separation Response Task Force is working to develop clear FAQs for families about next steps, how to get trauma services, get connected with consulates etc.
 - In the central region, there was ICE in a park near a childcare program whose presence was scaring children and families. We're also going through child files to make sure there's not anything that might inadvertently reveal statuses. If someone disenrolls or just stops coming, especially for home providers, they could lose all of their revenue.
 - DCYF is emphasizing confidentiality and with [Keep Washington Working Act](#), there's no requirement to work with ICE unless they have a signed warrant from a judge.
 - In Snohomish County, immigrant-led organizations are asking for more word-of-mouth resources being shared, because communities do not feel safe in being public about how to support families. This is the same discussion for LGBTQIA+ families and families with trans and non-binary children. We are educating and sharing resources through word-of-mouth.
 - A paraeducator at Shelton High School, supporting Spanish-speaking students, has shared that some parents have reported seeing ICE in the area, which has raised concerns. Mason County has a lot of immigrants, particularly those from Mexico and Central America.
- The Washington Child Care Centers Association (WCCA) is contracting with an immigration attorney to host a webinar specific for childcare centers and how to handle these different policies and things that

that they should be reviewing. They are offering a discounted rate to access immigration attorney services. There is not a date set but information will be sent to DCYF to share with the public.

- Would or could that be available in different languages?
 - We will be hosting in at least English and Spanish and are open to more languages if requested.
- Within the state, do we have a list of lawyers who are ready/willing to support families for either free or very discounted rates?
 - We will follow up to provide you with a list of immigration attorneys.
 - I know WAISN (Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network) is a great resource and the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA) has a resource hub broken down by county!

Early Learning Legislative Update.

DCYF Assistant Secretary of Early Learning Nicole Rose and Government Affairs Policy Advisor Courtney Parker provided an update on early learning legislation.

- Washington State Operating Budget Webpage
- DCYF Government Affairs Webpage
- DCYF Early Childhood Childcare Complex Needs Trainings Registration
- DCYF Early Childhood Childcare Complex Needs Trainings Flyer
 - Current Timeline:
 - April 2: Policy Committee Cutoff – Opposite House
 - April 8: Fiscal Committee Cutoff – Opposite House
 - April 16: Opposite House Cutoff
 - April 27: Last day of regular session
 - How did DCYF weigh in on each of these bills?
 - DCYF weighed in on some of the bills depending on their impacts to children, families, and providers and whether certain provisions were deemed implantable. This is something we can loop back in on the feedback loop.
 - Which of these have a fiscal note?
 - SB 5030 and SB 5752 have costs associated with them. Other bills do have fiscal notes but have no costs.
 - When the early learning bills come in, the early learning and licensing divisions have legislative staff who do bill analysis to see if there are any fiscal impacts on programs.
 - For 5769 what does collaboration on a recommended plan look like between DCYF and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)? How could DCYF utilize ELAC for this plan and engage providers?
 - The bill outlines priorities for expansion. You can find the language in Section 2.
 - It does require OSPI and DCYF to work together. There are some things that have come to ELAC and Provider Supports that can be foundational tools to support some of that work, including our saturation study from Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and our childcare dashboard.
 - There will be opportunities for information to be brought to this group. We don't know yet what that will look like, but we are looking for feedback.
 - For 5545, if these providers choose to be unlicensed, would they still be able to participate in Early Achievers?
 - You must be licensed by the state per the Early Achievers Participant Operating Guidelines.

- Can you share with us the reasoning around the elimination of Early ECEAP? I'm looking for something more than the reason - 'we have a tight budget'.
 - That was in both the senate and house proposed budgets. Some of that is related to those families who should be eligible for Working Connections Childcare (WCCC). The proposed approach is trying to preserve funding for the most number of children, families and providers.
- Can you share projected dollar amount savings for each of these program cuts.
 - Yes, we will be sure to do that. Some of them are indeterminate.
- What is the percentage of unused early ECEAP slots?
 - Right now, there are 167 out of 178 that are enrolled in early ECEAP.
 - We are under enrolled in ECEAP right now as well, sitting at about 14,600 children that are enrolled out of over 16,000 slots that were contracted.
- We are hearing from our community that families of children with special health care needs, behavioral challenges or other disabilities are really struggling to find the childcare that meets their family needs. How can we ensure that supports for these families continue or expand?
 - Families that are receiving WCCC are able to access and apply for the special needs rate. Providers who are supporting families can also apply for complex needs funds and there are also trainings available through the Haring Center.
- Does the Early Childhood Equity Grant funding fall under this or next year's budget? If next year and if cuts happen, how will the reductions be addressed with grantees?
 - All of the proposed budgets we discussed for today are for next year - for the 25-27 biennium.
- Please reach out to Courtney Parker (courtney.parker@dcyf.wa.gov) and Nicole Rose (nicole.rose@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

ELAC Committee Business

Members reviewed meeting materials and asked questions.

- [February 4, 2025, Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Feedback Loop](#)
- [State Agency/Partner Updates](#)
- [Regional Coalition Updates](#)
- [HCA Update](#)

Regional Coalition Updates

- The Snohomish County Early Learning Coalition has created a cross-sector centralized 19-member appointed [Early Learning Leadership Council of Snohomish County](#). The Council is leading an early learning report to discover the most significant barriers for immigrant, low-income, rural, LGBTQIA+, and families with children with complex needs. We are also asking providers what the biggest barriers are in filling their slots or expanding their slots. The report will be completed in June 2025 and will have recommendations with pathways for funding.

Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) Early Learning Data, Reporting, and Analyses Update

DCYF Senior Evaluator Adassa Budrevich-Ryan and Evaluation and Research Supervisor Karah Lothian provided an overview of the Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA) implementation efforts and the evaluation report and its impact on the Early Care and Education (ECE) field.

- [OIAA Fair Start for Kids Act Evaluation and Analysis Webpage](#)
- [FSKA 2023 Evaluation Report](#)
 - Do you have data on the reason given regarding why there is a stop in using the subsidy? Reason for restarting use?

- To my knowledge, I don't think so. However, there might be a way to get that data, and we can follow up.
- Do you have any data related to the impact of Transition to Kindergarten (TK) on the number of spans in care?
 - We are interested in TK but do not have access to any data yet.
- Do you have analysis on why there is an increase of serving BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) kids and expanding education of children who speak languages other than English? What is working?
 - Not currently but I definitely want to look into the literature to see if other states are experiencing this or if it's happening nationally as well. I think that is a really important policy implication.
 - DCYF has recently invested in resources related to language access. This is held on the language access team, which is in the administrative services team. They're looking at a really high, level view of what language access looks like at the agency and they will be doing a full review of everything in all of our areas within the agency. This includes what information OIAA collects, how it's collected, how accurate it is, and then how that information can help in our understanding of where programs are being carried out at that county and local level and what languages are being represented.
- Any information on where the spans occur (rural, urban, centers, family childcare), as well as why?
 - We do have whether they were operating in FSKA priority areas, including areas that had high covid impact, high poverty, high kindergarten readiness disproportionality, zip codes, and facility types. I'm sure that we could create flags for rural and urban but I don't think we currently have that. That is important to look at so it is a good addition.
- How are you defining affordability?
 - DCYF defines affordability as no more than 7 percent of a family's income. That's reflected in the most recent access and living wage proviso work and it is a federal requirement set by the Childcare Development Fund.
- Is there a plan to update/expand these definitions (access affordability) under Secretary Senn's leadership?
 - From OIAAs perspective, we support agency leadership by providing information to support any shifts in thinking related to this work. We are tapping into existing resources to expand our systemic thinking as related to access.
 - This month we combined two dashboards into the Child Care and Early Learning: Extreme Child Care Access Deserts & Uptake Estimates to overlay the extreme need, persistent need, and current need as well as the supply of childcare.
- Any information being recorded on children with special needs? The number of kids with special needs have heavily increased. Any research being done on what support providers have that keep the children and what are lacking to those that expel?
 - We have not done an analysis but have looked at the descriptive representation and it does appear there are more children with special needs. We do not have the same indicator or metric across these data sets. This makes it tricky because there are children identified with complex needs, children currently in the process of receiving an Individualized Education Program (IEP), children that have already received IEPs or have received early intervention and they're not all the same metric. We're in the process of defining what that could look like.
 - We know that children with increased needs are far more likely to be expelled. That is certainly in the research. As it relates to these gaps and spans, we are able to see which children are taking up subsidy as related to special education. The bulk of those children are actually school

aged who are receiving that kind of care. It doesn't exclude us from being able to look specifically at that group, but looking at them previously, it is a very small group, so it would be difficult to understand if they are being expelled from care, or if there are some kind of characteristics related to the quality of care related to the availability of care related to the site being a good fit for the family. We wouldn't be able to determine that, but we could see if they moved around more frequently.

- I do think that is something interesting to flag when it comes to looking at expulsion. Although expulsion is required to be reported by the WAC, it is not being reported at the rate that you would anticipate in the general population. And so this year you're going to see expulsion show up as a component of this report and a component of another legislative report we're writing, and the goal is to identify in our work stream exactly where our places in our existing DCYF work, where we can begin pointing people more regularly to our reporting so that we can understand what those circumstances and situations are looking like for families.
- Connecting with your coaches or your infant early childhood mental health consultant would be useful in this area as well as the Haring Center Trainings.
- When focusing on low-income populations and gaps, are you cross-referencing housing instability and how housing instability impacts stops and starts to using subsidies? This is an issue in enrollment shifts for K-12. It might also be a factor in the early learning sector.
 - That's a very important consideration. I'm not sure if the data includes housing but we can follow up.
- Please reach out to Adassa Budrevich-Ryan (adassa.budrevich-ryan@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Closing Remarks/Adjourn

- The next ELAC Public Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 3, 2025.

Members in Attendance

Ami Magisos, Andrea Carrillo, Astrid Newell, Brittany Hartikainen, Carlina Brown-Banks, Cheryl Smith, Colleen Condon, Danielle Rasmussen, Debbie Carlsen, Deeann Puffert, Hanna Bruning, Jaymie Davis, Lois Martin, Lola Moses, Michelle Perez, Million Shiferaw, Nancy Spurgeon, Samantha Bowen, Senator Claire Wilson, Shereese Rhodes, Tafra Jones, Victoria Hilt, Waylon Ballew

Members Absent

Alexandra Martin-Truesdell, April Messenger, Claudette Lindquist, Debbie Ham, Dr. Brian Knowles, Jen Sandvig, Julie Rolling, Kathy Carman, Luz Gomez, Mary Rulewicz, Muriel Herrera-Velasquez, Olivia Burley, Patti Bailey, Representative Mari Leavitt, Representative Travis Couture, Senator Paul Harris, Valerie Arnold, Valisa Smith