



Early Learning Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2022 – 9:00am-3:30pm
Virtual Meeting

Welcome and Virtual Meeting Protocols & Introductions

DCYF Deputy Director of Community Engagement Deanna Stewart welcomed attendees, walked through virtual meeting protocols and initiated introductions. Members reviewed and approved the [February 1, 2022 meeting minutes](#).

Feedback Loop & State Agency/Partner and Regional Coalition Updates, FSKA Temporary Licensing Subcommittee Update

ELAC Executive Committee Lois Martin and Enrica Hampton led the group in reviewing the Feedback Loop, State Agency/Partner and Regional Coalition Updates, FSKA Temporary Licensing Subcommittee Update and recapped the ELAC Orientation Part 2.

- [Feedback Loop](#)
 - [2021 Annual Reflection](#)
 - [2022 Work Plan](#)
- [State Agency/Partner Updates](#)
- [Regional Coalition Updates](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it possible to share a list of the ELAC members so we know who they are? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A list of ELAC membership can be found on the ELAC webpage here. • Wondering if we should include a question about the racial diversity and equity of the actual decision makers. • As an alternate, I have not participated in voting for the agenda or adding to the community agreements. I'm a little confused about who is permitted to shape the agreements, vote, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For voting we only count votes from ELAC members and regional advisors. As far as feedback, as an alternate we welcome your feedback because alternates are technically a member of ELAC.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can watch the March 29, 2022 Organizational License Pilot recording here (passcode: r?St%3Vk). • For more information on Washington Communities for Children you can visit their website here. To view the Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA) toolkit, you can visit here. To read the blog and newsletter, you can visit here.

Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) Data Reporting

DCYF Director of the Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability (OIAA) Vickie Ybarra provided an overview of a new data dashboard and updates to support ELAC’s FSKA work.

- [OIAA Data Reporting Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we know how many families were eligible for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy that didn't use the subsidy? Are we seeing an increase in usage of WCCC subsidy now versus a year ago? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Great question. That's a dashboard we are iterating on right now with OIAA. We are trying to develop some data now to see the trend of subsidy rates over time. We are seeing an increase in eligibility. • Is there a corresponding increase in participation due to increase in eligibility? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Usage lags behind as we need to look at paid data for that. • What is “paid data?”
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- Paid subsidy data is looking at the actual payment data to providers, which shows us how many families are using care.
- Any thoughts about why there are differences in averages of grant by region?
 - It is a difference in mix of types of grants that appears to be the driver.
- Is this information disaggregated by provider racial make-up? Wondering if there is a difference in populations accessing these funds.
 - We have pulled the self-reported racial information from the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT).
- Do you have the number of grants awarded by county and by type of facility?
 - Yes, we do.
- May be helpful to add a note in MERIT explaining why collecting the racial information is important and how it will be utilized. Stating your racial identity has been weaponized throughout history.
- For more information on the Senate Early Learning/K-12 Committee meeting and the presentation by Walla Walla and Bellingham on their 'hubs' and joint recruitment, enrollment efforts [here](#).
- Has any of the data collection actually influenced policy? If so, can you site an example?
 - As we look at the stabilization grant data, we are just beginning to dive into that data and take a look at it. Data around language really drives how we are translating and training our language access coordinators that were just hired. More to come on what policy decisions come out of that.
- Is there a similar dashboard for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) grant dollars?
 - No we do not have that. We hope to have that in the future.
- Is there going to be an evaluation or feedback from the provider community about the grant process, how stabilization grant funds were chosen to be dispersed, and co-design efforts with providers?
 - As we went out and talked about stabilization grants and we have tried to use that information we have gotten in grants moving forward. One of the things we needed to do was to go back and look at legislation and get clear with ourselves what the purpose was behind those grants. Then talk to others and get feedback on that purpose statement to drive the work. Some of that work has happened with the Provider Supports Subcommittee and some of the work has involved ELAC but would need to go back and check on that. We would like to continue working with our advisory boards and partner organizations too on impactful pieces and what shapes the amount for providers. Equity grants, trauma informed care are smaller amounts in grants than some of the grants we have put out in the past.
- Has the group for equity grants already been created?
 - We are working with our partner groups; Voices of Tomorrow, Imagine Institute, Child Care Aware and One America. At the last Provider Supports Subcommittee meeting we mentioned to let us know if you are interested and provide your contact information in being on that group.
- Is this equity grant only for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) providers?
 - No it is not.
- Given that providers aren't experiencing business recovery from the impact of the pandemic, there is still a great need for stabilization funds. What's in the queue for stabilization?
 - More to come on that.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would also like to see a breakdown of all funds received and what those were/will be spent on. Not 100% of federal relief dollars were granted directly to providers and I think we need to know what else funds were spent on. • Provider Supports heard about these "Design Groups" at the last meeting but it's frustrating that the Provider Supports group is not being utilized. • We will work with CE to pull together a design group for Provider Supports. More to come.
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Vickie Ybarra at vickie.ybarra@dcyf.wa.gov.

DCYF/OSPI Joint Agency Integration and Inclusion Work (previously referred to Integrated Pre-K)

DCYF ECEAP Assistant Administrator, Nicole Lor and Pre-K ECEAP Administrator, Karin Ganz provided updates on the report to the legislature between OSPI and DCYF on early learning programming for children 3-5 years old.

- [DCYF/OSPI Joint Agency Integration and Inclusion Work Presentation](#)

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the community have an opportunity to weigh in on the draft report? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That is our hope. If you and others would be willing to participate in interviews and focus groups that will help us greatly in lifting up your voice and concerns. • The bottom line is that if public (IPK) does not have to comply with the same regulations as private providers there is an uneven playing field and will harm existing private providers. The details matter. • Having a fillable form (survey monkey) that is shared out widely to providers via Community Engagement to submit participation interest would be great. • Can Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) also bill for WCCC for hours not covered by the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP)? Have you considered the financial impact to FCCH that take ECEAP funding while having a business model that is extended day and full year? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes. That is part of what we have been looking into. We have family home providers who provide different models. All contractors are able to bill WCCC outside of ECEAP hours of service. • The Provider Supports Subcommittee should be considered a "Design Group" in and of itself for any topic around provider topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We agree and given our tight timelines we are working to be as inclusive as we can of all provider voices. • Is the assumption that all ECEAP families are also receiving WCCC funding? Is that true? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That does not currently occur at all ECEAP sites, but it does occur at some sites who are able or want to provide extended hours of service outside of ECEAP. • Our impact concerns should be inclusive of child care centers too. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ • 50% State Median Income (SMI) new eligibility level and bumps into 60% SMI eligibility level for WCCC. Have you thought about the ramifications of working families with children who are not ready to transition from program to program as a key piece of your work? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That is definitely why we are here and highlight the piece around integrated programming and gather more feedback from the interviews and focus groups. That is what we are hoping, that children will have what they need where they need it. ECEAP serves many working families and providers are really showing us the way on providing services in different day models. • Inevitably there will be unintended consequences on the child care sector overall. It is important to take time to anticipate the unintended consequences and include them in the report.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intensive and reflective work can happen when more partners and impacted individuals are being actively engaged as programs are created and decisions are being made.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are interested in participating in interviews and focus groups, have questions or would like to provide additional feedback, please email Nicole.lor@dcyf.wa.gov.

2022 Legislative Session Update & 2023 Planning

DCYF Government Affairs Advisor Genevieve Stokes provided an update on the 2022 Legislative Session and shared a preview of 2023 planning and process.

- [2022 Legislative Session Update & 2023 Planning Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the 16% subsidy base rate increase be distributed equally across the board or will underfunded areas be increased at a higher rate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are looking at how we can do that. It is not a percentile. More to come on what that looks like. The language was very limited. • Are you saying that in the past there's been direction that required subsidy rates to be increased across the board, but there's no direction that requires that this time? DCYF is able to raise rates selectively by area or some other way? Will those that are making the decisions be coming to any of these advisory committees for feedback on that? Feedback before it's finalized? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No, I am not saying that at all. The legislature in the past has had rates as a percentile and this year they are telling us as a percentage and where the rates fall in the spectrum of the rates that are being collected in the market. It is a different measurement that we have been given to use to increase rates and we are trying to figure that out right now. • If DCYF chooses not to increase rates 16% across the board, how would we be notified and by when? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have to look at what is in the proviso and there will be more information on how that will get delivered out and what that will look like for folks later. • What is the status of the child care workforce compensation committee? Will DCYF be able to submit legislation to fund perhaps the current Wage and Career Ladder? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Great question. The childcare workforce compensation committee sunsetted in 2019 and those proposals are out there. As an agency we don't have an employment relationship with providers in general. It is an issue of the wage and career ladder which the agency doesn't really have purview on. We are doing the best we can to provide data on this as we look at 2023 proposals. • When does the subsidy increase go into effect? Before the next ELAC meeting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The subsidy rate increase for centers will go into effect July 1, 2022. The information will be going out before July 1.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have any questions, please reach out to the Government Affairs team at dcyf.govaffairs@dcyf.wa.gov.

Training and Staff Qualifications

DCYF Professional Development Manager Michelle Roberts provided an overview of the community-based training model, now known as PACE (Provider Access to a Community Equivalent) and provider pathway selection.

- [Training and Staff Qualifications Presentation](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may have missed it but where does work experience factor into PACE? Is there a plan for equivalency for work experience?
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- Yes, that's correct. Your work hours, out of the 120 hours of PACE, 30 towards Child Care Basics, 20 come from enhancing quality of early learning and work hours count for 10 of those hours as well.
- So if I have 30 years of experience in childcare, how does that equate?
 - Yes, if you have 30 years of experience you can select your experience as a pathway in MERIT.
- What if they're coming from out of state/country?
 - If someone has an international degree, have them reach out to MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov and we will walk them through a simplified process.
- What about providers who have a non-Early Childhood Education (ECE) degree plus a lot of years of ECE work experience?
 - If you have a non-ECE degree and a lot of experience, yes you will be able to use that experience option/pathway as well.
- Will degrees that were submitted when MERIT began be re-evaluated? What you are describing is not the experience we have had in the past.
 - If you were providing care prior to 2017 then you can utilize the experience pathway.
- You can find more information on the three plan options for childcare providers including equivalents [here](#).
- What about Directors? Is there an experience path with 30 credits in ECE and clock hours like previous?
 - Directors do not have the equivalence path. If they have 30 credits in ECE that may fulfill an equivalent or aligned credit.
- Is there a graphic that shows the breakdown of the 120 hours?
 - Slide 8 in the presentation shows the breakdown of hours on graphic.
- Are these also articulated with the four year institutions for people who may want to end up with a Bachelor of Arts in ECE or similar? Will they accept these credits?
 - That is something we would need to work out and isn't yet established. We are still finalizing what that will look like with the State Board.
- Thank you for this information. As everyone is aware, there is an immense teacher shortage within early learning. A lot of programs are working staffing miracles on a daily basis to support children and families. Does DCYF have any data around this by region, county, etc.? Who is leaving the field and who is coming into the field?
 - We are tracking that to some degree. As far as people leaving or joining the workforce. It is not always exact because the individual would need to have their past director end their employment in MERIT. We have some good ideas on this and one of our responses or solutions for this is allowing for ECE educators to have 5-7 years to fulfill their education while working in the field.
- You can find some information on the breakdown of hours [here](#).
- So they're not getting community college credits either?
 - House Bill 2556 specified a non-credit training option, so this as a stand-alone does not earn credits. We are working with an articulation agreement with the State Board to think through the next option for those that want college credit.
- Four-year institutions do not have an oversight board like the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) for Community Colleges. It will be up to each individual four-year institution to decide if they will accept PACE even if the community college accepts PACE as credits.
- Are the PACE and Experience Based Options available to choose in MERIT yet?
 - Yes, a provider can choose those options in MERIT now.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any concern with the direct correlation with the higher education and the compensation that will be necessary to attract/keep educated workforce? Childcare is not expensive; paying teachers living wages is the source of the cost which they deserve and have earned. This cost will be passed along to the consumer; the families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For sure, we understand there is definitely a correlation between higher education and compensation. I think those are things we are constantly wanting to tackle and I think there is a lot of movement and a lot of planning around this in our state. I think that we have an interesting way we are approaching it with not just with DCYF but other agencies as well. I think some of the things DCYF is thinking about with FSKA, what are some way we can make a small difference in that experience. Making sure the training is no cost to providers in eliminating that barrier, having access to healthcare and seeing some of those things we can tackle and knowing it will be a state wide agency effort. • Are there going to be more and larger groups of cohorts, especially for Enhancing Quality of Early Learning (EQEL)? They are filling up so fast and we have trouble getting staff signed up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There will be more cohorts. We wanted to start with a small sample so we could learn and refine and continue to expand. The FSKA allows us to broadly expand delivery of Child Care Basics and EQEL at no cost to providers. • I agree that this work needs to be done in concert with compensation work that is underway. • EQEL never seems available. How do we first focus on getting staff into EQEL before we can even begin PACE. • As far as EQEL training, for those who are qualified State Training and Registry System (STARS) trainers, is it going to be opened up to them or only specific organizations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I wouldn't say for sure yet what the answer is. We are definitely starting with our training organizations and that will give us the opportunity to learn and refine and guide us for the future. • Is EQEL available yet on the student portal? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EQEL Year 1 is live and being offered now on the DCYF training site. • What about people who submitted into MERIT? What if there is change in what courses are being granted points now versus in the past? What I am hearing you say is leadership would garner credit, but that hasn't been our experience. Is there anything we need to know that would benefit those who put in their credit from long ago? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As people start to make their selections in MERIT we will be doing that targeted outreach and as we work with them on a Professional Development plan, we want to have a pathway for those who don't have an ECE degree and as we run into those instances we will start to untangle those things. • Did you keep transcripts for those individuals? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our goal is to not have to go through people's transcripts who have already submitted them. Our goal is to draw a line on the sand and don't have them reopen their education and support people in credentials that they already have. Or if they are working towards something and what roles they qualify for if they choose to do so.
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can find more information on the 3 Plan Options for childcare providers including equivalent here. • You can read the Professional Development Plan Guidebook here. • You can register for a training on the training site here.



ECEAP Eligibility WAC

DCYF ECEAP Assistant Administrator, Nicole Lor provided more information on ECEAP’s eligibility WAC and requested feedback.

- [ECEAP Eligibility WAC Presentation](#)
- [ECEAP Draft WAC](#)
- [ECEAP Eligibility WAC Discussion Question Responses and Feedback](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you share what the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to SMI means for income allowable? For example, under old roles, a family of four. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early ECEAP is 50% SMI eligibility and regular Pre-K is 36% SMI eligibility. Family of four at 110% FPL about \$30,525 annually. At 36% SMI is \$38,940 annually and at 50% SMI it is going to be about \$54,000 annually. • How young can a child be to be eligible for Early ECEAP? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Birth. • I am just curious how that will be verified if a family member has attended an Indian Boarding school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Great question. This one came directly from tribal providers and contractors. Within their own organizations they will be able to ask that question of families and really when we are talking about prioritization factors, is a list of questions we ask folks we don’t ask them to verify it, we just ask them those questions. It comes with a building of trust with the family relationships in order to ask questions like that. With our ECEAP contractors and tribal nations they feel pretty confident they can have that relationship with families. • Thank you for involving our tribal partners and for recognizing intergenerational trauma.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have any questions, feel free to email Nicole Lor at Nicole.lor@dcyf.wa.gov.

Language Access and Dual Language Designation

Michelle Roberts and Contracts and Relations Manager Mallerie Lopez provided updates on the Dual Language Designation workgroup and Early Learning Language Access Coordinators, and provided feedback on language access strategies.

- [Language Access and Dual Language Designation Presentation](#)
- [Language Access and Dual Language Designation Discussion Question Responses and Feedback](#)

Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have any questions or would like more information, feel free to email Athena Jimenez-Manalo at Athena.jimenez-Manalo@dcyf.wa.gov. • Language Access and Dual Language Designation Jamboard: https://jamboard.google.com/d/1cDM8-nv74C-KmgXvjh87UasFoMskq5jKyrNXIAdTQGE/edit?usp=sharing
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Closing Remarks/Adjourn

- [Meeting Reflection Questions and Responses](#)

Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next Early Learning Advisory Council meeting will be on June 7, 2022.
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