

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

State Agency Partners and DCYF Updates

Date: June 9, 2026

DCYF Early Learning Division

New Webpage for Working Connections Child Care 2026 Legislative Updates

DCYF has a dedicated webpage for information regarding Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) 2026 Legislative updates. Providers are encouraged to visit this page for updates on implementation and timelines. Providers can also access resources as they are developed.

Visit [Working Connections Child Care 2026 Legislative Updates](#) for more.

Updates to the Dual Language Designation for Early Achievers Participants

What's Changing:

- There will be updates to the Dual Language Designation application in the Coach and Educator Community Interface (CeCi).
- Participants will be able to earn a dual language designation through the quality recognition cycle.
- There will be a new payment structure. Dual language funding awards will be issued to eligible participants who earn the dual language designation.

What's Next:

- DCYF is updating resources and the website to reflect these changes.
- More information on this process will be coming soon.

If you have questions, please email the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) team at dcyf.gris@dcyf.wa.gov.

Recent Communications

- [Early Care and Education Newsletter | June 2026](#)
- [Early Care and Education Newsletter | May 2026](#)
- [Child Care Subsidy Rate Increase Effective July 1, 2026 \(5/27/26\)](#)
- [Measles Guidance for Child Care Providers \(5/19/26\)](#)



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

- [Update to MERIT Dashboard: Hiring Status Display \(5/14/26\)](#)

Rule Making Updates

Rule Under Development

- The DCYF Licensing Division is revising rules related to the Washington State Executive Order 25-03 (Improving Transparency in the State’s Permitting and Licensing Processes).

Proposed Rules

- The DCYF Licensing Division is revising rules based on Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1648 relating to child care provider qualifications.

Read both rule making updates here: [Rule Making Update | June 3, 2026](#)
([English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Somali](#)).

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

SUN Bucks 2026

The USDA Food and Nutrition Administration has approved Washington state’s plan to launch the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer program, also known as SUN Bucks. The SUN Bucks program helps reduce summer childhood hunger by providing \$120 to eligible school-age children starting in June.

- Children might receive SUN Bucks through automatic approval or an application process, depending on certain factors. To be automatically eligible for SUN Bucks, children must meet the following criteria between July 1, 2025, and Sept. 4, 2026:
 - Be between the ages of 8 and 18 and live in a household that receives federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
 - Be enrolled at a school that offers the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Program and be directly certified for free or reduced-price school meals or meet income requirements reported through a Child Nutrition and Eligibility and Education Benefit Application
- All students who do not automatically qualify can submit a SUN Bucks application via the DSHS SUN Bucks website. To qualify for SUN Bucks, children must:
 - Be enrolled at an NSLP or SBP participating school
 - Live in a household that meets NSLP or SBP income requirements to qualify for free or reduced-price meals

H.R. 1 SNAP Changes-Noncitizen

On July 4, 2025, the president signed into law a continuing resolution, H.R. 1, that impacts programs managed by the Department of Social and Health Services. This federal bill includes several provisions that affect eligibility for federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. As part of that bill, eligibility for federal SNAP benefits based on immigration status was restricted.

We've reprogrammed our eligibility system to comply. Starting with May 2026 benefits, customers will be placed in the correct program per the new federal eligibility rules tied to immigration status.

Some customers who were previously eligible for SNAP will instead be issued benefits under the state-funded Food Assistance Program, or FAP.

H.R. 1 SNAP Changes-LIHEAP

On July 4, 2025, the president signed into law a continuing resolution, H.R. 1, that impacts programs managed by the Department of Social and Health Services. One of its provisions removes the state's ability to give some Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program households the highest utility deduction based on a customer receiving Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program aid.

Households that receive \$20.01 (or more) in LIHEAP assistance annually AND that do not have an elderly or disabled household member are being impacted. Per federal SNAP rules, "elderly" is defined as age 60 or older and "disabled" means receiving disability-based benefits from the federal government.

Beginning with May 2026 benefits, these households will have their utility deduction calculated based on their actual utility costs rather than automatically receiving the highest utility deduction. For many, this means their utility deduction will be lower, which could result in lower SNAP benefit amounts.

For more information, please contact Lorraine Peterson, lorraine.peterson@dshs.wa.gov.

Department of Health (DOH)

May as Maternal Mental Health Month

Governor Bob Ferguson proclaimed May 2026 as Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month in Washington State, recognizing the importance of raising awareness, reducing stigma, and improving support for maternal and perinatal mental health. Find the proclamation on the Governors website: <https://governor.wa.gov/>.

Washington State Perinatal Collaborative (WSPC) 2023–2028 Strategic Plan

The WSPC Strategic Plan is a coordinated, human-centered initiative driven by the [Washington State Department of Health](#). The primary goal is to address maternal mortality and reduce

health disparities disproportionately affecting Black, Indigenous, and rural communities. For more information on the strategic plan, visit the [Washington State Perinatal Collaborative](#) webpage.

Free Perinatal Mental Health Certification

DOH is supporting efforts on training 30 licensed mental health therapists to receive their Perinatal Mental Health Certification (PMH-C) and begin seeing Medicaid patients.

Once PMH-C certified, the cohort will possess the skills needed to help families experiencing mental health conditions in the perinatal period. DOH especially encourages applications from providers of color and those working with underserved or hard- to-reach communities. To learn more about this training opportunity, visit: <https://perinatalsupport.org/perinatal-trainings/>.

For more information on any of the updates, please contact Astrid Newell at astrid.newell@doh.wa.gov.

Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)

WA State Child Care for Military Families Workgroup Relaunch!

The Washington State Child Care for Military Families workgroup will be relaunching its monthly meeting series in June. Please contact Olivia Burley if you would like to be added to the series. Contact: Olivia Burley at Olivia.burley@dva.wa.gov.

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

No updates currently. For questions, please contact Samantha Bowen at samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us.