



Provider Supports Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

June 14, 2023 - 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Introductions, Virtual Meeting Protocols, and Meeting Material Review

Provider Supports Executive Committee member Julie Schroath welcomed members and completed introductions. The group reviewed the February meeting minutes, Feedback Loop, and Agency Updates.

- [April 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Feedback Loop](#)
- [Agency Updates](#)

Discussion	<p><i>April Meeting Minutes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a sustainable and predictable subsidy payment increase in July for all center and family providers. Is it just the number of days in the month that we bill for or are we still looking? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is a difference between the way the center provides and the family homes invoice. Family homes bill for one month and centers base it on whether it was a 22-day month or a 20-day month. ○ Sustainable and predictable subsidy payments are a way for us to continue to think about enrollment-based pay. Enrollment-based pay is what you're paying based on enrollment. A monthly unit is paying for the month but the child still has to be there at least one day. • Why can't centers be paid on a monthly basis like home providers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have been trying to move to monthly payments for centers. With all of the different eligibility, changes, and rate changes. we haven't been able to get to that yet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is this something someone is working on or is it not necessarily a priority? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't believe it is on the decision package list for this year. • Is there still a dedicated provider line? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, there is. They will not answer a question about a family in particular. • Can someone explain why the recipients of the Early Childhood Equity Grant aren't public because it seems like they ought to be? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grant recipient details are not public information – Licensed Family Homes and Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) providers are protected from identifying data requests under Initiative 1501, which prevents disclosure of identifying information under the Public Records Act. ○ That would have been a change from the facilities grant. That list was made public. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That was likely publicized by the Department of Commerce as DCYF doesn't administer that grant. • I've applied for multiple grants and you get a blanket list of reasons why your application may not have been accepted. Will those ever be more specific? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are different grant requirements for each competitive grant. We have received that feedback and are working to make them a little more specific to support the provider. We do point to the technical assistance specialists at the Imagine Institute because they can talk any applicant through approvals or denials. • How is the Imagine Institute the only one? I've used them for technical assistance only to be told what I applied for didn't follow the guidelines. It's frustrating to be misinformed by the technical assistance.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I can't speak to your individual application or experience but I can tell you about our technical assistance specialists that we have on contract. They responded to a competitive request for proposals (RFP) about 18 months ago, along with other organizations, and the contractors were the organization that was selected through that RFP process.<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Feedback on experiences with technical assistance should also be sent to dcyf.childcaregrants@dcyf.wa.gov. I will connect with the grants team to address this feedback.● How is Imagine connected to SEIU 925? Isn't that a conflict of interest and is anyone tracking the percentage of family homes approved versus centers?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The Imagine Institute is a separate 501(c)(3). We do provide that information in our grants overviews on the DCYF website.
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Licensing Division Update

DCYF Child Care Licensing, Quality Assurance & Continuous Quality Improvement Manager Aliza Yair and Statewide Licensing Administrator Travis Hansen provided an update on changes in the Licensing Division and discuss the TLS Recommendation on language access.

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● What kinds of supports/ information about the initial licensing process would be helpful for new providers, especially those who have language access support needs?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The delays for initial licensing are problematic. Providers would need to know the virtual recheck option and licensing needs to confirm that it's available to them. There are challenges of licensors only communicating in English. DCYF needs to hire more bilingual licensors.○ Are there Spanish-speaking licensors whose first language is Spanish?<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ We do have teams and are looking to hire bilingual licensors. One of the challenges for knowing how many of those licensors we need is we don't have a good count of how many providers speak particular languages.<ul style="list-style-type: none">● If licensing were to do a communication out to all providers that said we want to improve our language access data collection and asked providers for that information. Do you think it would be accepted? We have heard sometimes providers don't want to say that they don't speak English well because they're afraid of bias.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Be honest about the need. Say we are looking into hiring more bilingual licensors across the state but you need provider information. Make it a quick short survey.<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Just to clarify, it wouldn't be a survey. We would be asking people to go into their provider portal account.● A potential solution about the 90-day piece is to give people an idea of what to expect. I think the struggle comes from waiting to hear something for a month. After an applicant pushes submit on the licensing application, they should receive communication that lists out what's going to happen. It would save back-and-forth communication if people just had a better idea of the timeframe.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ And also translate that into multiple languages. It should be helpful for all providers.○ How are applications processed? I would assume they go to your closest office but has the department considered a centralized location for applications to go through the initial checks? That might help remove some bottlenecks as well as having a central contact place if providers have questions.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thank you, those are really good suggestions. With all of the new applications, we have been trying to address the bottleneck in the initial processing. We do have the state split into three pods before they get assigned to a licenser. We are tracking how equitably that work is distributed and the rates of new applications coming in over the new. ○ Please reach out to Jody Hitchings, Pre-Licensing Unit Supervisor, (jody.hitchings@dcyf.wa.gov or 360-271-4214) with any follow-up questions. • What about the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) book being written in more languages so that they don't need so much support from Imagine Institute? It would be nice for providers to be able to read and understand the licensing requirements in at least Spanish and Somali <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/LIC_0010SP.pdf ○ https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/LIC_0010SM.pdf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thank you this is helpful I didn't know they existed. This is great for staff that don't read English. I appreciate this
Next Steps/Follow Up	Please reach out to Aliza Yair (Aliza.yair@dcyf.wa.gov) or Travis Hansen (travis.hansen@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Temporary Licensing Subcommittee (TLS) Recommendation Tracker Update

DCYF Child Care Licensing, Quality Assurance & Continuous Quality Improvement Manager Aliza Yair presented the updated TLS tracker for members to review.

• [TLS Tracker Update](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the tracker one request was a notice of at least a timeframe when licensers would drop in unannounced - yet the recent WAC that providers MUST let licensers in seems to move in the opposite direction. What was the catalyst that made licensing feel this new mandate was necessary? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We've talked a lot about giving a window for the unannounced monitoring visit. We are still trying hard with the Federal Government and the policy unit there because that is a Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) requirement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That doesn't leave providers any wiggle room. There had to be some catalyst behind this. I'd be curious about the block grant language. Can you share that in the feedback loop? Is that based on their interpretation or is that really the law? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision came from the Office of Child Care Policy division which is part of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) • Is there a timeline for completion? The one's that are no, do they go back to ELAC and there is more discussion? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The timeline for each recommendation would differ depending on what action is needed (legislative, funding, etc.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When I look at #21. The answer talked about the background check, it is not related to the recommendation. There needs to be time for broader discussion to address the miscommunication. I'm concerned that there is not a timeline for these recommendations to be answered. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I hear that. It was my understanding that ELAC and PS went through and noted which ones were priorities so we are focusing on those first. Other than that, if you want more info about #21 then let's do that. We'll put it in the feedback loop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I think there are questions that come up. DCYF might read it one way and answer it in a way that wasn't intended when providers came up with the
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	<p>recommendation. We need to allow a broad timeframe in a future meeting to talk about this again. There are a lot of questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This would be a good conversation to have with ELAC and PS members separately so we can make sure that the recommendations are worded correctly and present that clarification to the agency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I suggest that No. 4 on the tracker be updated to reflect the feedback that was shared at ELAC. If ELAC/PS was working, the recommendation would never have been made. This is an example of why I think providers need to be engaged in completing the tracker so we all understand the rationale and are on the same page. • No. 5 on the tracker. Why is there no live person to talk to in an office any longer? Our last two licensors have not called us back or returned emails. We have no contact with licensing at this point. This is very frustrating.
Next Steps/Follow Up	Please reach out to Aliza Yair (Aliza.yair@dcyf.wa.gov) with any questions.

Provider Engagement

DCYF Assistant Secretary of Early Learning Nicole Rose and Interim Assistant Secretary of Licensing Ruben Reeves led a discussion regarding statewide provider engagement plans.

- [Provider Engagement Presentation](#)
- [Provider Engagement Discussion](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biggest themes for us are consistency across the board, transparency with communication, and relationships. • Providers have a fear of getting written up. Licensed providers and family homes should not fear licensors. They should be working with providers to find solutions. • We are hoping to open lines of communication in a different way and strengthen relationships across the early learning division. There need to be more opportunities to have a dialogue about things providers are seeing and hearing from licensors and the child care contact center. • DCYF should let us know every time there is a change to our licensor.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to Nicole Rose (nicole.rose@dcyf.wa.gov) and Ruben Reeves (ruben.reeves@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Early Learning Updates

DCYF’s Assistant Secretary of Early Learning Nicole Rose, Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Administrator Tracie Kenney, and Federal Initiatives and Collaboration Administrator Matt Judge provided Early Learning updates and collected feedback on engagement for the Preschool Development Grant Workforce Planning Grant projects and Renewal Grant application.

- [PDG Presentation](#)
- [Child Care Access & Living Wage Presentation](#)
- [PDG Discussion](#)
- [Childcare Access Discussion](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this plan include funding for programs operating transitional kindergarten (TK)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When we submit this, it will be focused on the programs that DCYF has purview over. So, we would not be asking for TK funding.
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Washington State Department of CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

- We need to understand that there is a discrepancy in the subsidy rates in different regions. The employees without benefits suffer. I hope DCYF will consider that and rethink a structure that's more equitable for regionally misplaced providers.
 - Am I hearing subsidy rates and a different structure for that?
 - Yes, it's not possible to have a livable wage for all if one region gets half as much and we're 95% subsidized.
- The financial cap is for all income levels of families? Is there a cap on the amount of family wages to qualify for access to the delivery system?
 - A cap on the amount of family wages to qualify for access to the delivery system is something where we're going to need to make some recommendations on. So what State median income should we go up to? And I'm using State median income because that's what's in law right now.
 - At the task force meetings, we talked about by zip code or by county instead of state median income. We have to think about it in smaller segments, not one for the entire state.
 - On the subsidy rate regions, that's a major topic of the Rate Model work group whose recommendations ELAC and PS will get to provide feedback on. Excited to get providers' perspectives on that.
- We need to work with the other systems so that if our staff gets a living wage, they don't lose their subsidized housing and medical benefits. If we come up with a system for living wage for early learning, are we now competing with the K-12 system? How does that all factor in?
 - That's a great point. What are the implications as wages increase? We don't want to inadvertently create another benefits cliff.
- Who will control the capital gains tax that the state is going to be collecting?
 - The legislature decides how to spend all the money that comes into the state in the form of taxes. They have already allocated the anticipated capital gains tax money through forecasting. A good portion was spent on subsidy rate increases so they did spend a lot of that on early learning.
 - Are there any risks because there were no restrictions placed on it? All the money goes into the Education Legacy Trust account that funds public education. Are we going to have to go through the legislative process to guarantee that some of those funds actually go not just to subsidy rates but to the childcare sector?
 - Every legislative session, there is a risk that they move funds. The only things that are guaranteed are things in the state constitution which K-12 is.
- Is the Capital Gains tax funding going to K-12? Is it possible that the funds could be used for TK in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) system and that be considered early learning? And then we might not see any of that money.
 - They've already allocated the money and they decided to fund our subsidy rate increase. They are not going to undo that. If we start getting more capital gains, then there will be an opportunity in the next biennial budget to make a case for spending it on early learning versus K-12. If by the next budget, there is a dramatic decrease, then we'll have to make the case for preserving what they're spending on early learning.
 - Could we see the allocation?
 - Yes, I can get how much is coming to us and what it's being spent on for DCYF.
- It says the unannounced visit needs to happen annually (which is a timeframe). Even if you have a 30-60 day window it would be unannounced (which is still a timeframe).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'm wondering if the feds would reconsider if we built a window based on compliance history into our monitoring system because it's based on lowering risk. You earn the window of when we're going to come out because there is a history of compliance.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ That would be punitive and not in line with the goal of building trust.• For our center, the reason we ask for a window is because we want the owner or director to be the responsible party signing off on the licensing visit.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I appreciate you describing that. It gives me a better understanding about the issues around unannounced visits. I doubt the feds will build flexibility around that but I will articulate this group's input back to them to fully explore it.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please reach out to Nicole Rose (nicole.rose@dcyf.wa.gov), Matt Judge (matt.judge@dcyf.wa.gov), or Tracie Kenney (tracie.kenney@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Early Achievers

DCYF QRIS Administrator Rachael Brown-Kendall provided members with an update on Early Achievers.

- [Early Achievers Presentation](#)
- [Early Achievers Discussion](#)
- [Early Achievers Video Highlight Fact Sheet](#)
- [CECI Security FAQ](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are providers dealing with recording and editing videos for Video Highlights? It might take me 30 minutes to capture the two minutes of footage that I want.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ There is no need to edit. You will submit a 10-15 minute video of continuous engagement with at least one child.• What happens to the videos after they're submitted?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ They are retained in the Coach and Educator Community Interface (CECI) secure server. If at some point Early Achievers ended then they would be deleted.○ Nobody else has access to them but the provider who submitted the video and the Quality Recognition Specialists at the University of Washington.• Can DCYF share what the concerns or complaints during the early adopter phase of Video Highlights were related to?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Some of the feedback was related to the CECI platform. We have planned some enhancements to make it easier to navigate. We've improved the upload time quite a bit. Currently the Early Achievers sections of CECI are in Spanish and Somali, but Getting the whole CECI site into Spanish and Somali is a big goal of ours.• Could you share the process for getting parental consent for the video?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A lot of people are adding this to their enrollment policies. In the Child Care Licensing WAC, there is a requirement to share any media you are using so media consent is the responsibility of the provider.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Is there an attestation?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes, there is and we do have a sample consent form that you can use.○ One provider from the subcommittee stated, "We added it into our registration packet. For parents who don't want their child videotaped, then we know not to include it."• Is there a library that shows steps on how to do the videos?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes, detailed instructions are available in English, Spanish, and Somali in the Coach and Educator Community Interface (CECI) resources. And coaches are available walk through the process with you. You can find your coach here:
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	<p>https://childcareawarewa.org/find-your-coach/. If you have trouble accessing CECI it, your community liaison can help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered working with Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT) or the new DCYF training website to put a link for CECI? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Absolutely, this is something we have been working on. The progress we have made so far has allowed us to create a connection so that you can sign into CECI using your Merit login. • Is there any chance that you will be starting some kind of a system where we can use one email for all of our classes instead of each classroom needing a separate email? It's more important for all the info to be in the owner's email. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We understand this recommendation and we are working to balance the desire of small business owners and the benefits of supporting adult learning in order to support a strong workforce. ○ We have heard that some employees sign confidentiality statements upon hiring related to program materials such as child observations. We are interested in working with providers to create a protocol that supports meaningful access to provider level data and a process to manage access when employee status changes. ○ Currently, the videos in the Early Achievers side are only accessible to the person who uploaded them and the director of the program.
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to the QRIS Support Team at (QRIS@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Background Checks

DCYF Assistant Director of Operational Supports Chris Parvin and DCYF Interim Assistant Secretary of Licensing Ruben Reeves provided members with an update and asked for feedback on the changes coming to the background check process.

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand there's a federal requirement. My concern is that the burden still falls on providers. Background checks should have a max clearance time so potential employees aren't waiting longer than 72 hours. • As employers, we all value background checks and we all rely on them. Even if someone was hired that has a portable background check, we aren't going to leave them unsupervised with kids until we have a history. Safety is our top priority and liability wise it's unthinkable to have a staff member unsupervised without a clear background check. That's not the source of our frustration. It's the turnaround time; we want clearances to come back in a way that allows us to hire people quickly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We did ask the legislature to fund us to have background check fingerprint capabilities at DCYF offices. We were not funded, but we are trying to ask for creative solutions. Office of Financial Management (OFM) has been leading a background check workgroup on how to improve for all social service agencies. • How will licensors handle someone who is working but still waiting for clearance? Will the person be forced to leave or will the provider be cited? Are current background checks going to automatically be updated to five years or is that at renewal? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We want to be able to allow people enough time to come into compliance. It's not going to be July 1. We have built into the system an extension of two years for anyone that has a current clear portable background check. • Will you explain why licensors are not required to complete the portable background check? This double standard is extremely troubling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This comes up on the child welfare side as well. DCYF staff are not providing direct care so it's not a federal requirement.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It comes up when they want to speak to a child alone, whether it's a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigator or licensor.• Why can't all offices that do digital fingerprints send into DCYF the person's prints to be read? Or is it the agency who reads the? Also, why don't all IdentoGo sites do DCYF fingerprinting?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Fingerprints in the state of WA are only used for background checks. They are submitted and then they are not kept on file.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Do we have to only contract with one specific agency? Why can't any place who takes fingerprints just send them to DCYF?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The system is currently not set up for multiple agencies or vendors. Now that is something that is possible. We are also looking to supplement to see if the state can offer fingerprinting.• If I am already fingerprinted as a Consumer Direct Care (CDWA) caregiver will I need to do it again for my child care family home facility too?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If you have a current portable background check then you won't need another one but if you're fingerprinted for a different agency then we cannot use those.• Are the background fees coming back in July?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The background check fees were permanently eliminated.• New employees may work (supervised) until their fingerprinting results are returned.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes, currently new employees may work supervised while fingerprints are pending/returned. But when we implement the Federal requirements, they have to have a completed background check before working.• A lot of civil rights and social justice organizations are nervous about records of arrests and prosecutions (RAP BACK) because it keeps biometric data and there are concerns about how it may exacerbate inequities in our justice system. OFM did put forward a list of recommendations. There would need to be some work. We do talk about the benefits and also the concerns.• Is it true there is a federal requirement that the prints get done but not the CPS portion?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It's both. The completed background check includes fingerprints and if they lived outside the state including the CPS.• This is not happening on July 1st. We do need to pick a date to get into compliance and it has to happen by the end of the year.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is there a slightly better time, what would be the optimal of a bad situation?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We'll be sending out a survey to providers.○ Yes, we recently updated our DCYF employee background check policy, and CPS and other staff who may have unsupervised access to children or youth are required to complete background checks and renew every five years as well.• The sooner folks know the better. FAQ and other information out by August 1. December 31 deadline - use all the time we have to put more mitigation processes in place.• Is a grace period for expiration dates possible?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Unfortunately, no grace period is allowed, but that is why the system sends out notices alerting the expiration is coming in three months and every month thereafter.• Directors used to be notified when staff members were expired or if they had cleared a background check.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I'll check into that to see if it's something we could reinstate in there without disruption.
Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please reach out to Chris Parvin (chris.parvin@dcyf.wa.gov) or Ruben Reeves (ruben.reeves@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.



Closing Remarks/Adjourn

Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2023.
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