



Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA)

Meeting Minutes

July 27, 2022- 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols and Introductions

DCYF Deputy Director of Community Engagement, Deanna Stewart, welcomed attendees, discussed virtual meeting protocols and initiated introductions.

Recommendation Tracker Activity

Providers reviewed feedback received from parents and providers on recommendations developed, to date, and worked individually to edit recommendations and incorporate feedback.

[Provider Feedback](#)

[Parent Feedback](#)

[Feedback Discussion Question Responses](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So glad the Early Learning Guidebook is in Arabic too. • Licensors could bring updated pages when they come for monitoring. • It is important to have transparency and consistency at meetings and trainings, to reduce any inconsistent messaging by licensors. • The Licensing Department should be holding webinars, not regionally, so the information is the same across the state. • The monthly licensor check-in should be optional. Not everyone wants to communicate that frequently. • We need a provider rights and responsibilities form that is for licensors and providers. • Licensing rules should be focused on the health and safety of kids and NOT designed so that there is power and control over providers. • "Speak to your own licensor" sends the message that the information may be different depending on who you speak to. • Any accusation that comes into DCYF for an intake should be given to the accused (providers) in writing so we can accurately address the accusation. • No more validations of accusations without evidence. • Currently, it is DCYF's "policy" to not give anything in writing. It is not a Revised Code of Washington (RCW) or Washington Administrative Code (WAC) rule. • Employment laws related to employee information, etc. must be factored into all related rules. • We should add that those groups (licensors, Early Achievers (EA) coaches, and DCYF staff) should be required to have background checks on the same schedule as providers. ALL trainings should count toward STARS hours- online or in person, especially those that are mandatory (ex: First Aide, Blood Born Pathogens, etc.). • Regarding minimum licensing standards and EA quality rate improvement, everything is tied to subsidy rates. At the most recent Cost of Care meeting, 24,000 families are accessing Working Connections Care Check (WCCC), but in a state that has about 7.8 million people, those numbers do not add up. Is all this work intended to impact the entire child care system or just the WCCC system? We need clarity on this. Seems like the pots are being mixed. What is the goal? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This would be a question for the early learning division as they determine subsidy policies.
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- We will add this to the feedback loop and try to have an answer for you at the next meeting.
- Is this a space where I am allowed to ask a question about equity grants?
 - You are more than welcome to ask, however, we might not have an answer and would have to get back to you.
- The Equity Grant just opened up, and I was recently cleared with the local school district for Early Childhood and Assistance Program (ECEAP) slots. I get about \$151 extra for additional resources. However, I did not understand that I couldn't apply for the equity grant since I was granted contracted slots. I wanted to let the group know that if you have contracted slots, you have to apply through your subcontractor only, and I was told by my subcontractor that they have no way of doing this. The subcontractors were not contacted by DCYF and did not know they were responsible for monitoring this, nor do they have the support to deal with all this.
 - So, to clarify the question, I heard you are asking, why if you have ECEAP slots, do you have to go through a subcontractor to apply for the equity grant?
 - Yes, that is correct.
 - We will look into this and get a response for the next meeting.
- Someone recommended DCYF should not be allowed to shut down a provider. We probably all know providers that should not be licensed. I would be happy if the one I know was shut down.
- Even a 30-day notice window would be helpful for monitoring visits.
- Please change the language to refer to Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) as "licensor training".
 - Not to remove the reference to IRR - just always include that it IS training for licensors, and providers are permitted to not participate in training licensors.
- I would recommend all the feedback from providers goes to parents because not everyone understands what all it takes to provide high-quality childcare. Feel this is a missed opportunity.
 - Thank you. It is all available to the parents if they want to go through the recommendations. Any new recommendations will be presented to the parents, as well.
 - Parents did ask for clarification on some of the recommendations. They wanted to know what was said and how the recommendations came about. We walked through the comments and the process with the parent group. They are providing parent feedback from their own experience and perspective.
- It is good for us to hear what the parent feedback is. There is always an opportunity for new learning.
- An unrelated thought, DCYF should have tools to ensure unlicensed providers get licensed. If the goal is to protect children, they should be looking at those in unlicensed care, which is going totally unchecked and experiencing massive growth.

Parent Recommendations Discussion:

- Regarding unannounced visits, we are in compliance every day, but when a licensor comes for long periods of time, we have to adjust that with staffing to accommodate, and it can be challenging to find staff to fill in.
 - Thank you and we understand those concerns. We went through this recommendation in depth with the parent group, and parents were adamant that they do not agree with this recommendation. As parent feedback is required in legislation, their feedback will be going into the report as well.
- I wonder what can be done to increase participation. Does DCYF post on their Facebook page about these meetings?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I can look into that. I don't believe they are posted to Facebook, just on our webpage, but that is a great idea! I will look into it and get back to the group ● Overregulation is not a blanket statement. Concerned about not going back to the minimum safety standards. When DCYF got large, they started jumping into too many things, and not doing any one thing well. DCYF needs to be very specific about minimum licensing standards. I do not feel DCYF should be involved with small businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To clarify, do you want a conversation with DCYF, or are you commenting to create a recommendation? ○ I am not sure who would speak to that. Would love to hear more about their overarching goals regarding overregulation. Would you have a recommendation of who could speak to DCYF's mission statement? ○ For this group, we are trying to figure out what is the best conversation to bring to this group to help with recommendations. There are some topics that would be better suited for the Provider Supports subcommittee group. If the intent is to make a recommendation to licensing, we can do that here. If it is a larger, broader conversation, then I would recommend taking the topic to Provider Supports. ● From a provider standpoint, overregulation is out of control. ● What does DCYF plan to do? What are their next steps with the feedback given to them? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Once these recommendations are made and sent to DCYF, we talked about having a meeting with you all and DCYF to clarify recommendations, get feedback, and talk about the next steps. ● The barriers to entry are significant, and this needs to be looked at. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I agree with this. We need to figure out what is holding providers back. Why aren't more people willing to go through the process, or what barriers need to be resolved to get there? ○ That is a great point, and that is exactly what this group was designed to do. ● Can the jamboard links be sent out to others outside the group? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I would recommend sending the links to Sarah Brady, Imagine, and Voices of tomorrow.
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Suggested Future Topics

[Feedback Discussion Question Responses](#)

Discussion	<p>Overreach by Licensors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not a part of this group, because it is an overarching topic. ● Needs to be a large conversation. ● For the overreach of licensors, providers want in writing what they or their organization is being accused of. Documentation and consistency, concerning the Licensing Division and Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation process. ● I know Oregon had (assuming they still do) a provider's rights document. May be good to see what other states are doing instead of starting from scratch. ● There is no consistency with licensors. All Early Learning organizations have shared experiences with licensors not following defined WACs and using a subjective interpretation of WACs. ● There is no collaboration; feels like us versus them. ● When providers put in a petition for WAC change, when you get a response, does it not include a reason? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, there was some rationale. There are a lot of things that providers find more important than, for example, toothbrushing. ● We petitioned that the requirement for toothbrushing be removed. It just doesn't make sense that ONE item be a required part of the curriculum.
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- When I had reached out to a facility, they told me they don't need to be licensed, because they had certified teachers. There should be a designated process with the same requirements.
- Seems to happen a lot with privileged and affluent neighborhoods who feel like they don't have to go through the licensing process.
- The process for reporting unlicensed child care is found [here](#).
 - I've taken that route and gotten no results.
- Surprised to hear if they are certificated they do not need to be licensed. I have not heard of that.
 - I was asking about rapid licensing to help with families on my waitlist. I was told by licensing that if you are not accepting subsidy, you do not need a license.
 - Seems that would drive more people to not obtain licenses.
 - We're all held to the laws except unlicensed care. DCYF does nothing.
 - If it's not a full year or is a half-day program, there is no need to be licensed.
 - There is a law from 1952 that exempts youth programs, like Boys and Girls club, however, laws change. Agree that there is a lot of enforcement with licensed child care, but almost none for unlicensed child care.
- The only way to report unlicensed care is to report the concern to Child Protective Services (CPS) and parents do not want to do this. I have been told by DCYF they do not have any enforcement options in regard to this.
- All early learning, whether part-day or full-day, should have a set of guidelines for the safety of all children.
- The RCW licensing requirements can be found [here](#). Section (2) lists the agencies that are exempt from required licensing.
- The child care sector needs more stabilization funding that is a non-competitive process. DCYF needs to improve equity in this process.
 - There have been conversations about the stabilization grant process. The Early Learning team adjusted their process moving forward, however, we have not had a lot of opportunity to go through what that process looks like now, because we have not had another stabilization grant opportunity.
 - Early Learning did take the feedback to heart and if there are funds available and they offer the funds again as a noncompetitive grant, I do believe we will be able to see the new model.
- Please note somewhere that parents see the word "Preschool" and think it means more when it actually means LESS. No background checks, no training, no CPR requirements.
 - Preschool is a classroom/age group - parents don't seem to understand that.
- Question regarding clarity on the licensing overreach topic. I am not sure if the group wants a presentation on this, or have time held for a conversation?
 - There is way too much interpretation of the WAC. I was told to go above the licensor's head to their supervisor. Depending on the licensor, then there is retaliation. There is no way to demonstrate fidelity because there is too much interpretation of the WAC.
 - Other things we have heard, is the lack of consistency across the state. Licensors are doing different practices in different regions, and we have heard this numerous times in different meetings.
 - So, what I am hearing is, outside of IRR, how do we train licensors to be consistent, and how are we ensuring our process? Also, the processes providers have to go through when there is a disagreement or complaint. Am I hearing that correctly about what you want information on?
 - To clarify, IRR training is meant for new licensors, however, the inconsistencies apply in older licensors.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ IRR covers all licensors.○ IRR is also optional, what if that is not happening consistently across the state?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It is not optional for licensors, however, is optional for providers.• For the financial piece, COVID is hitting us worse than ever right now. Many providers are closing their doors. We are losing more than we will be able to expand. We need to be able to sustain and figure out what is in place right now to help providers not close their doors.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I would like to see an extension of the subsidy payments for enrolled levels, not necessarily based on attendance until we get through the pandemic stage.
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2022 Meetings, Closing Remarks, and Adjourn

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2022.
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