



Early Learning Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

October 1, 2024 – 10:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols and Introductions

ELAC Executive Committee member Enrica Hampton welcomed attendees and walked through virtual meeting protocols. Introductions were completed via chat.

Review of Meeting Materials

ELAC Executive Committee member Lois Martin led the group in the review of meeting materials.

- [August 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Feedback Loop](#)
- [State Agency/Partner Updates](#)
- [Regional Coalition Updates](#)
- [Child Care Health Consultation](#)

Discussion	<p>Feedback Loop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Child Care Forums are being held in person across the state and the virtual forum will be Tuesday, December 10. <p>Regional Coalition Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pierce County Early Childhood Network (PCECN) is holding their 2024 Champions for Children Celebration on Friday, October 11th. PCECN is also working with a direct lobbyist for a two million legislative ask. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The upcoming budget session is going to be incredibly tight. On the house side, we’ve been asked to identify and communicate to the budget team if we’re looking at anything over one million. A two million dollar ask is going to be difficult so please set expectations appropriately and accordingly on operating dollars.
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Department of Health Lead in Child Care Drinking Water Update

Ashley Davies from the Department of Health (DOH) provided an update regarding lead in child care drinking water.

- [Lead in Child Care Drinking Water | Washington State Department of Health](#)

Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to Ashley Davies (Ashley.davies@doh.wa.gov) or leadfreekids@doh.wa.gov with any follow-up questions.
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Enrollment-Based Pay and Prospective Payment

DCYF’s Child Care Subsidy Program Administrator Jason Ramynke and Child Care Administrator Matt Judge gathered feedback on the new Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) rules on enrollment-based pay and prospective payment.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this mean that payments will move to providers being paid at the beginning of the month? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In general, yes. • When would this take effect? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DCYF does not have the authority to make that decision as it requires new funds to implement this change. The legislature would need to make the decision about when and how to fund this. The federal government does recognize that many states are in the same situation where they can’t take any action until the
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	<p>legislature makes a decision. They have made waivers available, and states can apply for those now through November and they are effective through August 2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DCYF is requesting a waiver from the Office of Child Care (OCC) and has included implementation in July 2026 in the Department's decision packages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will this impact emergency closures for snow, power outages, etc. or provider in-service days? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are still in process on those specific questions. • How will payment be impacted if classrooms have to close due to staffing challenges given that maintaining ratios is extremely difficult when staff call out sick. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We can follow up on this. • How will this impact Tribes that have their own CCDF programs? Will tribes follow this same payment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ My understanding is Tribal Programs are exempt from these requirements. A Tribal Program that receives state CCDF payments would benefit from these changes as to those payments, however. • These important changes are exciting and makes provider life easier, eventually increase access and quality for families and children • It is concerning that there is a possibility that programs will turn away tribal children covered by their tribal programs who have different payment scale. • What happens if families take time off (i.e. vacations, other family events) on the payment for providers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These are covered under absent days and will be allowed based on enrollment-based payment. The question that is still unanswered is how long will vacation be allowed? Today children must attend one day a month. • Aren't family providers set up on a monthly unit? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family Home Providers are using monthly units. • Providers need a bit more context about the federal requirements when asked for this specific feedback. Also, when these questions come up, often what's missing is what's happening in the day to day lives of providers. Whatever we do, do no harm and don't ask more of providers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The federal requirements are broad and don't give specifics on enrollment-based pay. We're trying to get to a system that passes the straight face test that it is an enrollment-based pay. In Washington State we have a voucher-based payment system so how do we make enrollment-based pay work for us? It's less about federal rules and more about how it will work in Washington with providers and subsidy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Even that is important context. Providers don't know the back-end workings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can adjust this for Provider Supports.
<p>Next Steps/Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please reach out to Matt (matt.judge@dcyf.wa.gov) and Jason (Jason.ramynke@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow-up questions.

Early Care and Education Access and Living Wage Proviso

DCYF's Early Care and Education Access Project Manager Diana Stokes provided a progress update on the Early Care and Education Access and Living Wage Proviso.

<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does increasing living wages for educators have to do with the other big picture recommendations mentioned?
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- In order to increase access to care options for families we need to make sure we have a sustainable workforce. We can't maintain our workforce without them receiving living wages. Bringing staff up to the living wages they deserve should help support increased access for families that need care.
- What are the recommendations to increase living wages for educators and early learning providers?
 - The goal is to reach that cost of quality care rate model as that will uplift our subsidy rates and support the living wages for staff. How we are going to do that is something that still needs to be identified and it will also require investment by our legislators.
 - I am concerned that we are asking more of providers while not having a clear plan to raise living wages.
 - I think it's a huge win that the Early Educator Design Team's frame, and DCYF's, is the MIT Living Wage Standard. DCYF also sought and received federal approval to move to basing subsidy rates on cost to provide care. This puts the state in position to pursue living wages. The question is funding/revenue/budget.
- This upcoming session will involve a biennium budget - is there a plan to put anything forward this session? What happens if capital gains is rolled back?
 - Our phase one implementation is based on the decision packages Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) entitlement and Working Connections eligibility expansion. Those two decision packages will allow us to serve more children. As we increase to the updated market rate survey, the Market Rate Survey rates, and having that different modeling will get us closer to the cost of quality care rate model.
 - If capital gains is rolled back, that is something we will have to address in the implementation plan after the legislative session. We will have to adjust our action items depending on what is funded, but it will not impact our recommendations on what we want to do moving forward.
 - Both the subsidy rate and co-pays are baked inside the Fair Starts for Kids Act (FSKA) so regardless of what happens, those things are now in maintenance budgets. The pieces that we need to continue to advocate for would be those things that are subject to appropriation like the Infant Toddler Mental Health Funds, interpretation, translation, complex needs etc. There are also conversations around wage boards and moving towards thriving wages.
- Continuing Washington Communities for Children (WCFC) regional community engagement was referenced in the what's next list. What might regional feedback opportunities look like between the fall status update and June plan?
 - We are working with WCFC on what this engagement can look like and thinking about it as a whole from DCYF. We will be coming back to ELAC, Provider Supports, and the Indian Policy Early Learning Committee (IPEL) to share the feedback received and the full recommendations.
- In Snohomish County average educators receive \$18/hr. I know this is preaching to the choir, but providers can't fill their slots because they are losing teachers.
 - We are still working on a clear plan to raise living wages, knowing that the state has to make that investment. We recognize that across the state there is a lot of variance and so getting to that cost of quality care will be a great step towards that thriving wage.



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please reach out to Diana (diana.stokes@dcyf.wa.gov) with any follow up questions.
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Closing Remarks/Adjourn

Next Steps/Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next ELAC Public Meeting will be held jointly with the Provider Supports Subcommittee on Tuesday, December 3, 2024
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Members in Attendance:

Ami Magisos, Brittany Hartikainen, Bryana Kowalski, Carlina Brown-Banks, Cheryl Smith, Claudette Lindquist, Colleen Condon, Danielle Rasmussen, Debbie Carlsen, Hanna Bruning, Heidi Scott, Jen Sandvig, Kathy Carman, Lois Martin, Michelle Perez, Million Shiferaw, Nancy Spurgeon, Olivia Burley, Representative Mari Leavitt, Ruba Ayub, Ryan Guzman, Samantha Bowen, Senator Claire Wilson, Shereese Rhodes, Tafra Jones, Valisa Smith, Victoria Hilt, Waylon Ballew

Members Absent:

Aida Rodriguez, Alexandra Martin-Truesdell, April Messenger, Astrid Newell, Debbie Ham, Deeann Puffert, Grace Yoo, Isis Lara Fernandez, Julie Rolling, Lola Moses, Luz Gomez, Mary Rulewicz, Representative Travis Couture, Valerie Arnold