



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Meeting
October 1, 2024

**Regional Coalition & Washington Communities for
Children (WCFC) Updates**

Regional Coalition Update

Inland Northwest Early Learning Alliance, Northeast

For more information, please contact: Colleen Condon, colleen@lilaccityelc.com

INWELA members made huge strides this month in deciding on internal structures. Moving forward the alliance will use a Consent Based decision making model. There's a lot of excitement around naming a decision-making framework as we start the creation of our charter and begin seeking funds to sustain the efforts of INWELA!

Our work with Washington STEM through our region's Catalyst Grant is wrapping up at the end of the year. Planning is underway to host an Early Learning Summit for our region to showcase the data we've collected and synthesized around access to early learning. Invitees include early learning providers, organizations, business champions, and legislative staff, among others. We hope to walk away from this event with 2-3 high level goals to increase access to early care and education.

DCYF recently hosted a Child Care Forum in Spokane. Provider turn out was not as high as anticipated, but it was nice to see so many DCYF staff in attendance. INWELA is working with DCYF staff on planning the next forum. We hope that increased communication efforts will lead to better provider attendance in the future.

Rural county outreach and bringing additional perspectives to the table continue to be a priority for INWELA as we address our equity concerns around representation. Advocacy conversations and building relationships with legislative staff is also a high priority, along with sustainability efforts. It feels like INWELA is growing by leaps and bounds, and we're all excited about this forward momentum!

Investing in Children Coalition: Central

For more information, please contact: Lindsay Bowsell, lindsayb@yakimavalleycf.org

No updates to share at this time.

King County

For more information, please contact: Logan Endres or Tristen Hall, kcelc@childcare.org

No updates to share at this time.

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North Central

For more information please contact: Nancy Spurgeon, nspurgeon49@gmail.com

The following are some of the highlights that we have been engaging in for the NCELC -

- 9/3-9/4 Attend Northwest Rural development strategy sessions in Skamania, WA Network with tribal members, local community, state, and federal organizations around the need to support childcare, food security and housing across WA and Oregon.
- 9/5 Took tour of Childcare center in Carson that shared their story of how the challenges faced with the licensing process for her at her facility.
- 9/ 10 Attended interagency meetings at Wenatchee school district to discuss information around supporting childcare in our region.
- 9/11 Met with North Central Early Learning Coalition and Grant County Health District to plan an outreach event in Grant County to gather information from families in the community about their need to access resources, including childcare.
- 9/11 outreach email/phone call to provider / parent Cohorts to engage in CCA of WA story bank and share info on attending community events happening this month.
- 9/12 Attended Civic Design team at the community foundation to participate in with local agencies in sharing information about how to engage in civics and the voting process.
- 9/16 Outreach to provider cohort in Omak and Okanogan counties to join us in our advocacy work and share out to other community members.
- 9/17 Attend Grant County Community Resource Forum to collaborate on community needs, join in the ECDOH planning meeting for upcoming event w/ cohort members.
- 9/20 Attend WCFC policy and advocacy meeting for FY24 to gain more insight into policy platforms.
- 9/20 Attend community health initiatives community event on mental health, connect with local health and tribal partners around childcare issues.
- 9/23 Host NCELC meeting and ECDOH events in Moses Lake to gather information from Grant County community on the needs of families and help connect them to resources.

Northwest

For more information please contact: Linden Obel, linden@first5fundamentals.org

Current focus areas of [Northwest Early Learning Coalition](#), a regional coalition uniting early learning coalitions across Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties:

WA STEM Early Learning Catalyst Project: in partnership with our STEM Networks, our region is collaborating 1) to co-create a regional strategic plan to increase equitable access to high quality early learning opportunities that aligns with the Early Learning Coordination Plan; 2) grow Family Friendly Workplace Business Champions through cross-sector engagement; and 3) develop a strategic policy agenda and advocacy campaign aligned with regional and state priorities. We are in the final phase of continuing to meet with partners to gather their perspectives on local and regional priorities, distilling our data gathering and learnings, and drafting our regional strategic plan outline in alignment with the Early Learning Coordination Plan.

Role Transitions: NWEL Coalition is in the process of hiring a new Regional Lead! With any transition

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in leadership comes the potential for new growth and energy, evaluation and reframing of current structures, and considerations for future initiatives and priorities as a region.

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care Project Outreach: As part of the FFN Care in WA Project, NWEL Coalition is actively supporting outreach to families utilizing FFN Care in our region and family members, friends, and neighbors providing informal or subsidized FFN Care.

County Coalition Highlights: Our local coalitions are in full force with exciting work happening around resource access and expansion!

- **Children’s Council of Skagit County:** launched their newborn outreach program! And the Children’s Council recently published their strategic plan aligned with the ELCP. [View it here!](#)
- **Partners for Young Children in Island County:** hired a new PYC Coordinator! PYC is in the first phase of local Help Me Grow system implementation and is participating in a regional newborn outreach initiative following Skagit’s launch. The coalition is also working with a local pediatrician to streamline enrollment processes across local resources.
- **San Juan County Early Learning Coalition:** hosted their first-ever ever site visit with County Councilmember and Board of Health Member at the Lopez Children’s Center! The coalition continues to focus on growing child care slots and licensed programs.
- **Snohomish County Early Learning Coalition:** Secured a grant from Start Early to work with a customized consultant focused on supporting their Leadership Council work.
- **Whatcom Early Learning Alliance:** is excited to participate in the regional newborn outreach initiative and is looking into bringing Bright By Text to the county.

Peninsula Early Learning Coalition

For more information, please contact: Elisia Anderson, elisia.anderson@firststepfamilysupport.org
No updates to share at this time.

Pierce County Early Childhood Network

For more information please contact: Ruba Ayub, rubaa@first5fundamentals.org

We need your help for our [Champions for Children](#) event on October 11, 2024, at Star Center in Tacoma.

Event Schedule & Tasks:

- 2 PM - 4 PM: Set-Up
Assist with arranging tables, chairs, and décor, setting up the buffet, and organizing A/V equipment.
- 4 PM - 6 PM: Event-Based Volunteer Support
Help with registration, information tables, ushering guests, and supporting the buffet.
- 6 PM - 8 PM: Break Down
Assist with packing up materials, clearing tables, and ensuring the venue is left in great condition.

Interested? [Fill out our Volunteer Sign-Up Form](#) to select your roles and share any relevant experience or accommodation needs.

Thank you for your support! Please share this opportunity with others who might be interested. For any questions contact ruba ayub rubaa@first5fundamentals.org

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Southeast (SEELC)

For more information, please contact: Brittany Hartikainen, brittany@bh-consulting.org

The SEELC will be hosting 4 Early Learning Summits as part of our Catalyst Grant work in the month of October. The dates will be as follows:

October 10th – Benton/Franklin County Early Learning Summit

October 16th – Walla Walla County Early Learning Summit

October 17th – Asotin County Early Learning Summit

October 22nd – Garfield County Early Learning Summit

If you would like more information about these summits, please reach out to Brittany Hartikainen – brittany@bh-consulting.org.

Southwest Washington Early Learning (SWEL)

For more information please contact: Debbie Ham, Debbie.ham@selfwa.org

We've been busy scheduling tours of child care programs, both family homes and small centers, for public officials and candidates running for office. This has been very effective and opens many conversations.

We completed our Impact Report for 2023 recently and distributed it throughout our region.

Our regional Imagination Library registrations as exceeded 11,000 children; we've distributed 237,331 books to children birth to five between 8-2021 and 8-2024.

Our SW WA Child Care Partnership Continues to grow. We have added over 80 new licensed family child care slots.

Visions for Early Learning, West Central

For more information, please contact: Sheila Kavanaugh, kav.consulting231@gmail.com

Visions for Early Learning (VEL) Update:

1. **Legislative Breakfast Planning:** VEL continues to support the organization of the upcoming **Legislative Breakfast** in partnership with Capital STEM Alliance, scheduled for October 15 at Centralia College. This event will address critical issues surrounding child care accessibility and the challenges faced by child care providers. Key speakers include Michael Cade from the Thurston County Economic Development Council and Kristin Wiggins from ReadyNation. The event will also emphasize the importance of sustained coalition infrastructure for early learning.
2. **ECCS Work – Year 4:** VEL is actively participating in **Year 4 of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) project**, focusing on improving the integration of early childhood systems to ensure equitable access to supports for families across our region. We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts in this impactful work.
3. **Grays Harbor Early Childhood Developmental Health Systems (ECDHS) Work:** VEL is providing ongoing support to the Grays Harbor Early Learning Coalition in its **Early Childhood Developmental Health Systems (ECDHS)** initiative. This work aims to build an equitable and family-centered system by connecting early childhood professionals and health care providers, ensuring that families can easily access the resources they need.

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4. VEL is proud to participate in the Early Learning Community Network (ELCN) cohort as a resource and support for local coalitions. Through this network, we aim to strengthen collaborative efforts across early learning systems to promote better outcomes for children and families. Using the Building Blocks and Assessment Tool from the Early Learning Community Action Guide, VEL is helping coalitions identify priorities, assess community needs, and develop action plans that align with state-level strategies. This framework allows us to systematically improve early childhood systems in the region.
5. **Upcoming Presentations:**
 - **September General Membership Meeting:** VEL will present about the **Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA) Universal Child Care Campaign**, discussing advocacy efforts and statewide initiatives to improve access to affordable, high-quality child care.
 - **October General Membership Meeting:** VEL will introduce **HearMeWA**, a free, 24/7 support service for young people up to age 25 in Washington State, offering help with issues such as stress, anxiety, bullying, abuse, and mental health. Operated by the Washington State Attorney General's Office, the program is youth-centered, trauma-informed, and antiracist. Trained crisis counselors provide confidential support via phone, text, or online. The service aims to connect youth with professional assistance in real-time, prioritizing accessibility and privacy.
 - More information is available at available at [HearMeWA](#).

WCFC Updates – For more information please contact: info@washingtongcfc.org

WCFC State Updates

For more information please contact: Rachel Hall, WCFC State Lead,
rachelh@first5fundamentals.org

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care in Washington Survey

WCFC, along with BrightSpark and Imagine Institute, is supporting a project funded by Ballmer Group and Stolte Family Foundation to learn more about practices in informal childcare provided by Family, Friends, and Neighbors in Washington state. **We are currently recruiting FFN providers and families utilizing FFN care to participate in a brief survey.** Survey participants will receive \$25. A QR code and link to sign up to participate are available on the one-pager linked below. Here are links to informational one-pagers: [English](#) | [Somali](#) | [Spanish](#)

Living Wage Proviso

WCFC's has played a role in supporting DCYF's implementation plan to expand access to Washington's early care and education system and provide a living wage to its workforce. Over the past couple of months, our Network has:

- Identified and analyzed existing local data from families about access to affordable child care and early education and from child care providers about wages and benefits since 2020. Our goal is to avoid duplication of activities and leverage data to which we already have access.

- Hosted listening sessions throughout the WCFC Network, and administered an online survey, to capture perspectives from families with children B-12, and child care providers.

We are excited to share the full report of the above activities available now in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

WCFC Workgroups

WCFC hosts a bi-monthly Diaper Bank conversation on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. The next meeting is November 20th. Ongoing topics of interest include sharing current best thinking/best practices, funding opportunities, sustainability, accessing discounted or free supplies, and diaper bank operations. [Contact Rachel Hall](#) to join - all are welcome!

WCFC hosts a monthly conversation regarding the Washington State Early Learning Coordination Plan on the 4th Thursday of the month from 2:00 – 3:00pm. The purpose of this space is to provide strategy to crosswalk the WCFC Network with the Goals and Strategies of the ELCP, and support local communities aligning their work with the ELCP. [Contact Rachel Hall](#) to join - all are welcome!

Welcome Gwen Hearn!

WCFC is excited to welcome our new Program Coordinator, Gwen! Gwen comes to us with a background in education and youth-centered nonprofits. She believes in the importance of relationship building and centering young people as a key to fostering strength in community. Outside of work, Gwen enjoys listening to live music, volunteering, and exploring all that the PNW has to offer with her wife and two young daughters. You will likely see Gwen in various meeting spaces – please extend a warm welcome!

Stay in Touch!

Want to learn more about WCFC, be the first to hear updates, or get connected with your local early childhood coalition? Get in touch with us!

Website: washingtoncfc.org

Facebook: [WashingtonCFC](#)

Instagram: [Washington_cfc](#)