



Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA)

Meeting Minutes

October 19, 2022 – 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols and Introductions

DCYF Community Engagement Manager Eric LaFontaine welcomed attendees, discussed virtual meeting protocols, and initiated introductions.

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)

Providers engaged in a feedback-seeking activity to support the recommendation.

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the intent of the recommendation that all providers can accept WCCC subsidies whether they are doing Early Achievers or not, but Early Achievers participants would get a higher reimbursement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will check in with licensing and provide context. ○ There are some other recommendations in the report saying we should make Early Achievers optional and go back to minimum licensing requirements, which would sort of fit in. We don't want contradictory recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All licensed providers (whether they are Early Achievers or not) should be able to accept WCCC subsidies as an incentive. • Is this a licensing recommendation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Since WCCC is a subsidy, this is a subsidy recommendation. There are additional licensing recommendations in the report. • Isn't it true if you are not an Early Achievers participant, you are ineligible to receive WCCC subsidized kids? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes that is the case. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ So then this statement would not change anything. It doesn't talk about the rest of the centers who don't accept Working Connections. ▪ You only have a certain amount of time to participate in Early Achievers and if you don't then you aren't able to accept subsidized children. • Do you think the wording needs to be adjusted? Or the actual recommendation needs to be adjusted? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is contradictory to the other recommendation to roll back minimum licensing standards in order to receive subsidies. The only way to increase participation is to open the door further. Early Achievers is the only door right now to accept subsidies. • The original recommendation is reading as three separate recommendations that don't always function together: first sentence is increase rates, second is Early Achievers incentive and third is regional rate alignment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If we're going to recommend making WCCC available to more providers then we need to focus on the Early Achievers timeline. Would this group like to focus more on the timeline for Early Achievers? Is two years enough time? We could have a rate for minimum licensing standards. |
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- Is anyone recommending that there is an alternate to Early Achievers? We recommend eliminating Early Achievers but there isn't any quality standard that has to be met other than minimum licensing.
 - There wasn't a quality issue to begin with; it was more about the latest childcare research. However, unfunded mandates came out of Early Achievers which should not be necessary and is overreach.
 - No, definitely not another program. We are already overregulated with no funding attached to it. There are many high quality programs that don't participate in Early Achievers who don't have access to provide subsidized care, which then impacts communities of color. If we can make Early Achievers voluntary and then you have access to that funding to build programs and implement best practices. It should be a choice and not attached to this funding. Low income families should not have to suffer the consequences of the state implementing these requirements which exclude their children from high quality educational programs.
 - Can we add and capture that inequity? We need to undue the harm, we decreased access for families because providers can't accept Working Connections.
 - That was not the intent of Early Achievers but this has been the unintended consequence.
 - Can we build on the statement. It's not that we don't want to participate in Early Achievers. We need to specifically call out there were unintended consequences like access and by making it voluntary we can increase the whole idea of accessibility for centers.
- Our federal dollars do have a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) requirement, can we have Matt Judge's feedback on how we write this recommendation?
 - There is no Early Achievers requirement for school age and we receive subsidies for school age kids. Is that the overreach in early learning? Why does one have to be Early Achievers and the other doesn't?
 - Matt would probably know the answer to that. I'm not sure if Washington state is in compliance with the federal rules in regards to school age kids.
 - Schools Out Washington was working on something but we should check. The application of the rules is not consistently applied.
- The Childcare Collaborative taskforce did a Cost of Care study. DCYF adopting this estimation model is supposed to be making things equitable between regions. We recommend using regional subsidy payments as identified through the cost of care study.
 - Childcare collaborative task force is finalizing its recommendations.
 - The Cost of Care study is still being worked on and won't be finalized until early next year. If we're going to use the cost of care we won't be able to have a specific amount.
 - Ensure Pay Equity for Providers. All members of the child care workforce, including those in public AND private settings, should have pay equity based on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Living Wage scale.
 - We could say a recommendation is coming from the Child Collaborative Task Force and we agree with their recommendation.



Internal Review Process (IRP)

Providers engaged in a feedback-seeking activity to support the recommendation.

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This isn't a recommendation. We just want an update. Nothing has happened with this.• Can we add something to make it a recommendation? We want a status update and recommend that there is a workgroup so that the IRP is being utilized.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ask for quarterly status updates.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Who do we want the update to go to? Since FSKA will be done, we should be specific about the workgroup, ELAC, PS, or PAG?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This status update should be for all providers.• What is the internal review panel for?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It was meant for another step when a provider asks to appeal a licensing decision. There was supposed to be a panel that had providers on it.• We want a status update on the process as general. And quarterly updates given to ELAC and providers.• What would be the workgroup be for?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I was thinking we needed a group to look into the rulemaking instead of just asking for an update.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What's missing is accountability.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We recommend that accountability measures be put in place. |
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Rulemaking Petition Process

Providers engaged in a feedback-seeking activity to complete and support the recommendation.

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is this process like what happened with the diaper change station petition?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes that is an example.• The Rule Making Process should have a step by step guide so that providers are made aware of the process. DCYF should provide an annual training so that all providers have access to this information.• How do I submit a petition?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Petitions for adoption, repeal, or amendment of a rule are managed by the Rules Coordinator of the agency responsible for the administration of the rule (WAC 82-05-030). It is recommended that petitions are submitted using the DCYF Petition Form here, but petitions sent to the Rules Coordinator via email or in mailed paper form are also accepted. A list of agencies and their rules coordinators can be found here. You can reach DCYF's Rules Coordinator Brenda Villarreal at: Brenda.villarreal@dcyf.wa.gov.• There were providers who didn't know they could appeal. We should have a step-by-step guide for the rulemaking process but also for appeals.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If it's not spelled out. it should be: the appeal process rule making process. Providers petitions are denied, but parents are approved. How do you arrive at the no, versus let's take action?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ I'm not aware of discrepancies of approval of petitions of provider versus parent, but if it exist,s it should be called out. If there is a pattern, we can pull that data.• Are you asking for transparency on approval/denial records?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I think that's a good idea, knowing the reason why and having context. |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The diaper changing rule was only communicated because it was a presentation during Provider Supports.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ To clarify, they don't have to come to providers. All DCYF has to do is provide the general public an opportunity to provide input on the process.• You can subscribe to the rulemaking newsletter here.• There are a lot of advocacy groups out there. but DCYF does not make changes. Can we put in a timeframe?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes, we should. We could recommend DCYF gives ELAC a presentation by a certain date.○ We should be aware of any rule changes ahead of time.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ DCYF does put out communication, but the problem is providers don't know where to find that information. DCYF needs to be more proactive in sharing these opportunities.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We would like a commitment from DCYF to consistently engage ELAC and Provider Supports and have a regular communication stream in the annual workplan.○ DCYF might say we send out a newsletter, but it's not enough.○ It's especially hard when you have language barriers.• Can we get a timeframe for when the step-by-step guide would be completed?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A deadline for a deliverable like that is doable for sure.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ When would you like that deadline to be?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sooner the better. I don't know what's possible.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The report won't be submitted until December so I would target the end of the first quarter.○ Since all the elements are there, why does it have to be a recommendation? Can we just ask for it without having to go through a report? It's a need. What's the barrier to just do it?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Yes, we will ask now and also keep it in the report. |
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2022 Meetings, Closing Remarks, and Adjourn

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| Discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When will these recommendations be submitted and to whom?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The draft recommendations will be sent out to FSKA, ELAC and Provider Supports with edits and feedback due on Monday October 24. The final report will be sent to public affairs for review and then to the Office of Financial Management (OFM). The report is submitted to Secretary Hunter by December 1. The last step is it will be submitted to the legislature as a recommendation report.• The next meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2022. |
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