



Fair Start for Kids Act (FSKA)

Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2022 – 1:00pm to 4:00pm

Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols and Introductions

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

Recommendation Report

Providers reviewed the submitted FSKA Recommendation Report and provided feedback.

Discussion	<p><i>Transparency and Trust</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a discrepancy between what licensors say and do. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DCYF has implemented a new training process called Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) to address this and licensors have to get to a higher level of consistency to graduate out of the program. • Licensors need to be trained on updates, new programs, and have documents in multiple languages. • DCYF needs to have a central call center with important information and policies so that providers can stay in compliance. • Information needs to be readily available in various languages and given to both providers and families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Licensors use a translation call line. There can be frustrations when an interpreter does not understand because they are not trained in childcare licensing or programs. • There needs to be transparency on how individual licensors are being communicated with. Things might be getting lost when information moves from providers to supervisors to licensors. How are licensors communicated with? Is it monthly, weekly, or just as issues come up? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I agree things can get lost during translation. We do follow specific policies, procedures, and tasks which are publicly available. We also use practice memos which are not posted online. • Translation has been an issue for a long time. What intentionality is the department putting into hiring licensors who are dual language and placing them in communities where they can assist? Having a licensing line staffed with people who can translate the top 4-5 languages that would definitely have good returns and a way to have positive child outcomes as well as a better provider licensing experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Licensing does recruit dual language candidates in job postings and those positions also provide higher salaries. • It takes 3-4 months for a new licensor to be trained and then they move to on-the-job training. It takes 8 months for a licensor to be fully trained and onboarded apart from the IRR. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ But they might have a caseload before the IRR training? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes, it is currently separate from their onboarding training but we are expanding it.
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- That's troubling but strengthens the idea that there needs to be a call line and quarterly meetings to address issues that come up.
- Sometimes providers will receive incorrect information from their licenser and it costs the provider money.
- Do you have a start date for the IRR program?
 - It is currently happening and we go through batches of people. We have a federal requirement for a licenser to visit every childcare program each year. It is challenging our capacity to double up the licenser visits.
- It's a great idea to have a survey but who gets the results? Licensing needs to use survey data as a tool for better training.
- Is there a way we can get information on when a policy is under consideration for change rather than after the fact? Providers should be able to give input before a policy is changed.
 - This depends on specific policies. There are ways for providers to request changes. There are also times when DCYF makes changes based on other stakeholders or if there is a legislative requirement.
 - In the current system, DCYF proposes a draft and anyone who has signed up for email alerts gets an email for periods of public comment when a WAC is changing.
 - You can subscribe to the Rule Making Newsletter here:
<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/policy-laws-rules/rule-making/participate>

Overregulation

- There is a concern about lengthening the timeframe for educational requirements.
 - We don't have equitable access to education even with some of the DCYF support. Some of the rules are barriers particularly for black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities who are unable to access these programs.
 - I agree. There is such a crisis in childcare and the process needs to improve so new providers could be licensed more easily.
 - A lot of these things should be gradual because more unlicensed providers would be less intimidated to get their licenses.
- What does it mean that basic health and safety should be in place upon opening?
 - Years ago, you could get your license with an empty building. That's not an option anymore, you have to have all your furniture, etc. Environmentally it's an issue.
- Regarding professional development there should be an experience or training equivalences so that providers do not need school diplomas. Dual language programs always have wait lists and providers don't have time to wait.
- It's really difficult to work through the steps and processes especially when there can be shipment delays. There is also a waiting period to be eligible for Early Achievers which can be problematic with regard to obtaining educational requirements.
 - As soon as you're registered for Early Achievers you can take state subsidy. The waiting period is for getting scored.
- There are financial barriers for people who want to go to school to open a childcare center but cannot afford the programs. Some community colleges have certificate programs that do not require a high school diploma and offer Spanish support and interpretation. The problem with the program's scholarship is in order to qualify you have to be licensed and be in Early Achievers for three months.
 - How can we get more funding for existing or additional scholarships, to create more equitable access because this is what will help many providers?



- Funding for substitutes will be helpful because there is a workforce problem. One of the goals of the FSKA is to increase the participation of providers in accepting working connections, child care subsidies, and one of the ways to do that is to remove barriers.
- Can we change the language to say providers must be made aware or acknowledge that a licensing visit will be taking place?
 - Unannounced monitoring visits are a Federal requirement for licensing. We did ask if we could do announced visits and they said no. Then we asked if we could give a window and have not received an answer back yet but will follow up.
 - If they say no to the window, can you push back?
 - We will definitely follow up on this.
- We're also having a lot of issues checking staff information through the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT). We're trying to get away from copy files but the system cannot provide the information licensing is looking for.
- How would past employee violations be made available to potential future employers prior to an employee being hired? Is there a database and are we violating their privacy?
 - A new practice for my center is not hiring someone until they put their background check and information into MERIT. If DCYF would share their work history too that would be beneficial.
 - There are still long delays for background checks though especially if someone is coming from out of state.

Compensation and Provider Supports

- We need to make sure Early Achievers is not an unfunded requirement for providers.
- Early Achievers has been a challenge for Latino providers who are having to wait years.
- If an example is needed for licensing requirements that have a financial impact we could use the self-closing and self-latching gates for outdoor play areas as fencing is a very expensive area.
- Are the requirements for exemptions for Family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) providers? Those groups are already registered, do background checks, and electronic attendance trainings.
 - The intent of that recommendation was to require all the providers that haven't applied for exempt care.
 - FFN providers are a type of license exempt provider. But there are also people who run whole centers and if they are under four hours according to current law they do not need a license. Those are the programs that this group is recommending apply and be kept on a registry.
- Can we make sure that not one recommendation takes resources away from another? Some of these recommendations may be an issue in some communities not so much in others. But other recommendations will help everyone, no matter what community you're in.
- There are provider rights and resources documents from other States that are already being used, so DCYF should not have to recreate the wheel. This would bring more professionalism to our community and the services we provide.
 - If it needs to be done internally we could also reference the document from the State of Utah or the liberatory design process.
- There should be transparency if a petition is submitted to change a WAC. It should be included in the DCYF newsletter.



Closing Remarks, and Adjourn

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can the feedback from today be included in the report?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The report itself cannot be edited at this time as it has already been submitted. However, we have the ability to identify to identify discussion points from today on follow up on them either in the feedback loop or add an addendum.• Are we looking to have the legislatures attend a meeting since this was a product of their work?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Yes, that's correct. We're looking at having a special meeting with Senator Wilson and Representative Senn involved and bringing ELAC, Provider Supports, and FSKA together.
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