

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

State Agency & Partner Updates

Date: Feb. 10, 2026

Professional Development Opportunities

Free Early Literacy Conference

Mark your calendars for a free conference on Saturday, March 21, 9am-4:30 pm. The Sno-Isle Libraries Early Literacy Conference is designed to inspire and grow a strong foundation of early literacy in Snohomish and Island counties. The day will include:

- Professional development focused on supporting early literacy.
- Interactive workshops for early childhood educators, parents and caregivers, community partners, and early learning leaders.
- REJUVENATE keynote co-sponsored by PNW-WAEYC.
- STARS credits.
- Free breakfast and lunch.

More info here: <https://silwa.patronpoint.com/email/view/696fd16e93a29280112649>

Parent Education and Support for Challenging Behavior

This 10-week virtual series is for parents and caregivers of children ages 3–12 in the Pacific Northwest with a suspected or diagnosed delay or disability. Using the Project ECHO “All Teach, All Learn” model, participants connect with other families while learning evidence-based strategies to understand and respond to challenging behaviors in a confidential, supportive space. Sessions run Thursdays, February 26–April 30, from 12:30–1:45 PM and include access to a multidisciplinary team of experts, computer-based translation, and live Spanish language support.

- More info here (English/Spanish): <https://ihdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/flyer-positive-parenting-english-spanish.pdf>
- Visit UW Lend to learn more: <https://ihdd.org/2026/01/20/uw-lend-positive-parent-strategies-project-echo/>



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Original Date: Feb. 13, 2026

Community Engagement | Approved for distribution by Emily Morgan, Deputy Director

DCYF Early Learning Division

Education Verification

We are aware that the processing period for education verification applications is currently longer than usual. This is due to a transition from one contractor to another, which resulted in a backlog of applications. We recognize the impact these delays may have and apologize for the inconvenience. Work is underway to streamline the verification process. During this period, processing timelines may continue to vary. If this delay affects your ability to receive a new license or complete the onboarding process, please contact your licensor to request an expedited review. We will share updates as improvements are implemented and additional information becomes available.

Child Care Subsidy Program

The DCYF Child Care Subsidy Contact Center processing time frames and wait times have rebounded from the back-to-school rush. The first part of January saw an increase in call volume creating a little longer wait times but have also rebounded by mid-January.

Average Call Wait Times by Month (in minutes/second)

- 9/1/2025: 49:05
- 10/1/2025: 21:49
- 11/2/2025: 11:11
- 12/1/25: 10:41

Average Application Processing Days by Month (days to final determination)

- Aug. 2025: 30
- Sept. 2025: 25
- Oct. 2025: 18
- Nov. 2025: 14

Cost of Quality Child Care and Market Rate Study Survey Update

DCYF's Cost of Quality Child Care and Market Rate Study survey concluded on December 15, 2025. DCYF contacted several more providers in low response counties afterward, and several completed the survey.

An unprecedented number of "bot" survey responses came in after DCYF posted the survey to social media. These required a manual, industry best practice process to remove to ensure data

integrity and that only real providers receive \$50 gift cards offered in appreciation for taking the survey.

As a result of the need to eliminate “bot” responses, gift cards promised after the survey closed were delayed. Western Washington University (WWU) began distributing these on February 6, 2026. If you or a provider you know completed the survey but have not received a gift card, please contact Matt Judge, Federal Initiatives and Collaboration Administrator, at matt.judge@dcyf.wa.gov.

Survey Demographic Data

- 2,573 total responses of 6,556 licensed providers received (39% response rate)
 - 1,340 family child care
 - 13 outdoor nature based
 - 1216 center
 - 4 school age only centers
- Each subsidy region had at least double digit response from both center and family home providers
- Language Distribution
 - 316 responses to Spanish survey (12%)
 - 1 response to Somali survey
 - All other survey responses were in English

Next steps

- WWU is now drafting the study report
- In March DCYF will begin review of the draft report
- June 1, 2026, DCYF will present the final report to the Legislature

Communications Distributed

DCYF provided an FAQ resource and communications to address questions related to Child Care Safety and Funding:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Message to Child Care Providers Regarding Federal Funding and Provider Safety](#)
- [Message for Child Care Providers in Response to Ongoing Media Coverage](#)

DCYF Rule Making Updates

February 3, 2026 | Rules Under Development: State Supplementary Payment (SSP) Rules and Managing and Using Unearned Income and Resources for Foster Children and Youth. [Read full update here.](#)

February 6, 2026 | Recently Completed Rules: Licensing Requirements for Residential Private Schools. [Read full update here.](#)

Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs coordinates the Washington State Military Child Care Workgroup meetings. If you are interested in being a part of the workgroup or attending meetings, please reach out to the Military Spouse Liaison at olivia.burley@dva.wa.gov.

There have been recent updates to Department of Defense military fee assistance programs for community-based child care providers. For more information and resources, visit www.dva.wa.gov/childcarestakeholders.

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

Partial Federal Government Shutdown is Over: The president signed a spending bill, ending the partial government shutdown. Programs administered by DSHS were not impacted by the temporary shutdown and there were no changes to services.

Washington's Time Limit Waiver for ABWDs ends Nov. 2: The time limit waiver for ABWDs ended Nov. 2, 2025 as H.R. 1 requires all waived areas have an unemployment rate above 10%. Unemployment rates in Washington do not exceed 10% in any county.

For more information, please contact Lorraine Peterson, lorraine.peterson@dshs.wa.gov

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Dani Hoffman is the new 619 ECSE Coordinator at OSPI. Bringing with her over 10 years of experience as an Early Educator, and 7 years coaching and consulting with Early Educators across King and Pierce counties, she is thrilled to step into the Section 619 Coordinator role to continue partnerships that ensure our earliest learners are seen, valued, and planned for in their educational settings and communities.

For questions, please contact Samantha Bowen at samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us.

Department of Health (DOH)

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families requires child care and early learning programs in Washington state to test their drinking and cooking water for lead and copper when getting licensed and every six years after. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) offers a free mail-in water testing program that fulfills this WAC requirement. DOH mails all needed supplies and instructions to sites to collect their own water samples and send them back to the lab for testing. If test results show lead levels are too high (at or above 10 parts per billion per Environmental Protection Agency guidelines), grant funding is available to reimburse providers for the cost of replacing fixtures that tested high for lead.

For more information or to register for the free mail in water testing program, visit the [Lead in Child Care Drinking Water](#) webpage. Questions? Reach out to leadfreekids@doh.wa.gov.

For more information, please contact Astrid Newell at astrid.newell@doh.wa.gov.

Additional Updates

Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) submits report on insurance for child housing service providers to Legislature. Additional information here: [*OIC submits report on insurance for child housing service providers to Legislature | Office of the Insurance Commissioner*](#)