

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

[Feedback Loop: Follow- up items from: June 9, 2026, ELAC Meeting \(Agenda Here\)](#)

Advocacy, Lobbying, and the Role of DCYF as a State Agency

At ELAC, we often hear questions, concerns, and feedback about how DCYF is carrying out its work. These conversations are an important part of ELAC's advisory role, and we value the experiences and perspectives members bring forward.

It is important to understand the distinction between the role of the Legislature and the role of a State Agency. Many of the programs and requirements DCYF oversees are established through state law, including the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), and through legislative decisions related to policy and funding. As a state agency, DCYF's role is to implement and carry out the work established in law — not to create or change the laws.

If there are concerns about how a law is written, or if there is interest in changing requirements, those conversations need to happen through the legislative process with elected officials. Advocacy for changes to laws or policies must happen outside of ELAC's formal structure.

DCYF can listen to feedback, share information, clarify how programs are implemented, and use community input to inform our work. However, DCYF and its advisory committees cannot lobby or advocate for specific legislative outcomes on behalf of the agency. For additional guidance around advocacy and guidance for advisory members, please review the [Advocacy and Lobbying Message to Advisory Groups](#).

If you have questions about this, please contact the Community Engagement (CE) team at dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov.

DCYF Strategic Planning Session with ELAC

- **Please share the answer to the name change (office of equity) in the ELAC feedback loop. Is that from federal pressure? You can answer the follow up question in the feedback loop as well.**
 - DCYF's Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) has changed its name to the Office of Equity. The name change clarifies that DCYF works to address all forms of oppression. The office will consist of language access, as well as racial equity and social justice. This work is strengthened by the Governor's Office of



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Equity, which is encouraging state agencies to align language that leads to a greater understanding of the work.

Employer Supported Care

- **Are there any publications or posters yet of the research? Is it possible to understand more of the methodology and intent behind the study?**
 - More information will become available on DCYF's webpages on employer supported care as a strategy for increasing access to care.
- Does your definition of employer-supported child care include both employer-subsidized (which keeps the choice of care with the families) and employer-operated child care (which would make the form/kind of care delivery determined by the employer)? If so, what did you find around the differences in impact for increasing access, affordability, and family satisfaction with those two approaches?
 - Our current definition of employer supported care (ESC) is broad, as this will vary for each employer.
 - DCYF will continue to explore ways employers can help increase access to early care and education, which will include identifying existing resources and systems that can be leveraged.
 - With existing resources, DCYF will build on the research conducted by the University of Washington students. Future work will include refining definitions, identifying target employer groups, and better understanding potential impacts on families.
- **Have you considered connecting with Child Care Aware of WA to see how their parent information services could be adapted for employer use?**
 - DCYF recognizes that local efforts of employer support care already exist. DCYF will continue to work with partners, such as Child Care Aware of Washington, to identify ways that existing services and resources can be adapted to support employers.
- **Is there a plan to follow up and do additional research?**
 - Within existing resources, DCYF will continue to connect with employers throughout the state to better understand their needs. DCYF will continue researching employer supported care as a strategy to increase access to high-quality early care and education. Connecting with other states will allow DCYF to learn more about the creative ways other states are implementing ESC in their state.

Early Learning Budget and Legislative Updates

- **Is there early indication of response rates for the 2026 Cost of Quality Child Care and Market Rate Study? Was 40% response rate generally met?**
 - Response rates for the 2026 survey are as follows:
 - Region 1, 45.52%
 - Region 2, 38.22%
 - Region 3, 48.95%
 - Region 4, 26.66%
 - Region 5, 46.17%
 - Region 6, 57.86%
 - Spokane, 59.83%
 - Statewide, 38.52%
 - Licensed Child Care Centers, 65.75%
 - Licensed Family Homes, 29.03%

Staff Qualifications Updates

Can you outline the membership structure, voting process, and composition of the Executive Committee, including how recommendations are developed and advanced through the committee?

Membership Structure

DCYF invited interested providers to apply to participate in the Staff Qualifications Workgroup through a statewide survey. Fifty-five providers expressed interest. From those responses, DCYF selected 10 provider representatives to ensure broad representation across:

- Geographic regions of Washington
- Licensed provider types
- Program sizes and capacities
- Primary languages spoken (including English, Spanish, and Somali)

These provider representatives joined 10 representatives from statewide organizations, resulting in a 20-member workgroup. Each workgroup member has an alternate, and all members have equal voting authority. The workgroup operates with a flat membership structure—no individual member or organization has greater voting power than another.

Voting Process

The workgroup uses a consensus-based voting scale to measure the level of support for recommendations. Members vote using the following scale:

Score	Meaning
5	I strongly support this decision
4	I support this decision.
3	This decision is acceptable to me.
2	I am uncomfortable with this decision, but I can live with it.
1	I have strong reservations but will support the decision and will not veto it.
0	I have strong reservations and cannot support this decision.

This approach allows the workgroup to understand and support and any remaining concerns.

Executive Steering Committee Composition

The committee includes representatives from across DCYF:

- Early Learning Division: Nicole Rose and Tiffany Lee
- Licensing Division: Ruben Reeves, Travis Hansen, Debbie Groff, and Brett Skinner
- Office of Tribal Relations: Wendy Thomas

How Recommendations are Developed

While the exact approach varies depending on the topic, the process has generally included:

1. Level-setting and information sharing.
2. Facilitated small-group discussions.
3. Compilation of feedback from the small groups and large-group discussion.
4. Review and refinement at subsequent workgroup meetings, allowing members to provide additional feedback, identify areas needing clarification, and revise recommendations as needed.
5. Core Team review between meetings to help organize discussion materials, clarify feedback received, and prepare refined draft recommendations for the full workgroup's consideration.
6. Workgroup voting using the consensus scale to determine the level of support for each recommendation before advancing it as part of the final report.

For more information, visit the page [Staff Qualifications Workgroup | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#).

Feedback Loop: Follow- up items from: April 14, 2026, ELAC Meeting ([Agenda Here](#))

ECEAP Expansion Presentation

- For the ECEAP expansion, what is the administrative rate - percentage/dollars? Is it a per year or total amount paid at once?
 - The ECEAP Contract Statement of Work Section 18(g)(g) states that the Contractor may use ECEAP funds for the following costs:
 - (1) ECEAP Services administration including planning and coordination; accounting and auditing; purchasing, personnel and payroll functions; and equipment, training, travel, and facility costs related to these purposes. Training costs for administrative personnel is allowed and is categorized with administrative costs. **Administrative costs must not exceed 15 percent of the amount of this Contract, including Subcontractors' administrative costs, if any.**
 - (2) Direct ECEAP Services including infant, toddler, and/or preschool education, health services coordination, nutrition, family supports and parent involvement; salaries and benefits for direct service personnel, goods and services, equipment, facilities, child transportation, training and travel, and other costs related to direct ECEAP Services. Training costs for direct service personnel is allowed and is categorized with program costs.
 - ECEAP slot rates are determined by the state Legislature and vary based on region for School Day and Working Day slots. Contractors receive monthly ECEAP payments upon invoice, based on the actual slot rate for their region. Part-day and school-day slots are generally funded at an administrative, enrollment, and staff development rate during June, July, and August, and at a comprehensive services rate from September to May. The Working Day annual slot rate is divided evenly across twelve months. ECEAP Part Day and School Day slots can be supported with wrap-around Working Connections Child Care subsidies if the child and provider are eligible.