



Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council
October 2024 Quarterly Meeting
State Lead Agency Report

ACORN Data Migration in Final Stages



Preparations for the launch of the new ACORN Data Management System are nearly complete. Earlier this month, a GovDelivery was shared with local and county administrators describing shared accountability documents necessary for establishing and confirming readiness at the local, county, and state levels.

Specifically, there is a new **ACORN Readiness Verification Checklist** for each early intervention provider agency, pre-populated with applicable data and information. This checklist is a tool that helps the local provider agencies understand how to prepare their local systems for the new data management system and will help DCYF confirm overall user/agency readiness. The checklist also serves as a training tool for agency managers, county lead agency managers, and Lead Family Resources Coordinators. The ACORN Readiness Verification Checklist includes step-by-step instructions to verify training completion, access to ACORN, agency information and user accounts. In addition, agencies with current, active data exchanges will also receive an **ACORN Data Exchange Integrity Checklist** to confirm adequate functionality of the new data exchanges being sustained in ACORN. Work testing functionality for the small number of existing data exchanges has been ongoing. Both documents will be submitted to the ESIT Data Systems and Analysis Manager by **October 31, 2024**. The ESIT State Leadership Office will announce the ACORN Go-Live Date after receipt of the readiness checklists from the ESIT contractors and completed items on the checklists have been verified.

Beginning October 21, 2024, the ESIT Data Systems and Analysis Team (DSAT) will offer training to ACORN users. Trainings will be provided on a recurring basis, with multiple trainings being offered every week. **See the *Upcoming ACORN Training Blitz in the October Mini Training Tidbit for a listing of training topics***. Training resources will continue to be available on the ESIT Website and the DCYF Learning Portal. DSAT will also publish an ACORN Handbook prior to the ACORN Go-Live Date. Please continue to reach out to Kim Hopkins, ESIT Data Systems & Analysis Manager at kim.hopkins@dcyf.wa.gov with questions or reflections.

Data Share Agreement for Enhanced Medicaid Billing Initiative

Co-Project Leads for the Enhanced Medicaid Billing Collaboration Project, Lauren Thompson, ESIT Resource Allocations Manager with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families and Christine Cole, Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Program Manager with the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA), have worked diligently on a new Data Share Agreement between the two agencies. This newest strategy, once approved and signed by both parties, will help assure cooperation in the implementation and funding of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, and interagency system of early support services.



The data shared through this mission-critical agreement will help the two systems, HCA and DCYF better understand how to support billing and claiming processes for local ESIT Provider Agencies and identify statewide systemic strategies for enhancing and expanding Medicaid billing practices. As shared in the previous quarterly report, HCA has partnered with Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to increase awareness and understanding of the ESIT program and Apple Health’s role in coverage of medically necessary services. As an actionable step, HCA reviewed managed care contract language to identify areas to improve language and clarify expectations related to ESIT services resulting in new MCO requirements.

Starting January 1, 2025, managed care contracts will include:

- Definitions relevant to Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers Program;
- Requirement for MCOs to contract with local ESIT provider agencies; and
- Requirement for MCOs to not impose prior authorization on ESIT services, rather MCOs may use concurrent or retrospective review to assess medical necessity.

We appreciate the continued partnership with HCA and look forward to next steps involved in the final signatory process and then, implementation of the Data Share Agreement. For more information about the Enhanced Medicaid Billing Collaboration Project, please feel free to contact Lauren Thompson, ESIT Resource Allocations Manager with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families at lauren.thompson@dcyf.wa.gov and/or

Dr. DeEtte Snyder Bestowed Highly Acclaimed 2024 Outstanding Alumni Award



Please join the ESIT State Leadership Team in recognizing and celebrating Dr. DeEtte Snyder as the recipient of the **2024 Outstanding Alumni Award** by **Portland State University College of Education**. The Outstanding Alumni Award is given to a College of Education alumni who has shown extraordinary service, community engagement, scholarly contribution, and/or leadership in their field. Dr. Snyder was nominated by Dr. Hollie Hix-Small as a recognition of her excellence in the field of early childhood and remarkable support for families with elevated service needs.

Dr. DeEtte Snyder is an early childhood teacher at heart through her work as a Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments (TVI) and an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialist. She earned her Bachelor’s degree (Psychology, 1992), Master’s degree (Special Education with focus on Early Childhood and Visual Impairment, 2003), and O&M degree (2022) from Portland State University (PSU). She received her PhD in Special Education from the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in May 2018 and completed her dissertation with an analysis of the national database called Babies Count. **She received three distinguished awards as a part of her doctoral work: The UNC Dean's Citation of Excellence for both Outstanding Student and Outstanding Dissertation, as well as the 2019 Council of Exceptional Children (CEC)/Division of Visual Impairment and Deaf Blind (DVIDB) Outstanding Dissertation Award.**

Date: October 16, 2024 | Partnership, Prevention & Services Division

Submitted by Valerie Arnold, ESIT State Administrator



For over 30 years, DeEtte’s practice has focused on children aged birth to 5 with visual impairments. Her early work experience was at the Foundation for Blind Children in Phoenix, AZ where she was a preschool classroom teacher, early interventionist (EI) service coordinator, and later the Director of Infant and Family Services. From AZ, she moved to Washington state to work for the Washington State School for Blind where she built a program for Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT), who are blind/low vision and their families, where one did not exist prior. In her current position as the ESIT Workforce Development Manager here at the Department for Children, Youth and Families, DeEtte is responsible for coordinating the statewide Comprehensive System of Professional Development for all early intervention service providers. **Dr. Snyder was also recently recognized for ten years of Washington State service with a 10-year lapel pin and embossed 10-Year State Service Certificate signed by Secretary Ross Hunter at an in-person ESIT State Leadership Team work session held on October 1, 2024.**

Additionally, she has served as an adjunct faculty member for PSU, UNC, and the University of Arizona teaching pre-service courses and supervising teacher candidates. She loves to teach, train, mentor, and guide all teachers in the field of early childhood and blind/low vision because her passion is children and families!

Dr. Snyder received the 2024 Outstanding Alumni Award at the **State of the School** event onsite at Portland State University held on **Monday September 23, 2024**. Congratulations and accolades abound for DeEtte from all of us, across the early support landscape in Washington State!

Workforce Development Team Highlights

The Workforce Development Team has been collaboratively engaged with diverse community partners on several developments related to the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). Dr. DeEtte Snyder, Workforce Development Manager highlighted two new developments and a recruitment strategy underway including:

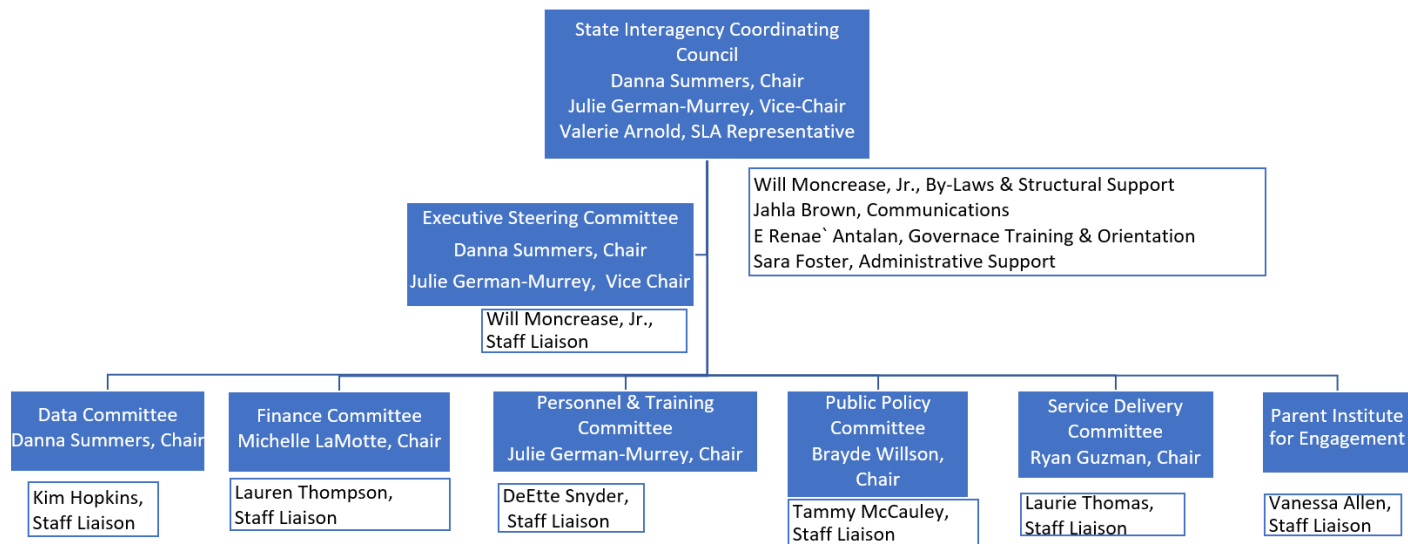
- ✚ The creation of a Family Resources Coordinator Design Team consisting of Family Resources Coordinators from around the state to work on the creation of a Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) tract to the Initial Training. This new dynamic FRC Design Team met over 4 sessions and determined unique content needed for an FRC only training to be added to the training framework.
- ✚ Holding Special Educator Focus Groups (provider of special instruction) to learn about the demographics of this provider role, including their pathways to the job, challenges, and joys of their profession. Data retrieved will be used to inform the creation of an ESIT credential for this provider role. The focus groups were held in 2 live webinars and an online survey; 24 providers attended live and an additional 68 completed the online survey for a total of 82 respondents.
- ✚ Recruitment of another Workforce Development Specialist to replace a valued colleague who retired. This position is currently active in open recruitment.



Spotlight on 2024 State Interagency Coordinating Council Structure

The Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council has a rich history of consulting, advising, and assisting not only the IDEA Part C State Lead Agency, but partner state agencies serving on the council as well. The SICC advises and assists the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families, (DCYF) and other participating agencies in implementing a collaborative and comprehensive statewide system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers who have disabilities and their families, including identifying sources of fiscal and other support for services for the early intervention programs, assigning financial responsibilities to the appropriate agency, promoting interagency agreements and providing appropriate services for children.

Operating under [Executive Order 19-02](#), the SICC responsibilities include assisting DCYF in effective implementation of the statewide early intervention system by establishing a process that includes seeking information from service providers, family resources coordinators, parents/caregivers, and others about any federal, state, or local policies that impede timely service delivery; and engaging in planned steps to ensure that any policy problems are resolved. One of the primary strategies for addressing this responsibility is the Council’s creation of six sub-committees. The six sub-committees, reflected on the graphic below, operate under the direction and instruction of the full SICC. Diverse sub-committee membership is recruited from across the state and comprised of influencers at all levels of the early support community. The sub-committees engage in work priorities guided by the Council, in between the four quarterly SICC meetings. Chairs of the sub-committees, which must be currently seated Council members, collaborate with a designated ESIT Staff Liaison, to establish an annual work plan, which in turn drives the frequency of meetings, and ultimately committee agendas. All sub-committee Chairs submit a SICC Quarterly Report to the Council to help ensure strong communication loops and that work plans are aligned with established Council priorities. For more information about the SICC and its sub-committees, please contact E’Renae Antalan, Community Collaboration Coordinator at erenae.antalan@dcyf.wa.gov.





Highlights from Accountability & Improvement Team

Members of the Accountability and Quality Improvement Team, led by Tammy McCauley, Accountability & Quality Improvement Manager, continue to widen their Circles of Engagement¹ as they expand and sustain existing federal and state accountability structures involving policies, procedures, and practices. Upcoming activities include:

- ✚ Submission of the revised Early Childhood Transition Parental Opt-Out Policy and Procedures and revised Systems of Payments and Fees Policy and Procedures to the federal Office of Special Education Programs for final review and approval. Following federal approval, the team will initiate a 90-day training and technical assistance window for members of the county and local early support communities prior to full implementation.
- ✚ FFY23 Determinations are right around the corner and are set to be issued by November 30, 2024.
- ✚ Finalizing the new Child and Family Record Review and Evidence-Based Practices tools for the Systems Analysis Program Review Visits. Orientation and training for this newest component of the ESIT Statewide Monitoring System (E-SIMS), will be rolled out to the field prior to implementation anticipated in mid-winter 2025.

2024 Infant Early Childhood Conference

We are pleased to continue our annual sponsorship of the Infant and Early Childhood Conference (IECC). Please save May 5-9, 2025, and join us for the 2025 Infant and Early Childhood Conference (IECC), hosted completely virtual via Zoom.

Call for Presenters

IECC is currently seeking proposals for its 2025 conference. The IECC Conference is well known within the State of Washington for providing high quality, evidence-based training for families and professionals working with young children (ages birth to eight) and their families.



- If you or someone you know may be interested in submitting a proposal - please submit proposals no later than Monday, January 13, 2025. To apply online, [click here](#).
- IECC will be evaluating session proposals using a Rubric developed by DEC - we encourage presenters [review our selection criteria before submitting](#) their proposal.

--END REPORT--

¹ Cashman, J., Linehan, P., Purcell, L., Rosser, M., Schultz, S., & Skalski, S. (2014). *Leading by convening: A blueprint for authentic engagement*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education.