



## Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

### Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council July 2024 Quarterly Meeting State Lead Agency Report

#### **Strengthening ESIT Referral & Service Delivery Pathways: A Braided Legislative Opportunity**

The Partnership, Prevention, and Services Division is drafting a joint decision package with three braided strands for DCYF executive leadership consideration that includes additional resources to strengthen ESIT's referral and service delivery pathways in partnership with the Plan of Safe Care (POSC) Pregnancy Substance Use Disorder pathway and Help Me Grow community pathway. Proposed funding will sustain current implementation, provide ongoing technical assistance to hospital and program partners, expand local community partnerships and provide system integration and infrastructure to support infants and toddlers in community and child welfare settings.

The ESIT-specific funding request focuses on increasing capacity at the local provider agency level to ensure equity in access to early support services in three areas:

#### **Scholarship & Tuition Reimbursement Program**

*Within Washington's early intervention system, local ESIT provider agencies will require funding for scholarships or tuition reimbursement programs to both recruit high demand disciplines and grow capacity within existing statewide programs.*

#### **ESIT Service Delivery Premiums for Local Early Intervention Provider Agencies**

*Staff capacity to address the specific needs of children with developmental delays and/or disabilities and families is a fundamental component of both keeping children and families together and addressing the developmental needs of those referred for services through the POSC. Funding is required to establish a model allowing one EIPA serving two family systems [Birth and Foster] and two EIPAs in separate catchment areas serving same child [In Birth Family] [In Foster Family]. Funding includes correlating costs for direct services, extended travel, and Cherish 0-3 training course and certifications for IFSP Teams.*

#### **Workforce Development Training & Technical Assistance.**

*Within Washington's early intervention system, ESIT provider agencies will require universal training on substance use disorder and support to include a comprehensive practice guide to support the development of local policy, and ongoing statewide training on home visitor safety practices.*

Next steps include final submission to Finance & Business Services Division and the Office of Public Affairs.



### ACORN Launch Date Clarification



**The final launch date for Phase I of ACORN has not been set and will not be established until the final work product has been completed by the Public Consulting Group.** The final work product includes case management module customizations necessary for initial navigation by Users, sustained maintenance of the data exchanges that are currently in place, successful integration of 4 years of data migration, required reporting elements, delineated and sequential IFSP data mapping, and resolution of ticketed bugs and glitches identified by Users during the 90-day self-exploration in the training environment, currently running May 1, 2024 through July 31, 2024.





Supplemental activities currently under development that will support an effective launch include new system-based trainings for specific User roles, a timeline extension to increase the percentage of Users accessing the features in the training environment (sandbox), and tiered support systems post launch. We anticipate these supplemental activities taking place over the next 4-6 weeks. **To be clear, a launch date will be announced through a formal GovDelivery, with ample notice for “blackout” planning to ensure timely data entry.** Please continue to reach out to Kim Hopkins, ESIT Data Systems & analysis Manager at [kim.hopkins@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:kim.hopkins@dcyf.wa.gov), with questions or reflections.

### Equity in Access-Technical Work Group (EIA-TWG) Soars!

Members of the EIA-TWG worked together to engage, influence and support the creation of equity-based data metrics in support of local decision-making processes for the use of the *IDEA Part C Equity in Access Funding Set-Aside*, totaling \$500,000 statewide. This dynamic group also assisted with the development of a streamlined mini-application package that included instructions and examples.

These influencers actively engaged in four interactive work sessions held on April 29<sup>th</sup>, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, June 17<sup>th</sup>, and July 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

Together they were able to set and then achieve the following goals:

-  Identify equity-based data metrics that we want to recommend local programs take into consideration as they decide how to use their \$\$ set-aside.
-  Provide input on the start of an Equity Data Dashboard to share with local programs for their consideration and potential expansion.
-  Draft an Equity in Access Mini-Application form for use by local provider agencies and embed an equity-based data metrics checklist.
-  Identify additional resources to enhance and expand the “Call to Action for Three Es: Equity in Access, Equity in Services, Equity in Outcomes”.

Expressed appreciations and celebrations were shared all around as the work group wrapped up their commitments. Lauren Thompson and Kali Wraspir, who provided facilitative leadership



## Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

and supports to the TWG, said it best in a final email communication to the EIA-TWG: *We wanted to take a moment to celebrate and express our deepest gratitude to every one of you for your outstanding contributions to the Equity in Access Technical Workgroup. Working alongside such dedicated and talented individuals has been nothing short of inspiring. Your hard work, creativity, and teamwork were instrumental in achieving our goals.*

The Equity in Access Mini-Application and companion, expandable, and tailored Equity in Access Data Dashboards have been finalized and disseminated to local ESIT contractors.

### **Enhanced Medicaid Billing Collaboration Update**

In October 2023, Health Care Authority (HCA) and Donna Cohen Ross, an independent advisor to government agencies, nonprofit organizations and private foundations specializing in the design and implementation of policies that make public programs work better for children and families, shared findings from [Washington's Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers \(ESIT\) and Apple Health \(Medicaid\) Policy Review and Comparative Analysis](#) which highlighted opportunities for increased alignment across programs. Findings from the report indicated that ESIT provider agencies experience challenges partnering with managed care organizations (MCOs) and included recommendations to ensure MCOs are contracting with local ESIT providers and addressing prior authorization barriers.

In response, HCA has partnered with 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.

HCA will collaborate with MCOs to implement these new requirements and continue to foster knowledge regarding the ESIT program. Additionally, HCA and DCYF have begun meeting regularly to assess feasibility and explore potential next steps addressing recommendations from the report and other prioritized joint recommendations from the SICC's Finance and Public Policy Sub-Committees.

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](mailto:lauren.thompson@dcyf.wa.gov) and/or



## Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

Christine Cole, Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Program Manager with the Washington State Health Care Authority at [christine.cole@hca.wa.gov](mailto:christine.cole@hca.wa.gov).

### ESIT State Leader Recognized for 10 Years of State Service



We are very pleased to share the exciting news and celebrate Jahla Brown's 10 Years of State Service Award recently bestowed in person by Will Moncrease, Jr., ESIT Partnership, Collaboration, & Family Engagement Manager. Jahla received a 10-year pin and Certificate of Appreciation signed by Secretary Ross Hunter.

While these artifacts are genuinely gifted to Jahla, they frankly do not begin to express the multitude of gratitude we hold for all that she has done and continues to do each and every day on behalf of children and their families. Jahla currently serves as the Partnership & Collaboration Specialist and provides specialized consultation and universal, targeted, and tailored technical supports to internal and external stakeholders, tribal governments, and other state-level agency partners through newsletters, website management, infographic development, and editing and design work for public awareness and outreach materials. Thank you, Jahla!

### Welcome to Three New Leaders Joining the ESIT State Leadership Team

Please join the ESIT State Leadership Team in welcoming three new leaders who have stepped in to fill vacancies in existing positions.



#### **Jaclyn Johnson, ACORN Technical Assistance & Training Coordinator**

The ESIT State Leadership Team is excited to introduce one of the newest members of its Data Systems & Analysis Team, Jaclyn Johnson. Jaclyn has accepted the ACORN Technical Assistance and Training Coordinator position.

Hello! My name is Jaclyn Johnson, and I am the new ACORN Technical Assistance and Training Coordinator on the ESIT team. This is my first position with the state and I'm so excited to use my skills and experience to contribute to a program that really makes a difference for children and families across Washington. I have my degree in Family and Consumer Sciences Career and Technical Education from CWU, but my professional background has largely focused on adult learning programs. This role gives me a unique opportunity to blend these career paths together.

In the past, I spent eleven years at Moneytree Inc. where I facilitated onboarding classes, trained new trainers, participated in product rollouts, and assisted with overhauling curriculum and rolling out a new learning management system. Most recently, I spent time dipping my toe

Date: July 15, 2024 | Partnership, Prevention & Services Division

Submitted by Valerie Arnold, ESIT State Administrator



## Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

into the world of safety compliance and building a training program from the ground up for a local commercial construction company.

I live in South Hill with my spouse, Joe, and our fur baby, a chubby cat named Addie. In my free time I enjoy tabletop gaming, writing, and spending as much time with our nieces and godchildren as possible.



### **Teanne Stangel, Data Coordinator**

The ESIT State Leadership Team is excited to welcome our new ESIT Data Coordinator, Teanne Stangel. Teanne will be supporting the Data Systems and Analysis Team (DSAT), specifically our DMS/ACORN Help Desk.

Teanne started her career as a preschool teacher and spent ten years working in various roles within Early Learning before moving to K-12 and focusing on Special Education data management. An opportunity to serve as Birth-to-Three Transition Coordinator for Spokane Public Schools merged those two worlds, offering her a first glimpse into ESIT and the many varied ways this team provides vital support for children and families.

She lives in Spokane with her husband Nick and their dog and cat (Cleo and Amadeus). They love to share time with their son, Casey (23), and daughter, Tia (21), who both also live in Spokane. She enjoys backpacking through the Cabinet Wilderness, retro arcade games, and hobby-hopping.



### **Molly Stryker, Technical Assistance Specialist**

Molly Stryker has joined the Service Delivery & Technical Assistance Team in a temporary six-month position as a Technical Assistance Specialist while Diane Golovkin is on parental leave. She earned her Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Washington, where she studied the job satisfaction and retention of a diverse early intervention workforce in Washington State.

Her studies focused on recruiting and retaining multidisciplinary providers, systems collaboration in Part C, and innovation in coaching including tele-intervention. Molly has led studies on job satisfaction, retention, and family-centered practices among early intervention providers. Her professional experience includes providing special instruction within ESIT, coaching graduate students, and teaching courses on disability and ableism in education, and infant & toddler support systems at the University of Washington.





In her personal life, Molly lives in Seattle with her 6-year-old, Emmy. She is a former summer camp professional and is involved supporting inclusive summer camp programs in the Puget Sound. She is a vocal musician and enjoys crafting and spending time outdoors with her kiddo and partner.

## **IDEA Part C Dispute Resolution Requirements & Methods for Identification of Non-Compliance Clarified [Repeated]**

OSEP Memorandum 2023-01 titled *Guidance on State General Supervision Responsibilities* published by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) on July 24, 2023 provides clarification and expectations for a number of Part C of IDEA requirements, including the Dispute Resolution requirements under Sec 303.340. In addition to tracking and reporting on compliance activities related to formal dispute resolution mechanisms, State Lead Agencies are also expected to track, resolve, and report on informal inquiries related to potential areas of concern and/or non-compliance. This includes informal family inquiries received by the ESIT State Leadership Office. Prior to OSEP making available these published interpretations, inquiries from families were not consistently tracked and recorded by the ESIT State Leadership Office and would be processed based on individual family circumstances and communication with local provider agencies, always in the pursuit of a satisfactory resolution.

OSEP defines an “area of concern” as a credible allegation regarding an IDEA policy, procedure, practice, or other requirement that raises one or more potential implementation or compliance issues, if confirmed true. Such credible allegations (e.g., information and awareness) may come from integrated monitoring activities, data reviews, grant reviews, stakeholder calls, media reports, dispute resolution systems, or other mechanisms that relate to IDEA implementation (see Question B:1). When the State Lead Agency (SLA) is made aware of a credible allegation, it must engage in due diligence activities in a timely manner and reach a conclusion regarding compliance in a reasonable amount of time. If non-compliance is confirmed, then the SLA must issue a finding of non-compliance and all of the related requirements for timely correction are effectively in play.

Again, prior to OSEP making available these published interpretations, findings of non-compliance were generally limited to and issued as a result of a formal monitoring component being implemented by the ESIT State Leadership Office. Be sure and watch for upcoming invitations to participate in multiple circles of engagement opportunities to develop written protocols, statewide communication plans, training and technical assistance materials related to these new OSEP published interpretations. To share reflections and/or ask clarifying questions, please reach out to Tammy McCauley, ESIT Accountability & Quality Improvement Manager at [tammy.mccauley@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:tammy.mccauley@dcyf.wa.gov).



## Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

### **Preparations Underway for Federal Monitoring of DCYF-ESIT**

Notable progress is being made as the agency continues to prepare for a comprehensive federal monitoring process described by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) as their Differentiated Monitoring and Support (DMS) system, which is part of the Results Driven Accountability System. Our State has been assigned to DMS Cohort 3 and October 2025 has been designated as our "Engagement" visit month.

The federal monitoring schedule for Cohort 3 includes three distinct phases:

1. **Discovery:** Document Request and Review
2. **Engagement:** On-site/Virtual Visit through issuing of the Monitoring Report
3. **Close-out:** Follow-up and TA

OSEP's DMS is designed to provide differentiated levels and types of support based on each State's unique strengths, progress, challenges, and needs. In addition, the monitoring will include a review of state-specific aspects of eight key components required to improve results for children with disabilities, which includes a focus on our systems of general supervision. OSEP will use information provided by us and our stakeholders to inform their monitoring efforts. For example, in addition to focusing on the eight components of the general supervisory system, they will also likely focus on Child Find and Early Childhood Transition.

Here is a snapshot of the DCYF's DMs 2.0 Timeline:

#### **Onsite Visit Scheduled for October 2025**

##### **DISCOVERY**

**April 2025:** OSEP Document Request (5 months before visit)

**April 2025:** OSEP will hold 1-2 calls with the State to review any overarching questions about the State structure and documents uploaded.

**April-October 2025:** OSEP will be conducting calls with key **stakeholders, SICC, and local personnel** leading up to the Engagement month.

##### **ENGAGEMENT**

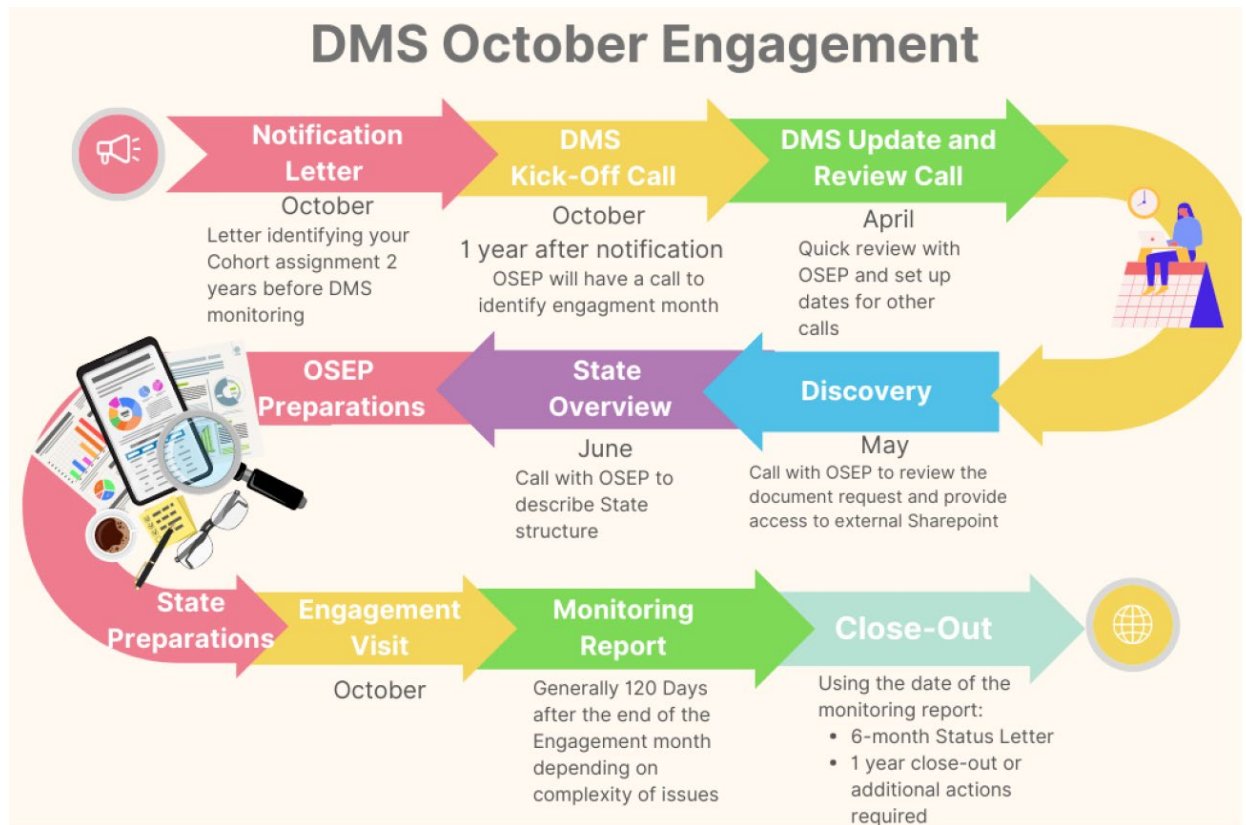
**October 2025:** On-site/virtual visit

**November 2025-February 2026:** Develop and Issue Monitoring Report

##### **CLOSEOUT**

**February 2026-February 2027:** Response to OSEP findings, TA and verification of required corrections.

Below is an infographic created and shared by OSEP.



The ESIT Management Action Team is providing project management and oversight, and the full State Leadership Team will become involved in decision-making related to recommended self-assessment tools and formation of focus groups comprised of key stakeholders and partner groups. Please be thinking about SICC opportunities to collaborate on this adventure and potential strategies to engage with us as we continue to learn more about OSEP's vision and expectations for preparation, participation, and reporting processes.

--END REPORT--