



## Focus on Children in Washington State

At the Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL), we work every day to help our state's children realize their full potential. We want children to grow up safe, healthy and filled with a love of learning so they're ready to succeed in school and life.

Created by Governor Chris Gregoire in July 2006, DEL is the first cabinet-level agency of its kind in the nation. Our work focuses on children's earliest years of life, offering information and resources for children's first and most important teachers: *parents*.

*Every day, we are honored to take action that inspires the world to discover, love and nurture the greatness in all children.*



## WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HELP A CHILD TODAY?

Each child is born with incredible potential to learn and contribute to our world in countless ways. With nearly half a million children in Washington under age 6, all of us have a shared responsibility to create a child-friendly state where children can grow up knowing they can be anything they want to be. Take a little time today—and every day—to help a child:

- > Say hello or smile at the children you see in your community.
- > Read to a child, even after she has learned to read on her own.
- > Go for a walk with a child and experience Washington's beauty.
- > Ask a child in your life about his day and really listen to his answer.
- > Parenting is sometimes hard. Praise a parent when you get a chance!

### Need advice?

Call the Family Help Line at 1.800.932.HOPE, the Parent Trust for Washington Children's free service for information, resources and support.

### Need help finding child care?

Visit the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network Web site at [www.childcarenet.org](http://www.childcarenet.org).

Think a child is unsafe?  
Call toll-free 1.866.ENDHARM



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## Kids' Potential, Our Purpose



# The ABC's of what we do

*These are just a few of the ways DEL invests to help Washington's parents, child care givers and communities support children in their earliest years of life.*

## Offering a Healthy Start *Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)*

DEL's state-funded preschool program for families with low incomes will reach more than 8,000 4-year-olds in 2008, offering classroom learning and medical, dental and nutrition connections that involve the whole family in preparing children for success in school and life.



## Ensuring Safe Places *Child Care Licensing*

DEL licenses child care settings to signal that they are safe, healthy places where parents can be sure their children are cared for and have the chance to play and learn. DEL sets the rules for Washington's more than 7,400 licensed child care settings that are in family homes or child care centers; these businesses serve about 174,000 children. Our 85 licensing professionals around the state support child care business owners and their staff in meeting the state's rules for minimum safety and health, and take action if settings are found to be unsafe for Washington's children. DEL also offers the Licensed Child Care Information System so parents and others can learn more about licensed child care providers.

## Encouraging Lifelong Learning *Funds for Early Childhood Professionals*

DEL invests millions of dollars to support the quality of care our children receive from teachers and child care providers. DEL encourages early childhood professionals to seek lifelong learning experiences that strengthen their ability to spark the joy of learning in children. We support early childhood professionals through basic child development and licensing training, English language learning classes, college scholarships, an apprenticeship program and a leadership institute.



## Supporting Working Parents *Working Connections Child Care*

Parents deserve to know their children are well cared for while parents are at work. We set the rules for a program called *Working Connections Child Care* that provides money to child care businesses and relatives who care for children while their parents look for work or are working to support their families. We partner with the *Department of Social and Health Services*, the state agency that decides who is able to receive resources and makes the payments to child caregivers. DEL also oversees seasonal and homeless child care subsidy programs.

## Investing in Growing Minds *Reading Readiness Initiative*

DEL invests in early reading projects in communities throughout Washington so adults learn how to use storytelling and reading with young children, whose brains and knowledge of words develop so quickly in their earliest years. With our private partner, *Thrive by Five Washington*, we want to help encourage all Washington children to say, "Let's read!"



To learn more about DEL, visit our Web site:  
[www.del.wa.gov](http://www.del.wa.gov) or call us at 1.866.482.4325.