

# Update from the Department of Early Learning August 2011

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Later this month, I get to greet my newest grandchild. I am excited to welcome the newest early learner to my own family! I only wish I could somehow manage to be two places at once, because at the same time, the third annual Starting Strong P-3 Institute will be taking place in Spokane.

Starting Strong is completely booked. Parents, educators and others from around the state will come together to learn how to build a seamless preschool-through-third-grade system for children in their communities. It is sure to be a wonderful event—thank you to our partners at NorthEast Washington Educational Service District 101 for hosting and to the many sponsors who are supporting this event.

Several new child care laws went into effect on July 22. DEL employees have been working hard to make sure we implement these laws smoothly. Thank you to child care providers around the state for helping us move forward with these laws, which promote health and safety in licensed child care. Read more here: [www.del.wa.gov/resources/newsroom/072211.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/resources/newsroom/072211.aspx).

*Bette Hyde, Director*

## DEL moves forward with building professional development system

*Progress based on Professional Development Consortium recommendations*

Recognizing that those who care for and teach young children need information and resources to support them as professionals, DEL is moving forward with building a professional development system. The system is being built based on recommendations by the Professional Development Consortium (PDC), a group of early learning stakeholders.



WASHINGTON STATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM  
CREATING PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

In Washington, our system helps create pathways to success by helping those caring for and teaching young children:

- Understand what they need to know and be able to do when caring for children.
- Manage their own training and education record.
- Find training and education opportunities to help them move forward in their career.
- Find resources and financial support for individual professional development.

For the next 18 months, DEL is focusing on three priorities from the PDC recommendations:

- Building out our online tool (MERIT) for early care and education and school-age professionals
- Implementing the Washington Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Establishing a trainer/training approval process for Washington

Find out more at the new Professional Development System webpage:

[www.del.wa.gov/requirements/professional](http://www.del.wa.gov/requirements/professional)



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## DEL submits feedback on Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

DEL has submitted feedback in response to draft requirements for the federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) competitive grant. DEL suggested that:

- The invitational priorities in the draft requirements be changed to absolute priorities (meaning they would be given more weight in states' applications). The invitational priorities are "sustaining program effects in the early elementary grades" and "encouraging private sector support." Both are critical to build a sustainable early learning system.
- Absolute priority 2 ("using tiered quality rating and improvement systems to promote school readiness") should recognize those states that have worked to implement a high-quality, sustainable QRIS. It also should consider a broader approach to parent and caregiver communication around quality child care, rather than simply communication around ratings.

RTT-ELC is a \$500 million competitive grant being jointly administered by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. At least 37 states have notified the federal government of their intent to apply. If successful, our state could receive \$60 million over four years to build our early learning system.

Visit our RTT-ELC webpage at [www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop/](http://www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop/) to read our feedback, and to see other updates:

- A summary of DEL's July community outreach.
- July RTT-ELC updates from DEL Director Bette Hyde.

The final application is expected in late August, and likely will be due within six to eight weeks.

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### DEL seeks ECEAP "grads"

This fall, DEL is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the state-funded preschool program, ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program). We are looking for "graduates" of ECEAP to tell their story about how the program affected their education or their life in other ways.

Anyone who is interested in telling their story can contact us at [communications@del.wa.gov](mailto:communications@del.wa.gov) or 360.725.4392.

### Hitting the road for seasonal subsidy outreach

DEL staff traveled to Kennewick and Mount Vernon in July to help families sign up for Seasonal Child Care subsidies. The program is for families who work in agricultural settings and need help paying for child care. The program had been suspended due to lack of funds, and DEL reopened it on July 1.

Watch this story from KNDO TV in Kennewick about the program and DEL's outreach:

[www.kndo.com/story/15131562/seasonal-child-care-help-for-ag-workers](http://www.kndo.com/story/15131562/seasonal-child-care-help-for-ag-workers)

To learn more about the Seasonal Child Care subsidy program, visit [www.del.wa.gov/care/help/seasonal.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/care/help/seasonal.aspx)

## Guide to choosing child care now available in Spanish

Families seeking child care now have a new resource: DEL has translated our guide to choosing quality child care into Spanish.

*Usted tiene una opción! Una guía para encontrar cuidado de niños de calidad* is now available at

[www.del.wa.gov/publications/development](http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/development). Hard copies can be requested by emailing [communications@del.wa.gov](mailto:communications@del.wa.gov).

The publication offers tips and resources for families as they seek licensed child care, including guidance on using their local child care resource and referral agency and how to get help paying for child care.



## Washington QRIS info now online

As DEL moves forward with implementing our state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), we have added new website content to help explain next steps. Visit [www.del.wa.gov/care/qris](http://www.del.wa.gov/care/qris) to learn more about how we are rolling QRIS out around the state.

The webpage includes information on "early adopters," child care providers who took part in the 2009-2011 field test and apply to be among the first to participate in Washington QRIS. The final Washington QRIS model will be available online this month.

DEL also is considering names for our state's QRIS. (Seeds to Success was the name of the field test, which we did in partnership with Thrive by Five Washington.) If you have ideas, email them to [qris@del.wa.gov](mailto:qris@del.wa.gov).

## Questions about new licensing laws?

Several new child care licensing laws went into effect on July 22. Find out more about:

### Nonexpiring licenses

[www.del.wa.gov/requirements/info/](http://www.del.wa.gov/requirements/info/)

### Portable background checks

[www.del.wa.gov/requirements/new/background.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/requirements/new/background.aspx)

### Immunization exemption requirements

[www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/exemption-info.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/exemption-info.htm)

You also can watch a recording of DEL's Legislative Session Wrap-Up webinar with providers on DEL's YouTube channel:

[www.youtube.com/user/DeptOfEarlyLearning](http://www.youtube.com/user/DeptOfEarlyLearning)

## Unlicensed care information added to Child Care Check

DEL's online tool for finding information on licensed child care providers has new information. When you visit Child Care Check at [www.del.wa.gov/check](http://www.del.wa.gov/check) you will now find:



- **Information about unlicensed child care providers.** Senate Bill 5504, passed during the 2011 legislative session, requires DEL to post online information about anyone cited for unlicensed care who does not move to become licensed. A provider will have a red statement about unlicensed care next to his or her name if they are considered unlicensed by the state.
- **New information under "license expires."** Due to Senate Bill 5625, licensed providers in Washington are moving to nonexpiring child care licenses. Previously, full licenses were good for three years, and Child Care Check reflected the license expiration date. Now, Child Care Check will show providers as either fully licensed or on an initial license (first license issued to a new provider).

## "Let's Move! Child Care" initiative kicks off

*Federal effort supports child care providers in offering healthy physical activity, nutrition to children in care*



One in five children in our nation is overweight or obese by the time he or she turns 6. The *Let's Move! Child Care* initiative is a new effort to give child care providers information and support to offer healthy child care.

Visit [www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org) to sign up and find online tools and resources. Starting in September, anyone who signs up will get regular tips, information and updates by email and webinar, and will be able to take quizzes and get recognition for their efforts.

The five goals for Let's Move! Child Care are:

- **Physical Activity:** Provide 1-2 hours of physical activity throughout the day, including outside play when possible.
- **Screen Time:** No screen time for children under 2 years. For children age 2 and older, strive to limit screen time to no more than 30 minutes per week during child care, and work with parents and caregivers to ensure children have no more than 1-2 hours of quality screen time per day (as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics).
- **Food:** Serve fruits or vegetables at every meal, eat meals family-style whenever possible, and don't serve fried foods.
- **Beverages:** Provide access to water during meals and throughout the day, and don't serve sugar-sweetened drinks. For children age 2 and older, serve low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk, and no more than one 4- to 6-ounce serving of 100% juice per day.
- **Infant Feeding:** For mothers who want to continue breastfeeding, provide their milk to their infants and welcome them to breastfeed during the child care day. Support all new parents' decisions about infant feeding.

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## DEL delivers state CCDF plan for FFY2012-2013

As the state lead agency for the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grant, DEL must submit a plan every two years outlining how our state will use CCDF dollars to support child care services and quality.

Our state plan for federal fiscal years 2012 and 2013 will be posted online shortly at [www.del.wa.gov/government/CCDF/](http://www.del.wa.gov/government/CCDF/).

A CCDF steering committee of DEL staff and early learning stakeholders met regularly throughout 2011 to provide input on the draft plan. DEL held two public hearings and a webinar in May to gather input on the plan. The federal Administration for Children and Families extended the deadline for the plan to August 1 to allow states to better align their plans with their Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge applications.

Funding from CCDF is used for:

- Child care subsidies.
- Activities to improve the quality of child care, such as child care resource & referral services and the Washington Quality Rating and Improvement System.
- Other research and technical assistance as we work to help ensure all families have access to high-quality, affordable child care.

### DEL on Twitter!

One more way to stay connected with DEL: We are now on Twitter.

Visit [twitter.com/DEL\\_wa](https://twitter.com/DEL_wa) to follow us.



### Early learning fairs begin Aug. 13

The Foundation for Early Learning and partners are hosting community fairs around the state to help families get ready for kindergarten.

The kickoff event is on Saturday, Aug. 13, in Seattle. Families will find school supplies, performances, parenting information and more.

Visit [www.earlylearning.org/events/fair/](http://www.earlylearning.org/events/fair/) to learn more.