

Update from the Department of Early Learning January 2009

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In December, Gov. Chris Gregoire issued her budget proposal for 2009-2011. It is clear in her proposal that Gov. Gregoire is prioritizing the young children of our state even in these unprecedented tough economic times. The budget proposal keeps intact funding for DEL's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), which means 8,226 children and their families would continue to benefit from this comprehensive preschool program. She also preserved funding for all-day kindergarten and children's health care. I encourage you to take a look at our Governor's budget proposal at www.governor.wa.gov/priorities/budget/default.asp.



As I close out my tenure this week as the founding director of DEL, our Governor's continued prioritization of young children and their families in these tough budget times is extremely heartening. Now more than ever, our state, communities, neighborhoods and families need to remember that as adults experience the stress of economic uncertainty, our children must remain at the forefront of our thinking: Kids have just one childhood, one period of life where their brains, bodies and spirits are nurtured so they may reach their full potential. I know the many Washington champions for children will follow our Governor's lead—advocating for our youngest citizens and taking action daily that nurtures their greatness. It has been an honor to work with you and I wish you all the very best in 2009!

Jone Bosworth, Director

DEL report makes recommendations on kindergarten assessment

On December 15, DEL delivered to the Governor and Legislature a report on four areas of DEL responsibility: kindergarten assessment process planning; designing and field testing a quality rating and improvement system; piloting a child care consultation project; and studying and making recommendations on aligning our state-funded preschool program with the federally funding Head Start program.

After collecting the input of more than 1,500 Washingtonians and researching what types of assessment processes other states and Washington school districts are using, DEL and our partners in this work, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington, made several recommendations for planning for a kindergarten assessment process, including:

- Consider stakeholder support for a statewide kindergarten assessment process.
 - Identify the key purpose(s) of an assessment process early on.
 - Choose the characteristics of children's early learning and development that will be measured in the assessment process, as well as the degree of comprehensiveness.
 - Determine how the areas of development to be measured in a kindergarten assessment process will be aligned with specific frameworks about children's early learning and school readiness.
 - Make decisions about methodology or approaches to be used for conducting a kindergarten assessment process, including those sensitive to cultural and socioeconomic differences influencing the development of young children.
 - Make decisions about methodology or approaches for inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs.
 - Make decisions about data collection procedures, including considering different options and alternatives.
- View the full report, including a proposed implementation timeline, at www.del.wa.gov.
- Consider including measures of schools' readiness for children in the assessment process.
 - Consider the costs and time a kindergarten assessment process could require.

DEL 2009 calendar now available

Make every month in 2009 one where you help Washington children reach their full potential! The DEL 2009 "What Have You Done to Help a Child Today?" calendar is now available online.

View January now (and learn how to have some gooey fun!) at www.del.wa.gov/publications/communications/#other.



DEL, partners host early learning media workshop

DEL, Thrive by Five Washington and several other early learning entities from around the state held a workshop for reporters on Dec. 12. The purpose was to share the latest on early learning in Washington, talk about potential "hot topics" for the upcoming legislative session, and answer questions. Hosted by Thrive by Five at the Puget Sound Educational Service District, the workshop was broadcast via the state's K-20 videoconferencing network.

Presentations included:

- Early Learning in Washington State: An Overview
- Early Learning and Child Care in Washington: Cost, Availability and Access
- An update on Seeds to Success, the state's quality rating and improvement system
- The Thrive communities in White Center and East Yakima
- An update on developing a kindergarten readiness assessment process
- The early learning policy agenda for the Early Learning Action Alliance

The Early Learning Communications Roundtable is a group of communications professionals from several early learning organizations around the state. Roundtable members work together to create and share messages and materials that get the word out about early learning. Materials from the workshop are online at www.thrivebyfivewa.org/en/FooterPages/PressRoom.aspx.



A farewell reception for DEL Director Jone Bosworth

When:

3:30 to 5 p.m., Thursday, January 8

Where:

DEL State Office
649 Woodland Square Loop, S.E., Lacey

RSVP:

360.725.4936

DEL seeks parents to serve on advisory committee

DEL is expanding its statewide Parent Advisory Group. DEL's mission is to help Washington children be successful in school and life, and to support parents and caregivers in the lives of children. With a commitment to have decisions affecting children and families shaped by parents, DEL is broadening the "parent voice" in this new expansion effort.



Parent Advisory Group members participate in monthly teleconferences as well as are available to travel twice per year to meetings in the Olympia area. The position receives a small stipend, as well as reimbursement while traveling for child care, food, and travel costs.

If you are interested becoming a member of the DEL Parent Advisory Group or know a parent/caregiver who might be interested please contact DEL's Parent Involvement Coordinator, Bambi Sotak, at 360.725.4946 or e-mail her at bambi.sotak@del.wa.gov.

Quality Enhancement Grant recipients for 2009 announced

With funding from DEL, School's Out Washington has awarded grants to 21 organizations around Washington to enhance the quality of their afterschool programs. We are proud that School's Out Washington was able to disseminate approximately \$60,000 in Quality Enhancement Grants to these organizations. The grants are to be used to improve the quality of Washington State's afterschool programs for school-age children, ages 5 through 12, particularly those from low-income families, communities of color and those with special needs.

This year's grant recipients are:

- Spokane Public Schools Express School-Age Child Care Program - \$3,000
- YMCA at Washington State University, Pullman - \$3,000
- YWCA of Spokane - \$774
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Pend Oreille County - \$3,000
- Women's Resource Center of North Central WA, Wenatchee - \$2,994
- City of Mountlake Terrace Parks & Recreation, Snohomish County - \$3,000
- Crossroads Covenant Church, Burlington - \$3,000
- Rebound of Whatcom County, Bellingham - \$3,000
- YMCA at Lowell Elementary, Everett - \$3,000
- Boys & Girls Club of Finley, Kennewick - \$2,800
- Crossroad Kids Christian Child Care, Yakima - \$2,600
- Boys & Girls Club of South Puget Sound Al Davies Branch, Tacoma- \$3,000
 - Boys & Girls Club of the Olympic Peninsula, Sequim - \$3,000
 - Learning to Grow Child Care, Elma - \$3,000
 - Southwest Child Care Consortium at Glenwood Heights, Vancouver - \$3,000
 - Boys & Girls Club of King County at Federal Way - \$2,666
 - Evergreen Children's Association Kids Co. at The New School, Seattle - \$2,395
 - Nia Center at African-American Academy, Seattle - \$3,000
 - Refugee Women's Alliance, Seattle - \$3,000
 - South Park Community Center, Seattle - \$3,000
 - YMCA of Greater Seattle at TT Minor - \$3,000





DEL 2008 Child Care Survey now available

Washington families are paying an average of \$7,644 per child per year in center-based care and \$6,938 a year for home-based care, according to a new Department of Early Learning (DEL) study. DEL's 2008 Child Care Survey includes information on child care cost and availability around the state.

The results suggest that while licensed child care is available around the state, both parents and child care providers may be struggling to make ends meet.

A record number of child care providers responded to the 2008 Child Care Survey. Of the 7,400 licensed care providers, more than 55 percent of licensed child care centers and 61 percent of licensed family home child care providers responded through online or telephone surveys from May to July 2008. Federal law requires DEL to conduct a survey every two years to determine child care costs and capacity around the state, and how many enrollment slots are subsidized. This is required for the state to receive federal funding through the Child Care Development Fund block grant.

Among the key findings:

- 177,000 licensed child care enrollment slots exist around the state with providers reporting about 13,544 vacancies at centers (10 percent of total capacity), and 14,001 vacancies in family homes (30 percent of total capacity).
- In King County, the overall vacancy rate is 7 percent, compared with 10 to 13 percent in other regions around the state.
- Statewide, care for infants costs more than for older children, averaging \$10,344 per year in centers and \$8,646 in homes.
- Almost 27,000 people work in licensed child care settings around Washington, and 94 percent of child care employees work in centers. Only 57 percent of lead teachers in centers have medical insurance, and the same is percentage is true for family home providers.
- Child care subsidies are available for working families who earn up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level through the state's Working Connections Child Care program. Providers report that about 28 percent of all children in licensed child care — that means about 46,806 children — are supported through this largely federally funded assistance.
- The majority of providers expressed satisfaction with their experiences with DEL licensing staff: Almost 94 percent of providers agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable calling their DEL licenser with questions, and more than 86 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they receive timely information about licensing policy changes.
- Many providers said they would like more communication with their DEL licenser and suggested that DEL hire more licensers to reduce their workloads to spend more time working with providers.

The 2008 Child Care Survey is available online at www.del.wa.gov/publications/research/docs/LicensedChildCareInWashingtonState_2008.pdf.

