

Update from the Department of Early Learning October 2009

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I recently testified before the House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee on our work with Thrive by Five Washington on testing elements of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in our state.



We had to suspend testing of "Seeds to Success" last year, with the state economic downturn. The Governor and Legislature then appropriated \$1 million in the current biennium to move this work forward, and we are partnering with Thrive to do just that. We are working with five communities (White Center, East Yakima, Clark County, Spokane County and Kitsap County) to test out elements of the Seeds model to find out what works in improving child care quality. Is it better support for business practices for providers? Enhanced family engagement in the program? Professional coaching and mentoring for providers? All of the above or something else?

Although the budget for this test phase allows us to test just some elements of the model, I am excited by what we're learning, and believe these data set us up to move forward on QRIS in better budget times. One coach testified at the hearing that she worked with a family home provider who had given up on naptime because it was too stressful for her and the children in her care to try to get them to rest. The coach helped the provider find ways to make it a relaxing time for the whole program, so that the children were rested and ready to have a more productive, positive and fun afternoon. A small but illustrative example of the potential power of a QRIS in promoting quality.

I encourage you to take a look at the Seeds model at www.del.wa.gov/seeds, and to watch the testimony on www.tvw.org to see for yourself where our state stands in this process.

—Bette Hyde, Director

ECEAP enrolls 150,000th child!

In a major milestone for Washington's youngest learners, the state-funded pre-kindergarten program for low-income children and families enrolled its 150,000th child in September. The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) provides free preschool education, family support, and health and nutrition services to low-income 3- and 4-year-old children and their families.

First created by the Legislature in 1985 to expand the benefits of the federal Head Start program to more children, ECEAP promotes school success by building children's skills in language, reading and writing, math and science, getting along with others, and participating in a group. More than 8,000 children are enrolled this school year. Because of ECEAP, thousands of low-income Washington children have received coordinated services that help them enter school ready to learn:

- 60,000 children got dental screenings and follow-up treatment if necessary.
- 30,000 children became up-to-date with their well-child exams.
- More than 50,000 children improved their English language skills before kindergarten.
- More than 6,000 children who displayed serious behavioral issues when beginning the year exhibited age-appropriate behavior before kindergarten.



Children in a 2008 ECEAP classroom

"Children living in poverty face more challenges in entering school ready to learn, whether it's exposure to books and reading in their homes or an unchecked medical issue," said DEL Director Bette Hyde in announcing the milestone. "By providing comprehensive services, ECEAP helps us balance the scale, build healthy families and support kids to thrive and succeed."

DEL, CHILD Profile partner to share info with new parents

It's among the first decisions many families need to make after having a baby: Finding child care. DEL and the CHILD Profile program at the Department of Health have teamed up to offer new parents in Washington information about choosing the right child care situation for their families.

Beginning this month, a new pamphlet-sized version of DEL's publication, *You Have a Choice! A Guide to Finding Quality Child Care in Washington State*, will be inserted into the introductory mailing Washington parents receive from CHILD Profile.

Available in English and Spanish, the pamphlet will reach more than 100,000 Washington families in the coming year with tips and information as they begin their child care search.

The full booklet version is available on DEL's Web site at:
www.del.wa.gov/publications/development/docs/ChoosingChildCare.pdf.

DEL submits PDC update

As required in House Bill 1943, DEL submitted a brief update on the work of our Professional Development Consortium to the Governor and Legislature on Sept. 15.

HB 1943 directed DEL to continue its work with the PD Consortium to create recommendations for how to ensure a professional development system that trains, educates and prepares professionals to work with young children.

Two sub-groups currently are focusing on the agreed-upon foundations of an integrated professional development system: professional standards and competencies for providers, and compensation and incentives to support professional growth.

The PD Consortium's final recommendations are due by Dec. 31, 2010, with a second interim update due by Dec. 31, 2009.

Read the update online at:
www.del.wa.gov/publications/research/docs/PDCLegUpdate.pdf. To learn more about the PD Consortium, visit
www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/development/consortium.aspx.

If you have 30 seconds...

Watch the new Thrive by Five Washington public service announcement about the importance of everyday learning moments at:
www.youtube.com/user/ThrivebyFiveWA



To read the latest on our state's efforts to draft an Early Learning Plan, and give your feedback, visit www.del.wa.gov and click on "Early Learning Plan."

Let's Talk About It: New resource guides families through K-12 system

Learning to navigate the K-12 system and start important conversations with teachers can be a challenge for families. The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has created a new publication, *Let's Talk About It: Your Child's Education*, to help families get the most out of their children's school experiences.



Let's Talk About It:
Your Child's Education

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Parents, child care providers and others can order copies of this publication in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Vietnamese.

Visit www.k12.wa.us/CISL/FamilyCommunity/LetsTalk.aspx to learn more and to order copies.

DEL, DOH issue letter to families about flu

DEL Director Bette Hyde and state Secretary of Health Mary Selecky recently issued a joint letter to Washington families with children in child care preschool or other early learning settings, outlining ways to help prevent the spread of flu and how to plan for if family members become ill.

DEL, DOH, local health agencies are working together to prepare for flu season.

To read the letter and find other information and resources about flu prevention and planning, visit:

www.del.wa.gov/development/health/flu.aspx



Director Bette Hyde is sworn in by Governor Chris Gregoire on Sept. 25 in Lacey.

Upcoming early learning events

October 15 to 17—WAEYC Annual Conference

www.waeyc.org/Conference.htm

October 10—KING 5 TV re-airs its "Ready for School, Ready for Life" special at 8 p.m.