

Update from the Department of Early Learning October 2010

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As you know, our state continues to face a serious budget crisis. Governor Chris Gregoire has ordered 6.3 percent across-the-board spending cuts for state agencies to balance the budget for the remainder of this state fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2011. DEL's share of the reductions is \$1.335 million in state general funds.

When we have already cut so much, it is tough to find additional dollars. Our top priority when making reductions continues to be preserving direct services to children. We are making reductions to:

- Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), which offers comprehensive preschool services to at-risk 3- and 4-year-old children and their families. This cut amounts to about 139 ECEAP enrollment slots. We will involve ECEAP directors in making decisions about how to make this reduction, either by cutting entire classes, cutting individual slots, or ending the school year earlier. Please know that we at DEL are working hard to find a way to "fill" this hole at least partially, but that is a work in progress. **Savings: \$923,246.**
- Career and Wage Ladder program contracts, which offers wage supplements to child care center employees in certain programs around the state. This reduction is effective January 1, 2011. We will use federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars to fund the program until then. **Savings: \$47,153**
- Contracts with organizations that conducted eligibility determination for families applying for seasonal child care subsidies. Funding for seasonal subsidies themselves are not being reduced. We are working with to ensure families can use the Department of Social and Health Services call center for eligibility determination. Contracts will end in February or March 2011 as funds are depleted. **Savings: \$254,058**
- Funding to complete the study required in Senate Bill 6759 around a voluntary program of early learning. DEL and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction have convened a work group overseen by the Quality Education Council. DEL and OSPI will complete the study with existing resources, which will mean the report will not include fiscal and research analyses. **Savings: \$50,000**
- Home visiting. We contract with Thrive by Five Washington to fund home visiting services to children and families. This will impact the number of families who get visits. **Savings: \$31,435**
- Funding for the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) pilot, which is currently being piloted in 120 classrooms around the state. This reduces the administrative dollars to support the pilot. **Savings: \$3,144**
- Parent support, which funds our Parent Advisory Group, and family, friend and neighbors (FFN) services. This reduction will take effect Nov. 1. **Savings: \$12,574**
- Our contract with the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network, through which we fund services to families and child care providers. This will take effect Dec. 1. **Savings: \$13,391**



At this time, we are working to propose further reductions that will be required to balance the 2011-2013 biennial budget. We will share that information as soon as possible.

We found these savings knowing that the decisions will affect children, families and communities. Our state will come out of this, but it is taking longer than anyone could have anticipated. We must make this an opportunity to revision the way we fund programs and services, so that state government is smarter and stronger in the future. As always, I appreciate the passion and dedication so many of you in our state bring to the issue of preserving early learning funding to the extent possible. I also remain excited about the amount of progress we are making on building an early learning system, despite the budget situation.

—**Bette Hyde, Director**

DEL closed Oct. 11 for layoff day

DEL will be closed on Monday, Oct. 11 due to state budget cuts. Staff will be temporarily laid off without pay on that day. Most local DEL offices will have one person available in case of emergency only in licensed child care facilities. To report suspected or known child care abuse or neglect, please call 1.866.END.HARM.

WaKIDS featured on KING 5 “Learning for Life”

The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) pilot was featured on KING 5’s “Learning for Life” series Sept. 29.



Go to DEL’s blog, DEL Connect, to watch the clip and to learn more about WaKIDS: <http://delconnect.blogspot.com/>

We thank our partners at Thrive by Five Washington for sponsoring the “Learning for Life” series, which ended in September. During the past year and a half, the series and occasional primetime specials have helped boost public awareness of the importance of early learning, and linked families and others with valuable information to support healthy child development.

Go to Thrive’s website to watch the Learning for Life segments and specials:

www.thrivebyfivewa.org/learningforlife.html

DEL names SW Service Area Manager

We at DEL are excited to announce that **Mary Kay Quinlan** has been appointed DEL Southwest Service Area Manager. She replaces Joshua Verville, who left DEL this summer.

Mary Kay previously served as Assistant Service Area Manager and as a licensing supervisor. She also owned and directed a preschool/child care center for 15 years.

“Mary Kay has been a longtime ‘ambassador’ for early learning and for DEL in the southwest part of the state,” said DEL Director Bette Hyde. “With her keen knowledge of licensing and her passion for ensuring all kids in licensed child care have safe, healthy, nurturing care, Mary Kay is such a valuable part of our team.”

Learn more about Mary Kay on the DEL leadership team page: www.del.wa.gov/about/leadership.aspx

6759 work group update

The latest information from the early learning technical work group required in Senate Bill 6759 has been posted on the DEL website at www.del.wa.gov/government/legislature/voluntary.aspx

New information includes meeting materials from the Sept. 23 work group meeting.

The work group is charged with looking at what a “voluntary program of early learning” should look like in Washington to help ensure school-readiness for all children.

The plan is due to the Quality Education Council and the Early Learning Advisory Council on Nov. 1, 2011.



*DEL Southwest
Service Area
Manager
Mary Kay Quinlan*

Working Connections Child Care eligibility change in effect Oct. 1

Starting Oct. 1, eligibility for the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program is reduced to 175 percent from 200 percent of the federal poverty level (a monthly income of less than \$2,670 for a family of three). This is expected to affect an estimated 2,500 families.

This cut is part of \$51 million in cuts to the WorkFirst program (Washington’s “welfare to work” program that includes WCCC) for the rest of the state fiscal year. The lower income limit will be phased in as families first apply for subsidies, or when they reapply for benefits at the end of their current eligibility period.

Learn more about this cut at www.del.wa.gov/care/help/connections.aspx

DEL signs agreement with federally recognized Tribes

DEL Director Bette Hyde recently joined leaders from several of Washington’s 29 federally recognized Tribes in Spokane to sign communication and consultation protocols. These agreements guide how DEL communicates with and seeks input from each of the tribes as sovereign governments.

Tribes have long been leaders in early childhood development and education, and DEL has worked hard to build strong partnerships that support culturally relevant early learning opportunities for all children, including Tribal children.

Both protocols are aligned with the Centennial Accord and New Millenium Agreement—agreements between Tribes and the State of Washington to ensure productive government-to-government relationships.

Read the consultation and communication protocols—and learn more about the way DEL supports and collaborates with Tribes—by visiting our Tribal Nations page:

www.del.wa.gov/government/tribal/



Suquamish Tribe Chairman Leonard Forsman and DEL Director Bette Hyde sign the agreement on Sept. 22

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October is Family Involvement in Education Month

Gov. Chris Gregoire has proclaimed October 2010 as “Family Involvement in Education Month” in our state.

The proclamation acknowledges the importance of family involvement in supporting success for Washington students preschool through college. Ensuring family involvement and support also is a key component of our state’s Early Learning Plan.

Take time this month to read a 2010 special report from the Governor’s Office of the Education Ombudsman called *The Missing Voices: What Families Say about Family Involvement in Education*:

www.governor.wa.gov/oeo/reports/family_involvement_report.pdf

If you have five minutes...

Read the September 12 piece by *Seattle Times* columnist Jerry Large, who writes about why our state’s Early Learning Plan is such an important step forward for Washington.

“Getting kids off to a good start” is available online at:

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/jerrylarge/>



Upcoming early learning events...

October 13 — Special meeting of the Early Learning Advisory Council to conduct co-chair elections. The meeting will be from 3 to 3:30 p.m. at the DEL State Office in Lacey. To join by conference call: 360.407.3780, PIN 644673# or toll-free 866.441.7284 PIN 644673#

The next regular ELAC meeting will take place on December 13 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Lacey Community Center.

October 13 to 16 — Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC) 34th Annual Conference in Spokane.

For more information: www.waeyc.org

