



February 2012

## Director's Note

*By Director Bette Hyde*

As we enter the second month of the 2012 regular legislative session, there is much focus on early learning as a key strategy for helping ensure children succeed in school and beyond. Among the issues being considered this year:



- Expanding the Working Connections Child Care subsidy program authorization period to 12 months to support continuity of care.
- Changing the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) statute to allow it to be taken to scale statewide by school year 2014-15 as planned in our Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant.
- Creating a voluntary, high-quality Washington Preschool Program as an entitlement for all children.
- Refining our statute to better reflect our focus on the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) as the main way we support and incentivize child care providers in improving their program quality.
- Requiring DEL, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington to create, make available and regularly review state early learning guidelines. These are a key resource for parents and professionals alike to understand what children may know and be able to do at different ages and stages of development.

You can learn more about the proposed Washington Preschool Program in this newsletter. Please check out [our agency 2012 legislative agenda](#) and stay connected with the latest legislative action on [our government relations section](#).

## Q&A: Proposed Washington Preschool Program, HB 2448

DEL has received several questions from child care providers and others about a bill that is currently being considered in the Legislature. This is House Bill 2448 (also called the High-Quality Early Learning Act of 2012). The bill moves forward the recommendations of a legislatively required work group about how to phase in a high-quality, voluntary preschool program to help children get ready for success in school and life.



Following are some answers to some of the questions we at DEL have heard most frequently:

### What does House Bill 2448 do?

HB 2448 would establish a new voluntary preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds in Washington. The bill calls this the "Washington Preschool Program." The new program includes 450 hours of preschool a year, as well as health and family support services. The bill also would focus on planning voluntary programs for birth-to-3-year-olds at the same time.

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## ELAC Member Q&A: Bianca Bailey, early learning advocate

Each month, we highlight a member of the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), which has members from around the state and meets quarterly to provide input and recommendations to the Department of Early Learning so our strategies and actions are well-informed and broadly supported by parents, child care providers, health/safety experts and interested members of the public.

This month, we spotlight ELAC member Bianca Bailey, an early learning advocate who serves on boards of several organizations and works at FISH food bank in Ellensburg.



Bianca and her children, from left, Cory (8), Austin (9), Kamryn (5)

### 1. What was your first job?

I worked at Montsho Books Etc. after school for three years, the only bookstore in Central Florida that featured African-American writers. My aunt owned the store and I loved to read, so it was a great fit.

### 2. What drew you to early learning?

I became a Head Start parent and saw the wonderful benefits that program has on the *families*, not just the child. I wanted to connect to and build friendships with the people around me who believed in the same things that I believed in.

### 3. As an ELAC member, how do you hope to influence a stronger early learning system for Washington?

I hope to bring the perspective of families, whether it be around what is working for them, what could better serve them or what they would like to see changed because it isn't working. I hope to learn from the expertise of those serving with me on ELAC and I hope to help implement a better early learning system that benefits the children and families who they are designed to assist.

### 4. Who most influenced your life and why?

My father, who passed away when I was 9, gave me the belief that I could do or be anything. My grandfather raised me from the age of 9 until 17 and without him, I would be so lost. My grandfather loved and protected me, instilled moral and ethical values in me and taught me that life isn't always easy, but it is always worth another shot. He taught me how to balance a checkbook, showed me that loving didn't mean there would be no consequences and gave me most of the common-sense skills that I have now. My grandfather would go out of his way to help anyone who needed it, as long as they were honest with him. We had many strangers

eating at our table on holidays and regular days, our house was rarely locked and people knew where to go when they needed a ride, food or other help. I always knew when I matured into an independent woman that I would want to be just like him.

### 5. What is your favorite childhood memory?

Childhood wasn't easy for me. I lost my father, was in an abusive home, I was abandoned, I was relocated to my grandfather's home about 1,100 miles away and left to figure things out. Despite all of that, my favorite memory was the time I got to spend alone with my dad. We would go to Coney Island or Rye playland and just talk in the car, smile and laugh, eat and play and then come back home.

### 6. How do you spend your free time?

Free time ... hmmm, it's been so long, since I've had any of that ... I advocate!

### 7. What have you done for a child lately?

I have helped provide food to children and families in need, I have testified in Olympia about child care, universal pre-K, state food assistance and other bills that affect children. I have served on boards and workgroups that support children, I have loved and cared for children who are not my own, I have tried to center myself around what is good for children and how can I make it happen.

### 8. What era would you like to have witnessed?

I would go back to the civil rights movement and talk to people who were advocating for some of the things we are still working toward ... equal rights for all children, equal and quality care for all children, bridge the achievement gap between the haves and the have-nots.

## DEL seeks public comment on several new rules

It's a new year, which means it is time for new rules related to many areas that affect DEL, parents, child care providers and even unlicensed providers. The rules that govern how state agencies do business are called WACs (pronounced "wax"), which stands for Washington Administrative Code.

Part of the rule-making process is accepting public comments on the proposed changes. Right now, DEL is accepting public comment on several rules. People can provide comment online, in person (in some cases), by email or by postal mail. Each topic has a link to the webpage that contains more information, including how to provide input.

This list is organized by the date in which the public comment period closes.

### February 13

- **Public disclosure** of DEL records, how the public may request records, indexes to certain public information and DEL organization rules required by law.
- **Child care centers and school-age centers on new nonexpiring licenses:** A nonexpiring license is available to current providers with a full license, and to new providers who have successfully completed the initial license period. The proposed rules describe the annual requirements for a provider to maintain a nonexpiring license.
- Raising annual license fees for child care centers and school-age centers: DEL raised fees for **family home child care providers** in new WAC chapter 170-296A. The Legislature directed DEL to increase license fees for all licensed providers to deal with projected 2011-2013 state budget deficits. License fees are deposited to the state general fund and are not kept by DEL. The new fee amounts have been in effect

by emergency rules filed in June and October 2011.

- Suspected unlicensed child care and higher civil penalties (fines) that may be levied for violating **child care licensing rules:** The rule changes are as a result of 2011 Senate Bill 5504, and have been in effect by emergency rules filed in July and December 2011.
- **Working Connections and Seasonal Child Care programs** in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 170-290, and related changes to licensing rules for child care centers, school-age programs and family home child care. The rules are being revised to meet state and federal audit recommendations, reduce potential fraud, waste or abuse, comply with portions of 2011 Senate Bill 5921, and clarify other requirements.

### March 31

- **Child care center rules:** This will be the first substantial update of child care center rules since 2003. DEL is interested in suggestions that are child-centered and evidence- or research-based.

You can find the complete list of rules DEL will tackle the first half of this year on our **semi-annual rule-making agenda**, which we update every January and July.

Anyone who is interested in receiving information about current rules, draft rules and notices of rule changes, can sign up:

- By email at [rules@del.wa.gov](mailto:rules@del.wa.gov)
- By postal mail at:  
Rules Coordinator  
Washington State Department of Early Learning  
P.O. Box 40970  
Olympia, WA 98504-0970

## News you can use

**Family home child care** provider rules take effect in March. We are developing new forms and answers to providers' frequently asked questions that we will send to providers in March.

From DOH, the **Winter 2012 edition** of the Office of Immunization and Child Profile School, Preschool and Child Care quarterly newsletter is posted.

The **state Commerce department** has a **downloadable toolkit** for people who may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which can result in refunds up to \$5,750.

**Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET)** is open for enrollment through May 31. GET offers flexible savings options, well tax-free growth and withdrawals. Learn more: [www.get.wa.gov](http://www.get.wa.gov).

## Child Care Check changes give families more information about providers

DEL recently launched upgrades to **Child Care Check**, our child care licensing information system.

DEL works to make as much information as possible available to help parents make the right child care decisions for their family. Providing parents with information regarding child care providers is required by state law.

Until this month, Child Care Check has shown basic licensing information, such as:

- How long the provider has been licensed.
- How many children and the age ranges of the children the provider may care for.
- Current licensing status (i.e., full license, initial license, probationary license).
- The name of the licensor.
- Valid licensing complaints since July 24, 2005.

Now, Child Care Check shows more information about providers:

- Certified providers, which is a classification for providers that are not required to be licensed but wish to comply with state licensing rules, such as Tribes and other governments.
- Providers that are closed, the date and reason for closure.
- Compliance agreements as of July 1, 2011, that are related to valid licensing complaints.
- The background check status (showing background check is cleared or in process) for the past three calendar years. The only identifying

information is the person's name. Background checked names are not searchable in Child Care Check.

- Routine licensing inspections and compliance agreements that have been completed on or after July 1, 2011.
- Note: Family home child care addresses **do not** appear in Child Care Check, including related complaints and compliance agreements.

"Child Care Check is a valuable tool for parents," said DEL Director Bette Hyde. "These changes are a new level of transparency for DEL and help parents learn more about child care providers who may care for their children."

DEL is developing a procedure for background check employees to request to have their names suppressed in the event they have a protection order from a court. We will provide more information this month on how to request that a name be suppressed.

Child Care Check is part of a three-step process that DEL encourages all parents who are looking for child care to do:

1. Find licensed child care in your area by contacting the [Washington State Resource and Referral Network](#).
2. Search Child Care Check for providers you are considering.
3. Review [DEL's guide for choosing quality child care](#).

For more information, please read the [frequently asked questions](#).

## Quick links

### Health Education Resource Exchange

From the Washington state Department of Health; contains information that may be of use to child care providers and educators, including posters and other information  
[here.doh.wa.gov](http://here.doh.wa.gov)

### New MERIT link

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

### Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) videos

DEL's ESIT program has three short videos, totaling about 20 minutes, that explain the goals of early intervention and how to access services in Washington. All three videos are available on the [ESIT webpage](#) under Related Information.

Babies Can't Wait: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoaFNGmSU5U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoaFNGmSU5U)

ESIT Guiding Concepts: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGqAOZrvQQU&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGqAOZrvQQU&feature=related)

Child Outcomes: [www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/pages/videos.cfm](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/pages/videos.cfm)

### Green Ribbon School awards

Washington is participating in the pilot year of the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon School Award program. View requirements and apply through the Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction's (OSPI) Education for Environment and Sustainability: [www.k12.wa.us/EducationAwards/GreenRibbon/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/EducationAwards/GreenRibbon/default.aspx)

### Week of the Young Child

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) sponsors the week of April 22-28 to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

[www.naeyc.org/woyc](http://www.naeyc.org/woyc)

## Washington Preschool

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The Washington Preschool Program would build on the standards of our current state-funded preschool program (the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, or ECEAP).

The Washington Preschool Program would be what is called a “mixed-delivery system.” This means that many different groups could deliver these preschool services. That could include licensed family home providers and child care centers; school districts; educational service districts; current Early Learning and Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Head Start providers; and faith-based organizations.

You can read the most current version of House Bill 2448, along with analysis prepared by House of Representatives committee staff, [online](#).

### **Would licensed child care providers have to participate?**

This preschool program would be voluntary for families. Not all families will choose to enroll their child, for any number of reasons. There is no requirement for families to be a part of the Washington Preschool Program.

Licensed child care providers could choose to apply to be a Washington Preschool Program provider, and would be encouraged to do so. Participation is not required. Providers who were selected by competitive process to be part of Washington Preschool Program would be funded per-slot to deliver high-quality preschool programming that meets the requirements of this

### **More information**

[www.del.wa.gov/government/legislature/voluntary.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/government/legislature/voluntary.aspx)

bill, for a minimum of 450 hours per year. Child care providers may choose to have Washington Preschool hours when all requirements of this bill are in place, and child care hours when they meet child care licensing requirements.

Licensed child care providers who did not wish to apply to be a Washington Preschool Program provider would be able to continue offering licensed child care, following the child care licensing WAC. The requirements of the Washington Preschool Program do not apply to all child care or to preschools that are not part of the Washington Preschool Program.

Licensed child care providers could choose to deliver both Washington Preschool Program services (which would be part-day) and subsidized child care to result in a high-quality full-day program.

### **Would private preschool providers have to participate?**

Currently, private preschool providers offering educational curriculum and operating for fewer than four hours per day are exempt from child care licensing requirements. These preschools would not have to participate in the Washington Preschool Program.

### **What would be the educational requirements for lead teachers?**

Research is clear that a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or a related field supports high-quality early learning programs. Part

of HB 2448 is a requirement that DEL and others make recommendations to the Legislature about a timeline to phase in a bachelor’s degree requirement for lead teachers. The bill also will likely include a requirement for DEL and others to review current capacity at higher education institutions, affordability in attaining a degree, barriers for child care providers, and any “equivalencies” that would allow child care providers to demonstrate quality without having a bachelor’s degree.

### **How would it affect child care subsidies?**

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and Seasonal Child Care (SCC) subsidy programs would continue operating the way they currently do. Funding for WCCC and SCC would not be diverted to fund the Washington Preschool Program.

I have heard that the Washington Preschool Program could not include religious instruction. Is that true?

It is true that any publically funded education program may not include religious instruction during the time of day funded for the preschool program. Faith-based organizations would be encouraged to apply for Washington Preschool Program with the understanding that they would not offer religious instruction during the portion of the day funded with public dollars.

### **Why would any entity consider being part of Washington Preschool Program?**

Those who participate in Washington Preschool Program would be paid per-slot to offer high-quality

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## QRIS grant will help DEL, child care providers with cultural training

In early January, DEL was awarded a technical assistance grant from the BUILD Initiative and the QRIS Learning Network to support child care providers' work with culturally and linguistically diverse children within a QRIS (Quality Rating and Improvement System).

This grant award gives Washington the opportunity to participate in a train-the-trainer program that focuses on how to work with child care providers on issues related to racial, linguistic and cultural diversity. BUILD will pay for two DEL employees who work with QRIS and professional development to attend the training in Philadelphia in March 2012. The training will in turn be offered to QRIS

participants in the future.

QRIS is our state's voluntary program for helping licensed child care providers offer high-quality care. It is also a large part of Washington's successful Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application. For two years, child care providers in five communities around the state participated in the development of Washington's QRIS. An evaluation of the model showed promising results—with one-on-one coaching and funding support, the quality of care increases quickly. In 2011, we named 50-plus early adopters of QRIS across the state. We will begin statewide implementation of QRIS in 2012.

### More information

QRIS

[www.del.wa.gov/care/qrjs/Default.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/care/qrjs/Default.aspx)

Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge

[www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop/Default.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop/Default.aspx)

## Washington Preschool

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preschool services. In addition, participants would have access to professional development and materials to support their work.

### Would this program be for families with low incomes only?

The Washington Preschool Program as proposed in House Bill 2448 would offer access to this program to all families upon full implementation in school year 2024-25. Families with incomes above 250 percent of the federal poverty level would pay a co-pay set by DEL.

### How were the recommendations for this program created?

This has been a gradual and thoughtful process:

- A bill passed in 2010 (House Bill 2731) created a voluntary preschool program for educationally at-risk children, to be phased in as an entitlement

program by the 2018-2019 school year. An entitlement means a guarantee of access to specific benefits either by law or by constitution.

- Another bill passed in 2010 (Senate Bill 6759) set up a work group to look at whether this preschool program should be part of basic education or an entitlement, and get more specific about what the preschool program should look like. You can find the recommendations from the SB 6759 work group online by clicking here. At that same place, you can find more information about the work group membership and process.
- The SB 6759 work group delivered its recommendations to two groups in November 2011: The Quality Education Council (QEC) and the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC).
- ELAC considered the recommendations during its Dec. 12, 2011, regular meeting. They supported the work group recommendations, with two additions:
  - Adding a birth-to-3 technical workgroup to use the state Birth to 3 Plan as the basis for working to enhance services for infants and toddlers.
  - Phasing in the SB 6759 work group recommendations about lead teacher education requirements, rather than requiring a bachelor's degree at the creation of the program.
- The QEC voted Dec. 19, 2011, to move forward with the work group's recommendations.
- The bill was introduced for consideration during the 2012 legislative session and is now being considered by the Legislature.

# Apply for a STARS ID online!

## Why go online?

- It's fast, it's easy and it's free!
- It includes registration in MERIT, so you can start keeping track of your professional development and experience
- Starting in July with new portable background checks, all providers will be required to register, so beat the rush!

- Go to [merit.del.wa.gov](http://merit.del.wa.gov)

- Click "sign in"

- Click here:



- Register and log in
- Go to "Applications" tab
- Apply for a STARS ID—you will receive it immediately!