



## How to contact DEL

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“Every day, we are honored to take action that inspires the world to discover, love and nurture the greatness in all children.”

### What have you done to help a child today?

It’s a question I ask myself every day. As the director of Washington State’s Department of Early Learning (DEL), I’m charged with making decisions to ensure safe, healthy and FUN early learning environments that prepare children for success in school and life – a child-friendly Washington. It’s a responsibility all of us at DEL take very seriously.

But we know keeping all children safe and healthy must be a statewide shared responsibility. We’ve all got to be the “eyes and ears” creating a child-friendly Washington where our children are safe and healthy in child care, on our sidewalks, and in restaurants, parks and neighborhoods. If you know a child who isn’t experiencing the joy of learning, ask yourself, what you can do to help that child today? Did you sing to a child today? Did you smile at that bashful toddler in the coffee shop? Did you volunteer as a math tutor?

With the creation of DEL and its public-private partner, Thrive by Five, Washington has an incredible opportunity to create a state where all children feel confident entering kindergarten that they can learn anything and achieve everything.

The momentum in Washington around early learning continues and I’m pleased to share this update on key DEL accomplishments. Among the highlights:

- The Early Learning Advisory Council met for the first time.
- We disseminated millions of dollars to enhance child care quality, increase literacy, and give local communities resources for innovative programs for families.
- We selected sites for the Quality Rating and Improvement System design phase.

DEL’s theme this fall seemed to be “On the road again” with DEL invited to speak around the nation – from Wenatchee, Seattle and Portland to Illinois, Connecticut and Rhode Island. We had the honor of being invited to the Stewards of Change conference at Yale University in October, where business and academic leaders met to explore creative solutions to help families more easily access public sector services. I spoke about the highlights and challenges of starting a Cabinet-level state agency devoted to early learning, and about the exciting work being done with Thrive by Five.

At a November DEL all-staff meeting, staff signed their commitment to the agency’s mission: “Every day, we are honored to take action that inspires the world to discover, love and nurture the greatness in all children.” It made me prouder than ever to be the founding DEL director and be a part of this incredible effort in Washington. Please read on to learn more about DEL’s recent work.

Jone

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## Early Learning Advisory Council holds first meeting

**Contact: Deputy Director Amie Lapp Payne: [del.elac@del.wa.gov](mailto:del.elac@del.wa.gov)**

On Oct. 22, Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) members came together in Lacey to get acquainted and identify the values that will guide the council's work.

Members elected as co-chairs Lorena Lowell, a child care center business owner and provider in White Salmon, and Dr. Maxine Hayes, State Health Officer from the Department of Health.

ELAC members represent the state's diverse early learning communities, and they are charged with providing input and recommendations so DEL's strategies and actions are well-informed and are broadly supported by parents, early learning educators, health and safety experts, and communities.

The next ELAC meeting will take place from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 17, at the Worthington Center at Saint Martin's University.

At this second meeting, ELAC members will begin digging into the work of building an early learning plan for Washington, reviewing potential early learning plan frameworks and establishing goals for what they want to accomplish, what success will look like, and how ELAC will support DEL's strategic plans.

For more information, including draft minutes from the first meeting, visit the ELAC section of DEL's Web site at <http://www.del.wa.gov/ELAC/ELAC.html>.



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## DEL funds local parent support projects

**Contact: Parent Support Specialist Shannon Blood: [shannon.blood@del.wa.gov](mailto:shannon.blood@del.wa.gov)**

Wood blocks, foam blocks, cubes, and planks cover a large room in a community center. Parents and caregivers bring their children here to explore math and science concepts in a hands-on setting.

East African refugees talk with each other about how to help their children transition into traditional American schools. They discuss how to talk with child care providers and school staff about what their child needs and how their child learns best.

These ideas are just two of 23 projects in 17 counties DEL recently selected for Local Parent and Caregiver Supports funding for

culturally relevant, innovative services to support underserved parents in healthy family development.

Other projects include:

- A family nutrition and health program at an organic farm in Lewis County.
- Monthly gatherings at the Kalispel Tribe's Early Learning Center for a family-style dinner, educational activities for parents and children, and developmentally appropriate books and materials for families to take home.

Additional projects help teen parents; grandparents raising children the second time around; public libraries offering kindergarten readiness activities to all parents and caregivers; incarcerated parents and caregivers working together to raise children of promise.

DEL will disseminate about \$320,000 to the projects, which were selected from 80 proposals.

The projects cover a wide array of populations, geographic regions, and parent education

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## QRIS pilot sites chosen for design phase

Contact: QRIS Lead Juliet Torres: [juliet.torres@del.wa.gov](mailto:juliet.torres@del.wa.gov)

On Nov. 6, DEL announced the five pilot quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) communities. Parental involvement is a hallmark of quality and defines the approach Washington is taking in designing its QRIS: Parents are required to be on the design teams at the local level.

The pilot communities are:

**Vancouver (Educational Service District #112)**

**Bremerton (Olympic Educational Service District #114)**

**Yakima (Thrive by Five Washington – East Yakima Early Learning Initiative)**

**White Center (Thrive by Five Washington – White Center Early Learning Initiative)**

**Washington State University, Spokane**

During the design phase, communities will gather information from stakeholder groups, parents and providers in their local community and work to define what quality in early learning entails, how it can be improved in their community, and how to make these improvements sustainable.

We'll be learning from parents and communities what kind of system they want, and how best to deliver information about quality opportunities for their children.

At the end of the design phase, pilot sites will use this data-driven information to provide a rationale for their recommendation about how to distinguish among and appropriately compensate providers according to variations in child care quality within their community.

Prior to DEL making final decisions about what rating or report card standards will be used, the pilot communities will get direct feedback from those the system will impact the most: parents and providers.

To learn more, visit:

<http://www.del.wa.gov/News/news.shtml>.

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## Negotiated rule making process continues

Contact: Assistant Director - Quality Division Larry Horne: [larry.horne@del.wa.gov](mailto:larry.horne@del.wa.gov)



The negotiated rule making (NRM) team continues moving forward in the process of ensuring clear, concise family home child care provider regulations and productive relationships between licensors and family home providers.

DEL has hired a dynamic and experienced NRM project manager, Andy Fernando (see "New Faces"), and added Quality Division Assistant Director Larry Horne and Northwest Service Area Manager Bob McLellan to provide senior leadership level input to the process.

The next NRM meeting takes place **Saturday, Dec. 8, at the Seattle DEL office, 3600 S. Graham St.**

Visit the DEL Web site for up-to-date NRM information, including meeting minutes and notes, meeting locations and dates, and the list of NRM team members:

<http://www.del.wa.gov/Policy/NegotiatedRules.shtml>.



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## ECEAP serves more families than ever

**Contact: Program Administrator - ECEAP Joyce Kilmer:**  
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Thanks to the historic level of funding from the 2007 Legislature for the state-funded comprehensive preschool for 4-year-olds, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), hundreds more low-income families already are benefitting from ECEAP's educational, health, nutritional and family support services.

The Legislature expanded ECEAP by an additional 2,250 children and the adults in their lives over the 2007-2009 biennium, and boosted the vendor rate to \$6,500 per slot.

DEL has reached 94 percent enrollment for the 7,081 slots available this year. More than 700 children have been added to the program already.

DEL staff are working closely with contractors to enroll the additional 390 children as early as January, to allow contractors time to procure facilities, hire staff

and recruit families.

This expansion is reaching more of the children most in need of early learning services. Forty-nine percent of the new slots went to Eastern Washington, where isolation and poverty affect many families. We have increased the percentage of children in ECEAP who:

- Speak a language other than English in their home (now 38 percent).
- Are in foster care at the time of enrollment (now 2.5 percent and expected to rise with our focused efforts).
- Are homeless at the time of enrollment (4.6 percent).
- Have not had a medical or dental exam in the past year.
- Are not yet fully immunized.

We know that children living in poverty are at greater risk for entering kindergarten not ready to succeed. This increase in ECEAP enrollment levels, along with the vendor rate increase, will help ensure more children succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

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## DEL offers support to Family Help Line

**Contact: Assistant Director -Parent Support Programs Lynne Shanafelt:**  
lynne.shanafelt@del.wa.gov

Children don't come with instructions. The Parent Trust for Washington's Children's toll-free Family Help Line provides "live" parent support by trained parenting coaches. Parents can access information about stress management, family classes and activities, and other parenting topics.

DEL has partnered with The Parent Trust by investing \$215,000 to enhance the help line services. DEL's contribution will:

- Expand the live help line services into evenings, an often stressful time for parents.
- Hire and train Spanish-English bilingual staff.
- Increase public awareness of the support and information available to parents.



## CCFF update

**Contact: Program Manager  
Amanda Jackson:**  
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The Washington State Child Care Facility Fund (CCFF) program continues to boost capacity in licensed child care while creating new jobs. A joint effort between DEL and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, the CCFF committee in September approved grant awards for quality enhancements at three child care centers in Washington, enabling the centers to increase capacity by a total of 46 new DEL-licensed child care slots. This will lead to the creation of eight full-time and two part-time jobs. The funds helped leverage a total project investment of \$841,000.

**The Seattle Institute for Early Childhood Development** received \$25,000 for their Hilltop Children's Center located in Seattle. Grant funds will be used to purchase materials and equipment to create an outdoor recreation environment for the new \$745,000 facility. The project will increase capacity by 14 slots, along with adding two full-time and one new part-time job.

**Beautiful Beginning Child Care**, a new business and the only state-licensed child care center in the Mosyrock area, received \$12,300 for educational and outdoor equipment and supplies. As a result of the project, Beautiful Beginnings anticipates an increase in licensed capacity from 12 to 24 slots, creating four new full-time and one new part-time job. Total project cost is estimated at \$25,000.

**ACAP Child & Family Services** in Auburn received \$25,000 to support necessary repairs and upgrade at their facility. ACAP specializes in providing services for at-risk children. Upon completion of the project, enrollment at the center is expected to increase from 60 to around 80, and two full-time jobs will be added. Total project cost is estimated at \$71,000.

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## DEL plans Web site redesign for 2008

Contact: IT Manager James Minkler: [james.minkler@del.wa.gov](mailto:james.minkler@del.wa.gov)

As one of the most visible representations of our agency, the DEL Web site is an important source of information for parents, providers and citizens. DEL communications and IT staff have begun planning a redesign to streamline and enhance the site's accessibility and functionality, and a request for proposals has been issued.

Feedback from the parent needs and desires assessment will be instrumental in designing a Web site that delivers information parents want about brain research, early learning opportunities and licensed child care.

In addition, DEL IT staff are enhancing the Licensed Child Care Information System (LCCIS), which provides information about licensed child care facilities around the state. By mid-December, LCCIS will include "plain talk" examples of what licensing complaint findings and categories mean, and a link to the correlating WAC. This is the first step in at least a year-long process in continually improving this component of the DEL Web site.

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## DEL awards \$1.4 million in literacy grants

Contact: Assistant Director - Systems, Partnerships and Collaborations  
Claudia Shanley: [claudia.shanley@del.wa.gov](mailto:claudia.shanley@del.wa.gov).

Research shows the road to literacy begins long before kindergarten. In October, DEL announced \$1.4 million in reading readiness grants to support early literacy activities around the state for our youngest learners and their families.

DEL's partner, Thrive by Five Washington, also provided funding for the grants, which will serve children from low-income families, whose parents speak a language other than English, who live in rural areas, or are otherwise at risk of beginning kindergarten without the skills they need to become lifelong learners. The selected programs have demonstrated a clear commitment to working closely with parents to increase the amount of time spent reading with their young children.

In addition to the local grants through Thrive By Five, the National Children's Reading Foundation is receiving \$200,000 so that they can expand their ability to support local community-based Reading Foundations in Olympic Educational Service District, Bremerton and Northwest Educational Service District 189. The National Children's Reading Foundation will also assist DEL in providing expertise for a statewide framework of early literacy.

Because early literacy is a key element of a child's development and means gaining skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, DEL is starting a process to work with parents, providers and communities to produce a statewide framework for early literacy services. The framework will inform DEL about the activities and strategies that can be used to increase early literacy and will guide the distribution of future Early Reading Trust grants. The framework process will be completed by May 31, 2008.

A list of all grant recipients can be found online at: <http://www.del.wa.gov/News/news.shtml>

## DEL initiates statewide system-mapping project

Washington's public sector systems put billions of dollars into strengthening services for families and children. Parents with young child in particular may access a variety of state-funded services, including economic assistance, Medicaid, early learning programs, housing and public health. We need to know whether we're using the citizens' money effectively to support Washington families.

In August, DEL received an \$806,500 grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to conduct an in-depth statewide "system map" of the many public sector resources parents may be accessing. This map is important to learn whether the financial investment is helping families and whether data-gathering by different public sector agencies is overburdening individual families as they try to access temporary support or resources.

It's the first project of its kind in the nation. DEL is partnering with the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Services, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and other public sector entities on this exciting project to gather information about cross-system data.

If public sector entities can streamline the requirements for information-gathering from parents and families, services and supports will be more accessible.



## DEL selects child care consultation groups

Contact: Assistant Director - Systems, Partnerships and Collaboration  
Claudia Shanley: [claudia.shanley@del.wa.gov](mailto:claudia.shanley@del.wa.gov)

Early learning caregivers have been telling DEL, through surveys and focus groups, that one of their biggest concerns and challenges is how to work with young children who present behavior problems.

Providers are reporting an increasing number of children who display severe behavioral and emotional problems caused by violence, abuse, prenatal substance exposure, losses due to incarceration or death of a parent, or residing with multiple caregivers or in foster homes.

Research suggests children who struggle with behavioral and emotional problems in their earliest years are far more likely to struggle into adolescence and adulthood. To better link child care providers with evidence-based resources that will help them in caring for infants and young children with behavioral issues, DEL has chosen three entities to participate in a pilot child care consultation program.

The 2007 Legislature earmarked \$500,000 for the 2007-2009 biennium for this pilot program.

This pilot program will provide services in early learning settings that assist caregivers and parents in promoting optimal social-emotional development in young children. The chosen participants by DEL Service Area are:

### **Southwest Washington Child Care Action Council in Olympia.**

The CCAC will work with child care providers to offer a model of training and mentoring that “supports successful relationships.”

The name says it all – Supporting Successful Relationships will help teach child care providers about qualities and activities that promote good social emotional development in young children. Training tools of observation, feedback and ongoing help are at the heart of this model.

### **Eastern Washington Catholic Family and Child Service, Diocese of Yakima.**

This local child care resource and referral agency will deliver training to providers in child care centers and family child care homes. A criticism of training is that sometimes it is removed from the child care environment – this pilot will go where providers are to assist them in their child care environment.

### **Northwest Washington Seattle-King County Health, Child Care Health Program.**

Some child care consultation has been available to child care providers, but this project is unique because it reaches a relatively isolated region of east King County and includes Duvall, Carnation, Fall City, Snoqualmie and North Bend.

Family home child care providers, in particular, will have the opportunity to learn from consultants and build networks with other providers.

Onsite training will help child care providers to better understand how they can manage behaviors, address individual needs of children in their care, and make communication with parents better to support their child’s social and emotional development.

## DEL partners with leading research institute for parent needs assessment

Contact: Family Support Specialist  
Judy King: [judy.king@del.wa.gov](mailto:judy.king@del.wa.gov)

DEL is pleased to be partnering with SRI International to conduct our comprehensive statewide parent needs and desires assessment, which will yield invaluable information about the specific services, supports and information Washington parents want and need when making early learning decisions for their families.

SRI is a recognized leader in independent research and technology development and its Early Childhood Program staff will bring a breadth of knowledge about early childhood education and child development to this assessment.

The information gathered from this assessment on parent and family priorities, issues, challenges, and strengths will help guide DEL decisions about how to support parents in offering children world-class learning opportunities.

Staff are working with SRI to develop the parent survey instrument and the plan for parent focus groups. The parent survey is scheduled to begin January, and focus groups are scheduled for March. We’re reaching out to include the voices of hard-to-reach parents (those using informal care provided by family, friends or neighbors; teen parents; and immigrant and ethnic minority families) and families using child care subsidies and enrolled in ECEAP.

SRI understands the best early learning systems are built with input from parents, and will offer invaluable expertise.



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## Quality Division launches policy, procedure improvements

Contact: Assistant Director - Quality Division Larry Horne: [larry.horne@del.wa.gov](mailto:larry.horne@del.wa.gov)

DEL's Quality Division staff are building teams and strategizing to support our 85 licensing professionals in their work by strengthening licensing policy and practice.

- We've created a standing policy development team comprised of members of our Quality Division, the three Service Area Managers and licensing supervisors from around the state. This team is charged with:
  - Working with licensing staff, supervisors, community partners and others to identify areas where DEL would benefit from consistent and relevant policy and procedure to guide the work of licensing staff in the field;
  - Reviewing existing policy and procedures to ensure they are up-to-date and matched with state regulations and best practice models;
  - Creating policy and procedure that will guide licensing staff in the field; and
  - Developing a statewide training curriculum for licensing staff.
- The National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) has submitted its report to DEL analyzing Washington's child care statutes and licensing policy and procedures. As part of the report, NARA conducted a comprehensive workload study involving 74 licensing staff (84 percent of total staff) as well as a comparison of Washington's child care licensing statute and licensing requirements for centers and regulations for family providers. The data in NARA's report will be instrumental as DEL staff determines the business processes and staffing efficiencies needed to achieve balanced caseloads and maximize the effectiveness of licensor visits to carry out licensing best practices. DEL state office staff, Service Area Managers and licensing supervisors are analyzing the report's recommendations to create an implementation plan. The final report will be available on the DEL Web site in December.
- The Quality Division is working to have a full quality improvement plan for licensing finalized by April. DEL is dedicated to continuously improving Washington's child care licensing system, one vital component of a state-wide early learning system. Well aware that improving licensing practice and policy means creating and implementing a comprehensive, internal quality improvement plan, DEL will build an improvement system through assessment and evaluation of every aspect of child care licensing work.

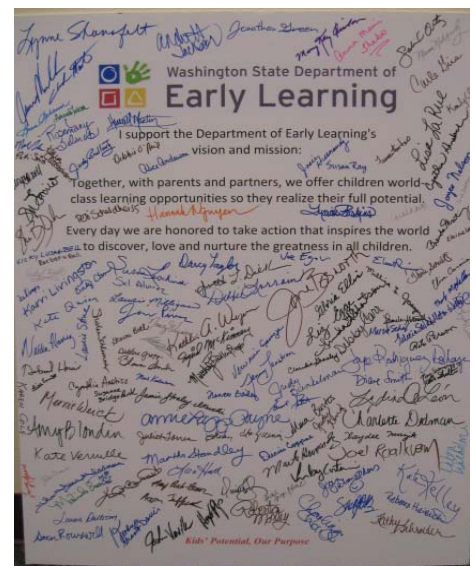
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## DEL all-staff meeting held to work on strategic plan, commit to mission

In November, DEL staff came from around the state to move forward on DEL's five-year strategic plan, building upon input from DEL staff over the past year so the plan reflects the goals and strengths of everyone in our agency and guides our work every day. Ongoing work overseen by Chief Operations Officer Joe Egan will refine our goals, objectives and measures.

Our mission statement is a powerful reminder of what we at DEL strive to do: "Every day, we are honored to take action that inspires the world to discover, love and nurture the greatness in all children."

Staff from every corner of the state were inspired to sign a commitment to this mission, and pledged to ask themselves every day at work, "What have I done to help a child today?"



*DEL staff sign mission and vision statement at November meeting.*



## New faces

**We continue our efforts to build a world-class organization by recently hiring several individuals who bring talent, energy and vision to DEL. In addition to several new licensing professionals, the new faces on our team include:**

**Joe Egan, Chief Operations Officer.** In addition to overseeing the assistant directors for several divisions, Joe is responsible for overseeing strategic planning, budget building and ensuring DEL meets its various accountability requirements. Joe joins us from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, where he most recently served as Chief Information Officer. His expertise and passion for education make him an invaluable addition to DEL, and his arrival at DEL allows Deputy Director Dr. Amie Lapp Payne to focus on using her tremendous expertise in child development and quality of care to support the majority of our staff: the licensing professionals.



**Bob McLellan, Northwest Service Area Manager.** Bob oversees licensing in the populous northwest portion of the state. He brings to DEL extensive leadership experience in human services, criminal justice, juvenile justice, mental health and emergency services. He's a skilled communicator and team-builder with a strong desire to serve children and families. Bob joined us from the Alaska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Juvenile Justice, where he served as the superintendent of the Ketchikan Regional Youth Facility.



**Amy Blondin, Communications Manager.** Amy serves as media relations manager, speechwriter and internal communications consultant to DEL staff. She's worked as a journalist and communications specialist for more than 10 years. She joins us from the Washington State Senate Democratic Caucus. Amy has worked as an education reporter in Washington, D.C., and at the Spokane *Spokesman-Review*.

**Juliet Torres, Quality Rating and Improvement System Lead.** As DEL moves forward with communities in QRIS design, Juliet will coordinate the process and help ensure designs reflect what parents and communities want and need in a voluntary rating and improvement system. Her creativity and enthusiasm made her a natural choice for this role. Juliet holds a Psy.D. in clinical psychology and joins us from The Children's Museum in Seattle, where she was Director of Education.



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## New faces (continued)

**Kate Verville, Special Projects Manager.** Kate will work with COO Joe Egan on strategic planning and accountability reporting and with Deputy Director Dr. Amie Lapp Payne supporting the work of the Early Learning Advisory Council and on other special projects. Kate brings with her a broad range of experiences across the public, private and nonprofit sectors, including program evaluation and research, accounting and finance, and child welfare practice and program. Kate joins us from an IT firm, where she most recently worked as a consultant on the development of a new child welfare information system for Washington.



**Claudia Shanley, Assistant Director, Systems, Partnerships and Collaborations Division.** Claudia served as a Program Administrator for the SPC Division before her recent appointment as Assistant Director for SPC. She brings her knowledge of DEL's work together with her past experience as Alaska's "System Reform Administrator," her leadership of Alaska's (Part C) Infant Learning Program, and the Healthy Families Alaska Program (home visitation). Claudia will focus her considerable knowledge and energy on leading the SPC Division to stronger partnerships, both internally and externally.



**Larry Horne, Assistant Director, Quality Division.** A native Washingtonian, Larry comes to DEL from the Department of Family Services in Nevada, where he has served as the assistant manager since 2005. Larry has many years of management experience working in foster care licensing, mental health, child welfare and child care licensing in Las Vegas. His extensive knowledge of policy development within a continuous quality improvement framework will help him lead the Quality Division to stronger support of our child care licensing service areas. We're excited he's agreed to bring his expertise back to his home state.



**Frances Bailey, Collective Bargaining Agreement Administrator.** Frances oversees the child care provider contract for DEL, administering, managing and implementing the collective bargaining agreement of the Service Employers International Union Local 925 (SEIU). Her responsibilities include contract administration, legislative bill analysis, budget development and serving as a liaison to other child and family service agencies. Frances has a solid background in human resources and a passion for ensuring work is done in an appropriate and impartial manner. She most recently worked as an HR manager at the Employment Security Department.



**Andy Fernando, Negotiated Rule Making Coordinator.** Andy will join DEL on Dec. 16 in this vital role, creating and maintaining standards and tools for rule development and help ensure agency rules support DEL's mission. He joins us from the Department of Health, where he served as Rules Manager. Andy has valuable experience in managing rules and the rules process to ensure they meet agency objectives, and assisted in helping DEL create its rules management system last year.



**Lisa La Rue, Licensing Program Administrator.** Lisa helps guide the policy development process and will be DEL's primary contact for licensing practice issues around the state. She will also serve as a central liaison between the three DEL service areas and the DEL central office, helping interpret new policy and practice issues to staff statewide. Lisa joins us from the Department of Social and Health Services.



**James Minkler, IT Manager.** James oversees DEL's IT staff, manages contracts and negotiations for DEL's 19 facilities around the state, is responsible for ensuring DEL's IT investments align with our agency's goals and vision, and oversees and creates systems that improve our ability to successfully help the children of Washington. He joins us from OSPI.

