



THE ROAD TO AN EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM

BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE STATE- REGIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

DECEMBER 12, 2011

WHY A HIGHWAY METAPHOR?

The *Early Learning Plan* is the 10-Year roadmap for early learning in Washington. However, we don't have the necessary "highway system" in place to get to our final destination of

All children ready to succeed in school and thrive in life

PURPOSE OF THE HIGHWAY

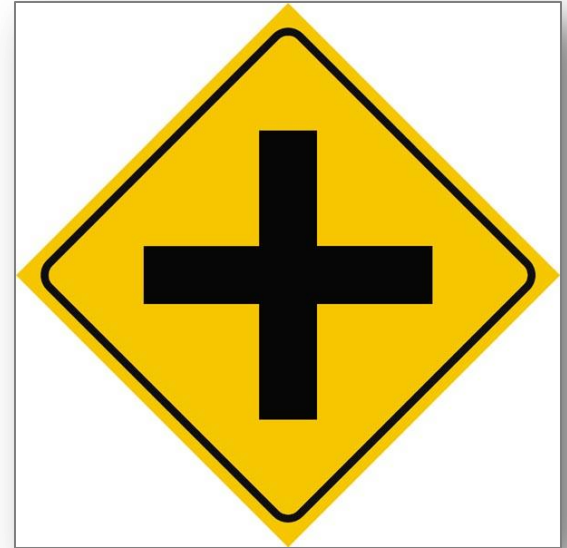


Intentional way for state and regional partners to create a comprehensive statewide early learning system that ***builds on what communities*** already have in place and helps the state and regions to ***work jointly*** to achieve the ***best outcomes for all children.***

PURPOSE OF THE HIGHWAY

An early learning highway will:

- 1. Coordinate:** Connect policies and funding across programs, services and institutions
- 2. Align:** Promote consistency among policies and programs
- 3. Provide balance:** Ensure effective use of resources
- 4. Maintain accountability:** Ensure oversight, promote innovation and make use of what is learned



OUR CURRENT TRAFFIC FLOW

- Children, families with varied and complex needs
- School readiness requires comprehensive approach
- Before entering school, families interact with a variety of different programs and services within their communities
- Programs exist to respond to a particular need (different eligibility requirements, standards, funding sources and policy guidelines)
- Services are both free-market and government-financed
- Regions are in different stages of readiness to implement and sustain high-quality programs
- Various state-level partners are driving implementation of the Early Learning Plan

WHY WE NEED A “HIGHWAY”

- Diverse community needs
- We have some successful early learning approaches, yet no consistent way to “scale up”
- Disconnect between state and local efforts
- We really want to go fast and far, yet we have no way to monitor our speed or mileage



STATE ROADS



- Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) is established in 2006 to advise DEL and coordinate the early learning system
- Washington receives a 3-year federal grant to evolve ELAC into the entity that coordinates, implements and monitors ELP
- In 2010, Infant Toddler Regional grants connect regional planning bodies with state planners

Construction under way is focused on:

Membership, Transparency and Data

REGIONAL ROADS

- State's early learning success with is dependent on regional work!
- Regions participated in the creation of state Early Learning Plan and are now aligning their early learning strategies
- Regions serving as “pilot” areas or “first adopters” for major initiatives (e.g., “Love. Talk. Play” and WaKIDS)



Construction under way is focused on:

- Geographic coverage of each region
- Regional priorities and roles and responsibilities of each regional partner
- Communication protocols
- Capacity and expertise

CURRENT “VEHICLES” ON THE ROAD



Thrive, DEL and other partners are committed to using the highway to improve early learning policy and funding allocation.

“Vehicles” already using the local-state structure to increase alignment and improve coordination and communication include:

- Infant-Toddler Interdisciplinary Child Care Consultation
- “Love. Talk. Play.” campaign
- WaKIDS
- P-3 Alignment

THRIVE'S EFFORTS TO PAVE THE HIGHWAY FASTER

Through Community Momentum grants and technical support, Thrive has helped the 10 regional early learning coalitions:

- Align geographically with the 10 Early Learning Regions that DEL established
- Align appropriate regional early learning improvement strategies with the ELP
- Establish and articulate regional governance structures, decision-making processes and communication protocols
- Strengthen expertise and capacity to work with local and state partners to leverage our efforts



2012 COMMUNITY MOMENTUM GRANTS



Grants focus all 10 regional early learning coalitions on four key strategies:

- Regional Infrastructure
- WaKIDS Early Learning Collaboration
- “Love. Talk. Play.” Campaign
- Regional Project

MAINTAINING THE HIGHWAY

State-Level Roles & Responsibilities

- Map statewide needs and assets based on input from regions
- Identify innovative practices within regions, integrate into state practice
- Set statewide roadmap with input from regions to drive investments
- Set early learning guidelines and standards aligned with K-12 system
- Account for program funding and report statewide results
- Educate stakeholders, policy makers and the public about early learning
- Coordinate efforts to align and increase state and federal funding

Regional Roles & Responsibilities

- Assess regional needs and assets
- Develop and innovate local strategies aligned with the statewide roadmap
- Assure all early learning programs, settings and trainings are grounded in the state standards
- Monitor local programs and report outcomes to the state
- Educate stakeholders and the public about the importance of early learning
- Raise local funds in alignment with state investments and priorities