



At the Department of Early Learning, we work every day to help children in our state realize their full potential. We want children to grow up safe, healthy and filled with a love of learning so they're ready to succeed in school and life.



Washington State Department of  
**Early Learning**

**Kids' Potential, Our Purpose!**

**Learn more about Seeds to Success:**

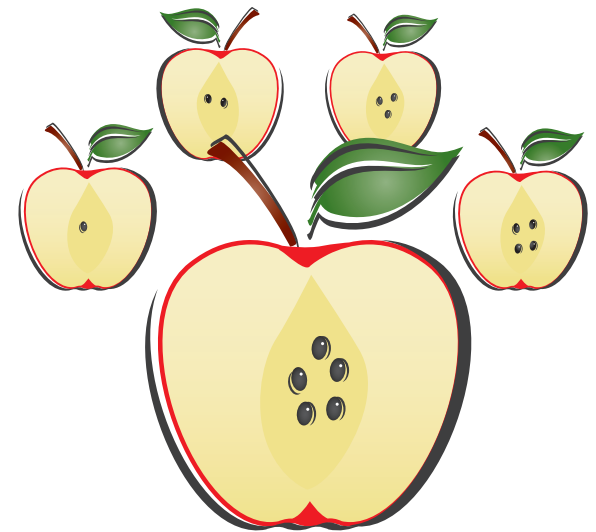
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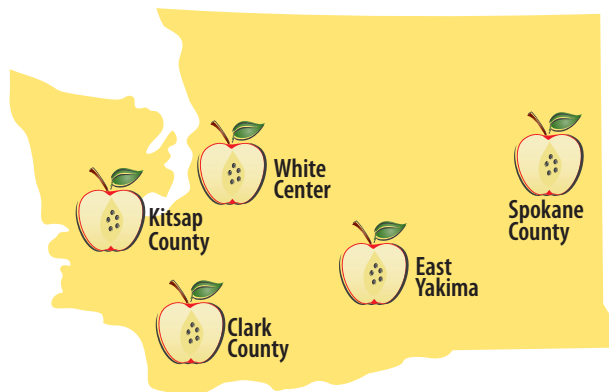
# Seeds to Success!



**A Guide to the Field Testing  
of Washington's Quality Rating  
and Improvement System**



Washington State Department of  
**Early Learning**



The seeds to lifelong success are planted in a child's earliest years! Children who grow up safe, healthy and filled with a love of learning are better prepared to succeed in school and life.

Seeds to Success is the Washington State Department of Early Learning's (DEL) voluntary quality rating and improvement system. The system is currently in its "field test" year, during which DEL is testing the system in five communities around the state. The field test year runs through June 2009. About 125 child care providers around the state will volunteer to be part of this field test year.

## What does DEL hope to learn during the field test year?

We want to learn whether coaching, facility grants and access to more resources help child care providers improve the quality of care they offer families. We also want to learn whether structured improvement plans that include parents and providers raise child care quality.

## How will Seeds to Success help parents and families?

Parents want to know their children are safe, healthy and having fun while in child care. During this field test year, parents with children cared for by a Seeds to Success provider will have the opportunity to be involved in the provider's plan to improve quality of care. If Seeds to Success is put in place statewide after field testing, it will offer "consumer report" information about child care providers to help parents find the best child care for their families.

## How will Seeds to Success help child care providers?

Child care providers are professionals who understand the importance of a child's earliest years. Providers who choose to be a part of Seeds to Success will get coaching and funding—including professional development—to improve the quality of care they offer to families. Plus, by being part of Seeds to Success, providers signal to parents that they are committed to offering child care that supports playing and learning and that goes beyond the state's minimum safety and health standards.

## Who can participate?

- ▣ Licensed family home child care providers
- ▣ Licensed child care centers, including those facilities that offer state-funded preschool, Head Start, Early Head Start or afterschool programs
- ▣ Facilities with Tribal Nation certification

## How will Seeds to Success work?

During the field test year, participating child care providers will be evaluated by an independent team in four areas:

- ▣ The child care facility environment and curriculum
- ▣ Staff education and training
- ▣ Relationships with families and local community partners
- ▣ Business and staff management

Based on a recommendation from the team, DEL will assign the child care provider a quality rating—from one to five apple seeds. During the field test year, that rating will not be made public. If Seeds to Success is put in place statewide after the field test year, ratings and other information about voluntary participants will be made available on DEL's Web site. The provider must maintain a quality rating for at least six months before moving to the next level.

Providers and their coaches will work together, with parent input, to create a plan to improve the quality of care they offer to families. Providers will get funding to help them make these quality improvements. The money can be used for new supplies and equipment, safety improvements to the child care setting, and staff training and education.