



**Contact:**

**Amy Blondin**

**DEL Government and  
Community Relations  
Manager**

[amy.blondin@del.wa.gov](mailto:amy.blondin@del.wa.gov)

360.725.4919 (office)

360.878.0628 (cell)

DEL Government Relations  
online

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

## **Help implement our Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant**

In December, Washington won a four-year, \$60 million **Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant**. This grant will help our state build key elements of the early learning system faster.

As part of this, DEL and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction are seeking a change to **the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)** statute to allow this kindergarten readiness process to go statewide by school year 2014-15.

## **Support working families with 12-month subsidy authorization**

Families that are working or looking for work with the help of child care subsidies need an authorization process that is streamlined and easy-to-understand. Most families have to reapply for Working Connections Child Care every six months, which is a time-consuming process for families and for the state. A **DEL-sponsored study** in 2011 found that families able to get 12-month authorization (those with children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start or the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) believed it supported continuity of care and healthy child development. The federal Administration for Children and Families in 2011 issued a policy memo supporting 12-month authorization for just this reason.

## **Ensure Early Learning Guidelines are reviewed and revised**

Early learning guidelines are an important part of a strong state early learning system. They are a resource for understanding how young children grow and develop, and what parents, early learning educators and caregivers can do to support that growth and learning. DEL and many partners are finishing an extensive review of **the state early learning guidelines** (formerly called the Early Learning and Development Benchmarks) and are preparing to roll them out statewide. We are seeking language in our statute that requires DEL, OSPI and Thrive by Five Washington to develop, make widely available and periodically review Early Learning Guidelines.

## **Protect children’s personal information**

In 2010, the Legislature passed a law (SB 5098) that allowed DEL to exempt from public disclosure personal information about children in nonprofit early learning programs. This year, DEL is seeking that same exemption for children enrolled in for-profit child care.

## **Clarify information-sharing with Children’s Administration**

DEL staff use Department of Social and Health Services records when determining whether an individual has appropriate character and suitability to work in a child care setting where he or she may have unsupervised access to children. DEL and DSHS are seeking statutory language that makes clear Children’s Administration staff are allowed to share certain records with DEL staff for this purpose.

## **Look to the future of state-funded preschool**

The research is clear: High-quality early childhood education better prepares children for success in kindergarten and beyond. And including children from families at all income levels in the same classroom is beneficial for all children. The Early Learning Advisory Council and the Quality Education Council have both supported the **recommendations of the Early Learning Technical Workgroup** established in SB 6759, which call for a high-quality, voluntary preschool program to be phased in by school year 2024-2025. The program would be an entitlement program featuring a mixed-delivery system of service providers, well-educated and adequately compensated teachers, low class sizes, and co-payments for higher-income families.