

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

December 2012 update from the Department of Early Learning

Dear Early Learning Leaders,

Almost exactly one year ago, Washington learned we were one of nine states that won the Federal Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of thousands of people over more than a decade, Washington was given the opportunity to expand statewide several key elements of our early learning system, notably WaKIDS, Early Achievers, and professional development. No one would say this work has been easy, or smooth. But, everyone agrees it is important. In fact, for those of us who are dedicated to improving outcomes for young children in Washington, this is likely one of the most important times our careers. And if you get discouraged, take a look at the performance tracker at the end of this newsletter and take note of the thousands of children that are already benefitting from your work.

Family Home Participation

We are thrilled to announce that negotiations between DEL and SEIU Local 925 have been finalized for family home providers who participate in Early Achievers at levels 3-5. Family home providers, who care for 22 percent of children in licensed care, are essential to kids and families in Washington, and participation in Early Achievers demonstrates how committed these providers are to providing the best possible care. To date, 381 family child care providers have enrolled to participate, and these providers are working with their Technical Assistance Specialists and taking advantage of the free training!

Level 2: Getting on the Path to Quality

We all know that quality matters and attaining quality care for kids is not like making widgets--quality practice takes many forms and can be demonstrated in many ways. When child care providers sign up to participate in Early Achievers, they are beginning a journey of self-reflection and will be assessing their strengths as well as areas for improvement. Continuing to learn and improve in our work is something that everyone, in every profession, aspires to do. Level 2, the first phase of participation, is designed to support providers to do that.



When a provider signs up to participate, there are several supports available:

- **Getting started:** Support for enrollment, MERIT registration, and orientation.
- **Technical assistance:** Participants in Early Achievers receive individualized, onsite technical assistance from a trained professional who can help them get started and support them throughout the process. Level 2 activities include MERIT completion, free training, completing self-assessments, and preparation for rating.
- **Free training:** Level 2 includes a variety of free trainings that help providers understand child development, improve quality, and assess their own areas for growth.

Online training: what have we learned?

Three of the trainings offered in Early Achievers' professional training series are provided online:

- Introduction to the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Washington State Early Learning Guidelines
- Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals.



To date, these trainings have been taken more than 1,400 times and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive—89 percent of the people who have taken the trainings agreed or strongly agreed the course provided valuable new ideas and information that will enhance their work with children and families. Comments from participants include:

"I wish this info would have been available 30 years ago when I was getting my degree! GREAT STUFF"

"This was one of the most informative online courses I have taken. I did enjoy this particular course!"

"This course is very informative and provides valuable ideas that will enhance my work with children."

"I liked everything about the course and it made me see the importance of core competencies and how I can be better professionally and serve and meet the needs of children and their families"

Shout-outs!

Early Achievers is only possible because of the incredible hard work, strategic thinking, and superior dedication of a group of statewide partners working to bring together an incredibly complex system of quality. Rumor has it that the stock price of midnight oil has been skyrocketing thanks to the many hours these people have been working. Of special note this month:

- **Child Care Aware:** Targets for Early Achievers participation have not only been met, but they've been exceeded with several weeks left in the year!! From the statewide office to the seven regional offices to the Technical Assistant Specialists and Regional Coordinators, Child Care Aware has been building the backbone of Early Achievers by engaging providers, offering training and technical assistance, collecting data, and assuring quality implementation.
- **University of Washington:** It's easy to forget how spoiled we are in Washington to have one of the nation's leading early childhood research institutions in our backyard. However, just talk with leaders from out of state for a quick reminder that Dr. Gail Joseph and her team are indeed rock stars. Early Achievers has been built with the best research available about how children learn and grow, creating a QRIS that is tied to child outcomes—which makes Washington unique in the nation!

Thanks for all you do to support young kids in Washington!

Learn more!

www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop

Washington's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Performance Tracker

Early Achievers: Levels 2 to 5

	Projected as of Dec. 12, 2012	2012 Targets	Progress to date	2012 target met?
Total Programs Registered	851	802	106%	✓
Head Start and ECEAP Sites	161	152	106%	✓
Licensed Child Care Programs	690	650	106%	✓
Total Children Served	31,408	20,265	155%	✓
Licensed Child Care Programs	20,219	14,928	135%	✓
Head Start sites	7,175	3,401	211%	✓
ECEAP sites	4,014	1,936	207%	✓

WaKIDS: 2012-13 school year

	Projected 2012-13 school year	2012-13 school year targets	Progress to date	
Districts	105	N/A	N/A	
Schools	307	N/A	N/A	
Teachers	1,036	1,138	91%	
Students	22,710	25,714	88%	

