

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

July/August 2013 update

Dear Early Learning Leaders,

It's hard to believe that summer is more than halfway over! Many child care programs offer different programs in the summer than they do during the school year, and in many cases programs will wait until the fall before requesting an Early Achievers rating. In order to receive the full benefits of Early Achievers, programs should prepare to move forward for a full on-site rating as soon as possible. DEL **announced several policy changes** to encourage more providers to complete their Level 2 requirements and receive a rating.

Early Achievers ECEAP/Head Start Reciprocity Pilot Project

Early Achievers, Washington's voluntary quality rating and improvement system, was designed to support high-quality learning environments for children in child care centers, family home child care and preschool programs. Ensuring consistent high-quality programs for children, regardless of the setting, is critical to improving outcomes for Washington's youngest learners. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) recently concluded a voluntary pilot project with Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program and Head Start providers (ECEAP/Head Start) to determine the best ways to incorporate these pre-K programs into Early Achievers.

The pilot's goal was to develop a streamlined process for Head Start and ECEAP participation in Early Achievers that builds upon existing practices and monitoring to avoid duplication. The data identified ECEAP/Head Start program strengths and helped determine an Early Achievers participation pathway that builds in credit for programs' existing quality practices and performance standards.

Lessons learned from the pilot:

- Washington's Head Start and ECEAP programs are able to demonstrate quality at Levels 3 to 5 using their existing practices and program implementation.
- Programs that participated in the pilot reported a high degree of alignment between Early Achievers and Head Start/ECEAP.
- Pilot data showed that Head Start/ECEAP programs are able to demonstrate high levels of quality through their existing program practices, procedures and policies.

Implications of the pilot

The pilot demonstrated that ECEAP and Head Start program standards are preparing programs to enter Early Achievers without Level 2 prerequisites. Pilot data showed that Head Start and ECEAP programs, on average, provide a level of quality commensurate with an Early Achievers Level 3 or higher. Therefore, they will be able to participate in Early Achievers with the following differences from licensed child care. ECEAP and Head Start programs will:

- Enter Early Achievers at a Level 3.



Pilot facts at a glance

- ♦ DEL invited nine Head Start and ECEAP programs to participate (about 180 sites)
- ♦ Pilot ran from Summer 2012 through April 2013
- ♦ The nine programs represented 45% of children enrolled in Head Start and ECEAP in Washington
- ♦ Pilot sites had a wide variety of features, including:
 - Geographic location
 - Population served
 - Program models
 - Program size
 - Program configuration

- Be strongly encouraged to demonstrate higher Early Achievers quality levels 4 or 5 through a full on-site evaluation and streamlined rating process customized for Head Start/ECEAP.
- NOT be eligible to receive ongoing Quality Improvement Awards that are available to licensed child care.
- Have the opportunity to apply to become local, regional, or statewide Training Resource Centers if they are rated at levels 4 or 5. Head Start/ECEAP programs that become training resource centers will receive a contract to share training, professional development and other resources with other Early Achievers participants.

Including ECEAP/Head Start in Early Achievers is integral to ensuring that all children in Washington enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. ECEAP/Head Start serve some of the highest-need children in Washington and are an essential part of the Washington early learning system. ECEAP/Head Start are state leaders of quality and can share this leadership to support Early Achievers. Many Early Achievers program standards, such as family support and engagement, assessment, curriculum and individualization, are modeled after ECEAP/Head Start programs.

- [View the ECEAP/HS Reciprocity Pilot executive summary.](#)
- [View the ECEAP/HS Reciprocity Pilot full report.](#)

State budget for supports Washington’s youngest learners

The 2013-15 state operating budget supports school readiness and success for Washington’s youngest learners in several ways:

- DEL will add 350 ECEAP enrollment slots in the 2013-14 school year and another 1,350 slots in the 2014-15 school year. The per-slot rate will increase to \$7,500 by the end of the biennium.
- The budget adds \$1 million in state funding to Washington’s home visiting system, which offers voluntary support and resources to expectant parents and families with new babies and young children.
- The budget increases state-funded full-day kindergarten from reaching 22 percent to 43 percent of incoming kindergartners. It also adds state funding to support teacher training in WaKIDS.
- The budget includes a 2 percent base rate increase for child care providers who offer care that is subsidized by the Working Connections Child Care program. It also boosts subsidy reimbursement by 2 percent for providers who join Early Achievers.
- The budget requires DEL to submit even more program data to the state’s P-20 longitudinal data system to help ensure we are measuring how our investments are impacting school readiness and success.

Thanks for everything you do to support young children in Washington!

“When we stepped in we were worried with the size of our program: 4,000-plus kids and different organizations [including] child care. It has been beneficial to see our strengths. The level of information that we got is amazing, not only for our programs but for each classroom. Now I have the keys, the antidote. If we do not support the foundational base of the classroom then it is hard to improve instructional support.”

*Luba Bezborodnikova,
Puget Sound ESD*

Washington early learning in the news

- [Washington Races Forward In First Year of its Early Learning Challenge Grant:](#) New America Foundation
- [Expanding Pre-K? Check out Washington state:](#) New America Foundation
- [Early childhood education receives more cash:](#) Snohomish Times
- [Invest in early learning to fight future incidence of crime:](#) Seattle Times
- [Legislature shouldn’t scrimp on investment in early learning:](#) Seattle Times

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

	June 30, 2013	2013 Targets	Progress to date
Total Programs	1,416	2,277	64%
Head Start and ECEAP Sites	181	388	47%
Licensed Child Care Programs	1,235	1,839	67%
Family home child care	710	1,291	55%
Child care centers	525	548	96%
Total Children Served	45,806	53,324	86%
Licensed Child Care Programs	34,617	39,684	87%
Family home child care	4,810	8,282	58%
Child care centers	29,807	31,403	95%
Head Start and ECEAP	11,189	13,640	82%

WaKIDS: 2012-13 school year

	2012-13 School Year	Targets 2012-13 School Year	Progress To Date
Districts	102	N/A	N/A
Schools	308	N/A	N/A
Teachers	1,003	1,138	88%
Students	21,811	25,714	85%

