



Shared Activities and Accomplishments for the Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL) and Thrive by Five Washington

Over the past five years, DEL and Thrive have had many individual successes. But our strength is in our partnership. Here is a snapshot of what's possible when you work together.

2006

Gov. Christine Gregoire's 18-month Washington Learns evaluation of our state's entire education system makes early learning a priority and a necessity for ensuring children thrive early in life and enter school ready to succeed. As a result, the state Legislature creates the **Washington State Department of Early Learning**, the nation's first and only cabinet-level early learning agency. Business, government and philanthropic leaders also sign a Memorandum of Understanding, creating **Thrive by Five Washington**, the state's public-private partnership for early learning. The two groups are expected to work closely together, building on each other's strengths.

2007

A dozen community organizations receive \$1.5 million in **Reading Readiness Grants** to bolster early language and literacy skills.

Nine early learning coalitions receive **Born Learning** grants to support their public and parent awareness work on the importance of early learning and their efforts to increase the number of early learning advocates.

2008

Led by Thrive and DEL, **Early Learning Communications Roundtable** begins as a way to coordinate communications about early learning statewide. Group holds a media workshop in December for reporters to learn more about early learning.

Communities, providers and others help develop **Seeds to Success**, the two-year field test of the state's voluntary quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care.

2009

The two-year field test of **Seeds to Success**, the state's voluntary quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care, gets under way in five communities.

Thrive, DEL and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) sign a joint resolution, creating the **Early Learning Partnership** and formally connecting early learning and K-12. The resolution is signed at the first **Starting Strong Institute**, a professional development opportunity for teams of teachers from preschool through third grade.

Thrive, DEL and OSPI co-lead and release the first draft of a state **Early Learning Plan** – a guiding document for prioritizing policy, programs and public dollars – and provide recommendations to the governor for getting started.

2010

Work begins on regional **Infant/Toddler System and Services** to support infants, toddlers and those who care for them – parents, families, providers and caregivers.

Legislature establishes new **Home Visiting Services Account**, which matches public and private money to fund, support and evaluate evidenced-based, research-based and promising home visiting programs for some of the state's most vulnerable families with young children. DEL contracts with Thrive to administer the account.

After more than a year of planning and input from hundreds of Washington residents, the **Washington State Early Learning Plan** is released. The plan will guide early learning policy and funding decisions over the next decade, with the overall goal of building a statewide system that supports school readiness for children in Washington. It focuses on children from birth through third grade.

OSPI, DEL and Thrive combine resources to offer grants to districts receiving state full-day kindergarten funding for the 2009-10 school year to support **Preschool through Grade 3 Implementation Grants**. Given to school districts, these grants support a local PreK-3 learning partnership and a partnership focus on early literacy, numeracy and/or kindergarten transition.

Year-long statewide pilot begins for the **Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)**, which combines conversations between families, early learning providers and kindergarten teachers as well as a formal assessment of each child's development to provide children with a smooth transition into kindergarten and a great start in school.

Review and revision begins for **Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines** to make sure they are culturally relevant, reflect the latest research about child development and connect to the K-12 system.

Washington State Birth-to-3 Plan is submitted to the Legislature. The plan builds on previous work, aligns to the new state Early Learning Plan and recommends actionable policy recommendations.

Early Learning Professional Development System Report and Recommendations is submitted to the Legislature to help ensure that those who care for and teach children birth to age 8 have the professional development opportunities they need to be able to provide high-quality environments for children.

\$1.7 million federal grant received to support state's **Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)** and its role in coordinating with local communities to implement Washington's Early Learning Plan.

2011

Thrive, DEL and OSPI issue a **One-Year Action Plan** that prioritizes the Partnership's work to help implement the Early Learning Plan.

Work begins on a **Preschool-to-3rd Grade Plan** to ensure that children have a smooth and successful transition from preschool through the early years of school.

"Love. Talk. Play." campaign launches with partners statewide to support parents as their child's first and most important teachers by focusing on love, talk and play and providing ideas for how more families can make them part of everyday activities.

Legislature makes **WaKIDS** the statewide kindergarten readiness assessment process and provides funding to begin implementation.

Home Visiting Services Account is not only protected during legislative session but also grown with the transfer of grantees from other organizations. Number of communities supported by HVSA increases from 4 to 21 by end of the year thanks to a sizeable federal grant.

DEL and Thrive work together to help strengthen 10 regional early learning coalitions and connect their work to the state Early Learning Plan.

2012

When we look back at all that's been accomplished in Washington since the creation of the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and Thrive by Five Washington five years ago, two things are immediately clear:

- A lot of hard work has gone into supporting all of our state's youngest learners.
- DEL and Thrive can only take partial credit for this.

Indeed, DEL and Thrive exist because parents, educators, legislators, advocates, business leaders and our governor understood that investing in early learning is a must. High-quality early learning programs prepare children for school, promote better health and social outcomes, and support parents as their child's first and most important teachers.

The support for early learning was there – it just needed to be harnessed, so that public and private dollars were used strategically to support school readiness.

Look how far we've come! There are even more people shouting from the rooftops about the importance of early learning, making long-term investments in programs and policies and doing the hard work needed to give every child a great start in life and school. Through partnerships at all levels, home visiting, state- and federally funded preschool, child care quality initiatives, literacy grants, a focus on the transition into kindergarten and more, we are building a system second to none. We've become a national leader, and we should all be proud of the progress we've made in such a short time.

DEL and Thrive are true partners in this work – our teams care deeply about children and families, we laugh together and, on occasion, we even disagree. But we never lose sight of who we serve: the children and families of Washington.

We look forward to working together and with all of you for many years to come.

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