



December 2012

2012 was a big year for Washington

By Director Bette Hyde

Exactly one year ago, Washington state won a four-year, \$60 million Race to the Top-Early Learning grant from the federal government. Ever since that day, DEL and our partners been working tirelessly to build the state's early learning system to serve children and families for decades to come.



Here's a snapshot of what we've accomplished with the grant funds in 2012:

- **Early Achievers statewide roll-out:** Early Achievers is Washington's voluntary quality rating and improvement system. Early Achievers is free for families and providers. Providers who opt to participate have access to free training, coaching and technical assistance, and financial assistance to help them work toward a rating. Since July, nearly 800 child care providers in Washington have chosen to participate in Early Achievers.
- **Professional development:** We have made important strides in building a professional development system for child care providers. We've created a process for approving trainers who provide continuing education to child care providers that aligns with early childhood common core standards; and we collaborated with the state's community colleges to create a common statewide early childhood education curriculum and a set of "stackable" ECE certificates, in which students' education builds upon itself to establish a career path.
- **WaKIDS:** Our state's kindergarten readiness assessment is called WaKIDS. Incoming kindergartners and their families meet with teachers to ascertain where children are in their development before they start school. In 2012-13, more than 22,000 students at 307 schools are participating in WaKIDS.

I look forward to reporting more progress on these important initiatives in the coming months!

State-Local Coordination project needs your input

The Department of Early Learning, in collaboration with our partners at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington, has created the Washington Early Learning State and Local Coordination Project.

The project's goal is to strengthen how different parts of the state's early learning system – state agencies, regional collaborative efforts, K-12 education, parents, caregivers and child care

providers – work together to support children in Washington. In particular, we want to improve coordination and communication to create an even more accessible, accountable, and developmentally and culturally appropriate early learning system that partners with families to ensure that every child is healthy, capable and confident in school and in life.

Participate in the project's second round of outreach by [visiting DEL's website](#) to read a letter from DEL Director Bette Hyde, preliminary recommendations for improving coordination of early learning and to take the survey. The survey closes Dec. 21.

Take the survey

The state-local coordination project survey closes Dec. 21.

- [Read the recommendations from the first round of outreach](#)
- [Take the survey](#)

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News you can use for child care providers and families

Revised school-age rules take effect on Dec. 20

DEL recently filed final, revised school-age licensing rules, which take effect Dec. 20. The revision process started in April 2009.

The updated rules are better aligned with DEL's other child care licensing rules and reflect more recent research. They include updated water safety requirements, more information about guidance and discipline, requirements for licensees to share information with families about the program's philosophy, and limiting screen time.

Read more about the rules and specifics about what changed on [DEL's school-age rules webpage](#).

Notice from DSHS subsidy payment system

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) Social Service Payment System (SSPS) will not process subsidy authorizations or payments the nights of Dec. 26, 27, or 28. Dec. 24 will be the last processing date until the night of Dec. 31.

Authorizations submitted on Dec. 31 will not be paid until Jan. 2.

The last day SSPS can accept payment adjustment requests is Dec. 21 before 2 p.m.

Small business information for child care providers

Child care owners/operators are encouraged to review the [business resources available on DEL's website](#), including tax information and the state small business guide.

Opportunity for family home providers in King, Pierce

Puget Sound Educational Service District Head Start is seeking licensed family home child care providers in King County, outside City of Seattle limits and in Pierce County to provide Head Start services to eligible children ages birth to 5 years and their families. Providers must offer high-quality care in diverse communities and have a few to no compliance concerns. Most sought are providers who have a history of serving low-income families, as well as a desire to learn and grow. Financial assistance is available to help providers complete their CDA within two years of contracting with Head Start.

If you are interested in participating, please contact:

Kathy Schirman, Family Educator
Puget Sound Educational Service District Head Start
425-917-7762
kschirman@psesd.org

Early Childhood Certificate starts in January 2013

The University of Washington will start a new session of the Early Childhood Leadership Certificate program in January. The program is designed for Early Childhood professionals to advance their careers. [Learn more about the program](#).

DEL reports on state-funded preschool caseload, subsidies

DEL recently published three reports to the state Legislature, which are available [on DEL's website](#).

- House Bill 2731, passed in 2010, requires the Department of Early Learning and the Office of Financial Management to annually review the caseload forecasts for ECEAP, the state-funded preschool program, and provide recommendations for phasing in the program statewide as an entitlement by the 2018-19 school year.
- An evaluation of the state's child care subsidy program with recommendations for improvements to business processes for its eligibility functions.
- Recommendations for near-term investments in the state's birth-to-age 3 infrastructure.

Notices from CPSC

As of Dec. 28, all child care centers and homes must comply with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) new crib rules. CPSC published guidance on which cribs meet the requirements and how providers can determine if their cribs comply. [Read the guidance online](#).

CPSC recently issued an advisory to prevent poisonings and chemical burns from single-load liquid laundry packets:

1. Do not let children handle laundry packets.
2. Keep liquid laundry packets sealed in their original packaging, out of children's sight and reach.
3. If packets are swallowed or exposed to a person's eye, immediately call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222.

Early Achievers coordinator: Here to help every step of the way

Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system, started its statewide expansion on July 1, 2012. Early Achievers is a voluntary program in which child care providers get support and coaching to improve the quality of care they offer.

This month, we hear from Tiffany Stutesman, Early Achievers Regional Coordinator for the Olympic Peninsula. Tiffany studied education as an undergraduate and graduate student and has worked as a Training and Curriculum Specialist for the Navy Child and Youth Program.



From left, Joseph, 7; Jacob, 1; and Tiffany Stutesman

1. What is your experience with Washington's quality rating and improvement system?

I am thrilled that there are so many providers who are eager to strive for excellence. I love the flexibility of the rating system; it really recognizes the strengths of individual programs. As a strong proponent of lifelong learning, I am also pleased that there are so many educational incentives for participants.

2. What part of your work do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy meeting people who are excited to increase their knowledge and skills. I love the idea that this program has the ability to positively impact so many children. If we can make a difference in these lives, we will reap the benefit for years to come and on a global scale.

3. What impact has Early Achievers had on the facilities that you work with or your community?

Early Achievers has already had a major impact on the facilities that I work

On the web

- [Preparing to participate in Early Achievers](#)
- [Information for families](#)



with and my community. Even though it has only been a matter of months, we have already been able to provide educational opportunities to enable participants to pursue degrees in Early Childhood Education. I am proud to say that my sons' provider is an Early Achiever and I'm already seeing how the training and educational incentives are benefitting my sons and the other children in their care. Their enthusiasm about the program was an enormous indication to me that they are committed to excellence.

4. What would you tell early learning professionals who are considering becoming an Early Achiever?

I would tell

What is a regional coordinator?

Regional Coordinators are responsible for Early Achievers implementation activities, which includes:

- Coordinating outreach and recruitment activities
- Facilitating Early Achievers orientations and trainings
- Overseeing technical assistance and coaching activities.

Regional coordinators are employed by Child Care Aware regional lead agencies. There are seven Child Care Aware regional agencies statewide.

early learning professionals considering participating in Early Achievers that it may seem daunting, but they have support through it all; we are here for them through every step of the process. This program is research-based and will help them have the greatest impact on the children and families they serve.