



January 2013

Director's Note

By Director Bette Hyde

The 2013 legislative session begins on Jan. 14, and lasts 105 days. This is the long, state budget-writing session that happens every other year.

We are fortunate to live in a state where policymakers understand and embrace the importance of high-quality early learning opportunities. They know that what happens to a child in the first years of life has a tremendous impact on the rest of her life. This was demonstrated most recently when Gov. Chris Gregoire in her 2013-15 budget proposed a significant expansion to state-funded preschool:



Serving more than 5,000 more children in the coming years.

This session, much of the conversation will be around funding basic education as a result of the 2012 McCleary decision, in which the state Supreme Court upheld a decision asserting the state was not meeting its constitutional obligation to amply fund basic education for



Washington students. Clearly, high-quality early learning experiences have a significant role to play in helping ensure children are ready to succeed when they reach the K-12 system.

We will keep you updated on the legislative session in this newsletter, and under the Government Relations tab on our website: www.del.wa.gov/government/legislature. We also will post DEL's 2013 legislative agenda there when it is finalized.

Early Achievers expands into 7 Washington counties

Starting Jan. 1, licensed child care providers in seven more Washington counties may participate in Early Achievers, the state's voluntary quality rating and improvement system.



Early Achievers offers child care providers and their staff access to coaching, professional development, cash incentives, and other resources that support high-quality child care at no cost to providers or families.

Starting Jan. 1, more than 800 licensed child care providers in the following counties may participate in Early Achievers:

- Grays Harbor
- Mason
- Thurston
- Lewis
- Pacific
- Benton
- Franklin

The statewide roll-out kicked off in July 2012 in 23 Washington counties, serving roughly 66 percent—more than 4,000—of licensed and

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Do you know a parent or caregiver who is an unsung hero?

February is Parent Recognition Month in Washington. What better way to recognize a parent, grandparent, foster or adoptive parent or other caregiver than by acknowledging the things they do

to strengthen their family and those around them in the community?

DEL is accepting nominations to recognize 28 parents, primary caregivers or adoptive Washington

parents with an Unsung Hero Award, one each day in February. Tell us what you think is so remarkable about this Washington parent or caregiver by **completing a nomination form** by Jan. 25.



UNsung HEROES!

Send Your Nomination to:
strengtheningfamilies@del.wa.gov

Nominations are due by:
January 25, 2013

February is Parent Recognition Month — celebrated in Washington this year through the Annual Unsung Heroes Awards.

What better way to recognize a parent, grandparent, foster or adoptive parent than by acknowledging all the wonderful things they do to strengthen their families and communities.

Join us in identifying the 28 Unsung Heroes that will be recognized in February — one special parent/caregiver for each day of the month.

This event is brought to you by:
strengthening families
Washington State Department of Early Learning

Early Achievers

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certified child care programs in the state. With this phase of the statewide roll-out, nearly 5,200 out of approximately 6,300 licensed child care programs in Washington may participate.

From July through December 2012, more than 800 child care providers opted to join Early Achievers, serving more than 19,000 children in 23 counties.

Child care providers in the remaining counties will be able to join Early Achievers in July 2013, representing more than 1,300 licensed child care

Read about Early Achievers efforts with child care providers in Central Washington on page 4.



programs. **Read more about the statewide roll-out plan.**

Early Achievers connects parents and families to child care and early learning programs through an easy-to-understand rating system. Families can see whether licensed and certified child care providers are participating in Early Achievers on **Child Care Check**, DEL's online

licensed child care information system. Ratings will be available in 2013.

DEL developed a 30-second public service announcement about Early Achievers. **Listen to the PSA.**

Read more about Early Achievers at www.del.wa.gov/care/qris.

New crib rules for child care providers take effect in United States

Starting last month, all child care centers and homes must comply with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) new crib rules.

More than 11 million cribs have been recalled because of safety hazards in the United States since 2007. The CPSC changed federal manufacturing standards for cribs in June 2011. The new rules, which apply to full-size and non-full-size cribs: prohibit the manufacture or sale of traditional drop-side rail cribs; strengthen crib slats and mattress supports; improve the quality of hardware; and require more rigorous testing. [Read more about the details of the crib manufacturing rules.](#)

All cribs in use in child care centers, family homes and places of public accommodation must comply with the June 2011 crib safety standards.

More information

- [Child care provider guide to new crib standards](#)
- [Enforcement guidance for child care providers](#)
- [New crib standards questions and answers](#)
- [CPSC crib information center](#)

How can I tell if my crib complies with the new standards?

You cannot tell from looking at a crib whether it meets the new standards. If you purchased a crib before July 2011, it is not likely that it meets the new federal standard. You can check the crib itself for the manufacturing date. If it's after June 28, 2011, the crib meets the standard.

The CPSC recently published guidance on which cribs meet the requirements

and how providers can determine if their cribs comply.

[Read the guidance on CPSC's cribs webpage.](#)

How will DEL enforce the new standards?

DEL has incorporated the CPSC crib rules into our [child care center](#) and [family home](#) licensing rules. The rules require licensees to keep a log that shows each crib in use meets the CPSC crib requirements. Child care licensors may ask to see the log at any time, including during monitoring visits.

Updated rules in effect for school-age child care programs

Updated rules for [licensed school-age child care](#) took effect last month. The revised rules pertain to the 450 licensed school-age programs around the state, which serve up to 20,000 children ages 5 through 12 with before- and after-school care. The rules were last updated in 2001.

The rules are better aligned with DEL's other child care licensing rules and reflect more recent research. Key changes include:

- Updates to water safety requirements, including adding a requirement of minimum staff-to-child ratio of 1:10 during water activities.
- More information about guidance and discipline,

including ways recognize and prevent bullying.

- Allowing use of public transportation, as long as children are supervised at all times and required staff-to-child ratios are maintained.
- Updates to lighting safety requirements, including adding a requirement for either shatter-resistant light bulbs or shatter-resistant light coverings on ceiling-mounted light fixtures.
- Requiring licensees to share more information with families about the program's program philosophy (view of child learning and development).
- Information about use of private wells for water.

- Limiting smoking in or near the licensed space.
- Updated information about first-aid kits.
- Requiring ground cover in fall zones near swings and play equipment.
- Limitations to screen time.
- New rules regarding satellite kitchens.
- Increasing education requirements for program directors.

DEL began the process of updating these rules in 2009. You can view a [comparison of the old rules and the updated rules](#) on DEL's website. School-age providers who have questions should [contact their licensor](#).

Early Achievers work in Central Washington

Early Achievers is a voluntary program that gives participating child care providers training, coaching and scholarships to help them provide high-quality child care. Later this year, families will be able to use the ratings that providers earn as a tool for selecting care for their children.

DEL partners with Child Care Aware of Washington to work with child care providers who wish to participate in Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system. This month, we hear from Child Care Aware of Central Washington, which is working with child care providers in that area of the state.

In the Central Washington Region, we are working hard to meet our providers where they are and provide various options of support to enable their success within Early Achievers. We have found success using a cohort model in working with providers through pre-enrollment activities such as MERIT Facility Registration and Level Two Activities.

There is a high population in this region of monolingual Spanish-speaking providers. These providers often come together as a team to attend trainings, share resources, and be a support to one another. To build on this strength, Technical Assistance staff offer cohort training for entering facility registrations within MERIT as well as Level Two online trainings. This began with a group of 10 providers from this community who took online trainings together as a cohort community. Technical assistance staff set up computer labs at our Child Care Aware offices and other community locations to allow this cohort of providers to view the online trainings together,



Georgina Perez, family home child care provider from Sunnyside, participates in an online meeting in November 2012.

which allowed for group discussion. Providers who are more familiar with the concepts presented or whom have strengths in working with computers are emerging as group leaders, providing feedback and support to their peers. Providers have given feedback that this model supports their needs. They are able to discuss the concepts presented in the online modules and break them down to what the concepts mean to them as providers.

There are several rural communities in the Central Washington in which access to technology can be a barrier for providers. Child Care Aware of Central Washington

On the web

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



has developed partnerships with local school districts, libraries, and community colleges to host Early Achievers cohort groups. Without these partnerships, providers in remote areas would not be able to participate in Early Achievers because they would lack access to access MERIT, online trainings and other Level Two activities.

Success is not limited to current Early Achievers participants

Cohorts have been developed in Chelan and Douglas counties, which will have the opportunity to participate in Early Achievers in July 2013. These cohorts are giving an overview of Early Achievers and other training to inform and prepare providers about Early Achievers. One hour of technical assistance is built in, which allows providers to chose an area of focus and begin implementing concepts in their facilities and to allow a smooth transition into Early Achievers in July.

“This training offered a good birds-eye view of the different aspects of Early Achievers. I was able to have my questions answered and alleviate the fear of the unknown. Our center is preparing to move into a new building where I will be setting up new classrooms. Now I can use knowledge of ERS to set environments that will best meet Early Achievers quality standards.” —Leanna Fain, Director, St. Paul's Child Care Center, Wenatchee

News you can use for child care providers and families

Opportunity for family home providers in King, Pierce

Puget Sound Educational Service District Head Start is seeking 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 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

Focus on Children Conference

The 29th annual Focus on Children Conference will be held at Bellingham Technical College on Feb. 2.

The conference is sponsored by Bellingham Technical College and the Northwest Association for the Education of Young Children. [Learn more about the conference.](#)

Healthy Habits for Life webinar for child care providers

Child Care Aware USA is hosting a webinar about childhood wellness for child care providers in conjunction with Sesame Workshop on Jan. 29 at 4 p.m. PST. The hourlong webinar will provide multimedia resources to help child care providers integrate healthy

activities within their curriculum and engage young children in physical activity and movement. The webinar includes a [free Healthy Habits for Life Child Care Resource Kit](#) that providers can download. [Register for the webinar](#) online.

Immunization news from state Department of Health (DOH)

The [Winter 2012 newsletter](#) from the state DOH Immunization and Child Profile office is available on its website. The newsletter has information that may be of interest to child care providers and families.

Vacancies on State Interagency Coordinating Council

Applications are being sought to fill the following vacancies on the Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and Their Families:

- Parent
- Service Provider – Physician
- Service Provider – Public Health
- Service Provider – Head Start

SICC assists the Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in implementing the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program per the federal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C. The SICC is mandated by IDEA, Part C and established through the Governor's Executive Order 01-04. The Governor appoints the members

of the Council.

Applications are available on [the Governor's website](#); click the "Apply to Serve on a Board or Commission" link.

Childhood obesity conference

Nutrition First is hosting Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids: Practical Approaches for Preventing Childhood Obesity conference on April 3, 2013 at the Seattle Center.

This conference provides practical tools and resources for those working with the preschool and early learning populations. Experts will address issues on establishing healthy eating habits and behaviors to help maintain a healthy weight. There are sessions focused on regulation and policy work as well as descriptions of community intervention programs to expand access to healthy foods and promote positive behavior change in Washington.

Participants may earn 6.5 hours of continuing education. Cost to attend is \$125 for Nutrition First members and \$145 for non-members (includes annual membership to Nutrition First).

For more information and registration, visit www.nutritionfirstwa.org/events.

Orientation schedule for 2013

If you are interested in becoming a licensed child care provider, view the [2013 licensing orientation schedule and instructions](#).

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge updates

[Read the December 2012 newsletter](#) for the latest update on DEL's RTT-ELC work.