

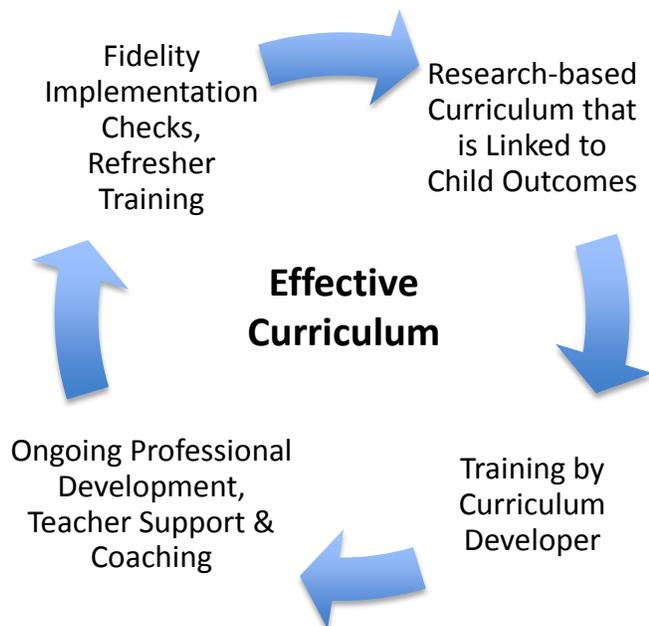
As Washington expands state preschool, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) is enhancing the state’s preschool model. These improvements align with new research about essential elements of high quality preschool that directly promote positive child outcomes and school readiness, including pairing research-based curriculum with ongoing professional development focused on curriculum implementation.

Research

Recent research shows that curricula designed to meet specific child learning outcomes are most effective when implemented with fidelity and when closely tied to ongoing professional development and coaching. Since Washington’s state preschool, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), already has a strong curriculum focus, augmenting these efforts can provide immediate support for quality teaching practices.

Washington’s Plan for Curricula Enhancements

Almost all ECEAP contractors already use a research-based curriculum to meet requirements for developmentally-appropriate and culturally-relevant practices. In 2013-14, 87% of ECEAP sites used Creative Curriculum, other sites used High Scope, and many layer their core curricula with additional language/literacy and math/numeracy curricula. Washington will build and expand upon these curricular practices, providing new resources for ECEAP.



Training:

By 2019, DEL will provide all ECEAP teachers with training created by curriculum developers. While a research-based curriculum is widely used in the ECEAP, training varies widely and sites may not have access to the most recent version of curriculum. DEL will offer a menu of training options at reduced or no cost to programs. These options have been chosen because they have strong professional development components, they are already commonly used and recent studies suggest they are strongly linked to positive child outcomes.

The training will cover the most recent version of the research-based curricula to ensure:

- Adequate coverage of all early learning domains
- Well-designed learning activities, and
- Support of strong teacher-child interactions including the ability to individualize, respond to the individual cultural and ethnic diversity of each program
- A strong family component.

Preschool Curriculum Menu

- Creative Curriculum
- High Scope
- Layered Approach

High Quality Curriculum Criteria

- Research-based and tied to sound child development principles
- Aligns with WA Early Learning Guidelines
- Research demonstrates that child outcomes improve across multiple domains; studies exist that include measures of fidelity of implementation
- Learning activities are well designed & integrate multiple learning domains; learning domains clearly articulated in learning activities
- Content covers language development, mathematics, science, social studies, logic and reasoning, approaches to learning, physical development, social and emotional development
- There are specific, measurable, child-focused, and developmentally appropriate goals for each learning activity
- Allows for responsive teaching that supports high quality interactions
- Supports individualized instruction
- Culturally and linguistically responsive
- Ongoing assessment component that is linked to learning goals and children's outcomes
- Strong professional development opportunities including initial and on-going training
- Family materials provided for teachers to distribute and support family engagement



ECEAP contractors may choose to implement other curricula, as long as it meets DEL's criteria for high quality curriculum (see inset). ECEAP contractors who choose their own curricula must pay for training and support.

Coaching:

All teachers will receive curriculum support from coaches who are trained experts in the specific curricula being used. Each ECEAP contractor will have at least one Preschool Coach trained in the curriculum chosen by their program. Through ongoing observation, assessment tools and refresher trainings, Preschool Coaches will ensure that curriculum is implemented effectively and with fidelity. Coaches will work on-site with teachers to assess on-going professional development needs, model best practices and ensure adequate support at the classroom level. Coaches will also support individualization so that curriculum activities are tailored to meet the individual needs of children, including dual-language learners and children with special needs. ECEAP Contractor Preschool Coaches will receive ongoing support from the University of Washington Childcare Quality and Early Learning (CQEL) staff and DEL Pre-K Specialists.

Fidelity Study:

DEL will implement a fidelity study to evaluate the success of training and implementation and inform decisions about program-wide curriculum use in the future. In addition to a focus on child outcomes across all domains of development, the study will also investigate the strength of the strategies planned to support children with special needs and dual-language learners. The study will also investigate the use of child level assessments in multiple languages for dual-language learners at both the pre-k and kindergarten levels.

Implementation Review:

DEL is utilizing the Preschool Operational Work Group (POWG), made up of organizations that recently received expansion and early learning stakeholders, to provide recommendations on implementation of these curriculum efforts.