

Early Start Act, Early Achievers Update

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) continues to ramp up outreach and engagement activities, targeting providers who accept children on Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy. The goal is to contact 100% of WCCC providers and get them enrolled in Early Achievers by August 1, 2016.

Up to now, DEL's primary engagement strategy was carried out in partnership with Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA of WA). Each CCA region has specifically targeted providers and reached out through phone calls, letters, hand-written invitations, incentive campaigns and testimonies from successful Early Achievers participants. CCA regional contacts have also worked with local DEL licensors, forming another layer of outreach to providers.

When comparing numbers from time periods in 2014, CCA reports a 43% increase of enrollment between July and December. This includes a 76% increase in enrollment between September and December alone:

Jul-Dec 2014 New Enrolled	230
Jul-Dec 2015 New Enrolled	329
Jul-Dec YoY Increase in New Enrolled Count	99
Jul-Dec YoY % Increase in New Enrollment	43%
Sep-Dec 2014 New Enrolled	163
Sep-Dec 2015 New Enrolled	287
Sep-Dec YoY Increase in New Enrolled Count	124
Sep-Dec YoY % Increase in New Enrollment	76%

2016 Outreach and Engagement Strategies

Addressing enrollment: Three goals of the 2016 DEL engagement strategies are to motivate providers to enroll in Early Achievers, to have enough Early Achievers field staff available to meet their needs, and to have a plan in place for exceptional circumstances that may prevent enrollment by August 1, 2016.

- DEL, CCA of WA, DSHS and SEIU 925 are developing targeted outreach strategies to increase enrollment by contacting 100% of WCCC providers who are not yet enrolled in Early Achievers.
- In February 2016, the Child Care Aware of WA Family Center will change their messaging to families. They will let them know about the mandate and encourage families to ask the providers they screen if they are participating in Early Achievers.
- In March 2016:
 - WCCC providers will begin receiving targeted messages will encouraging them to to enroll in Early Achievers before August 1, 2016. These messages will come from DEL,

DSHS, CCA of WA and SEIU. Providers will receive emails, letters, phone calls from their licensors and targeted messages on their WCCC warrants.

- WCCC families will receive a letter from DEL about the mandate and how to find care with an Early Achievers participant.
- In May 2016, the Child Care Aware of WA Family Center will stop referring families to providers who are not enrolled in Early Achievers. This change will be communicated to providers by March 2016.
- DEL is also working to provide enough orientations to meet demand. This means exploring new and different ways to deliver the Early Achievers Orientation to make sure 100% of mandated providers have access to Early Achievers registration on or before August 1, 2016. If providers are unable to attend an orientation before August 1, 2016, because of a lack of CCA capacity, then they will be allowed to remain on subsidy for an additional 60 days in order to complete the orientation and registration.

Families as influencers: DEL is reaching families in new ways to help them understand Early Achievers by providing more information about participating programs and the ratings as well as seeking their input.

- In November 2015, all Early Achievers participation and rating information was posted on DEL's [Child Care Check Website](#). Plus, Early Achievers participants can now add a program description—this helps families learn more about the programs.
- By February 2016, families seeking child care services that accept WCCC subsidies through the Child Care Aware of WA Family Center will be instructed to ask providers if they are enrolled in Early Achievers.
- DEL has a newly formed Parent Advisory Group (PAG) that has parent representation from across the state. The next PAG meeting is an Early Achievers information session. DEL hopes to have their help in shaping the Early Achievers engagement protocol.
- DEL hopes that informing parents about Early Achievers and the WCCC mandate will increase the number of messengers that encourage providers to enroll in Early Achievers before August 1, 2016.

Addressing Barriers

DEL, the Early Achievers Review Subcommittee and the Indian Policy Early Learning Committee are drafting an engagement protocol to eliminate barriers to participating in Early Achievers. This protocol will offer guidance to DEL as they set policy. This protocol will help DEL develop any alternative processes in order to make sure 100% of WCCC providers have access to Early Achievers registration before August 1, 2016.