

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

March 2013 update

Dear Early Learning Leaders,

On February 15, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) submitted Washington’s Annual Performance Review to the Federal Government detailing the progress we made during the first year of the RTT-ELC grant. It was an incredible opportunity to see in black and white just how much has happened over the first year of implementation. For those of us that are “mired in the brambles” of the day-to-day implementation of the work it can sometimes be difficult to step back and see how much that has happened for young children in Washington. But at every level, in every region of our state incredible progress had been made that is impacting the lives of children. Please take a moment to reflect on the amazing progress of the past year. Then let’s roll up our sleeves and keep going!

If reading the full 103-page report feels a little daunting, have no fear. DEL published a [summarized annual report](#) that highlights of the first year of implementation.

Sequestration

The across-the-board federal budget cuts brought on by sequestration are affecting all state agencies in Washington, including DEL. While the RTT-ELC grant funds are not in jeopardy, this work relies on other funding streams, which may be in jeopardy. It is likely that DEL will have to implement some cuts, and we are working to ensure that the impact of these cuts will be as minimal as possible. Our philosophy in any budget cuts will focus on the following:

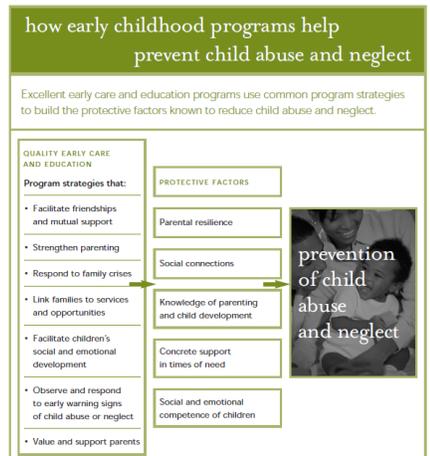
- Demand efficiencies in the system.
- Focus on the long term sustainability of our work, beyond RTT-ELC funding.
- Ensure minimal cuts to direct services.

While there is a lot of good news on the economic front, we also know that economic uncertainty is still real. Through sequestration and beyond, we will continue to make sure that every dollar for early learning is spent for the greatest benefits for kids.

Strengthening Families training for early learning professionals

A part of the Early Achievers Professional Training Series, participants in Early Achievers will complete a daylong, in-person training on how to best support the families in their programs. The Early Achievers Strengthening Families training offers suggestions for being a good role model for families, how to make families feel welcome, and resources for families that need additional support. Focusing on building open and trusting relationships with families is the key to Strengthening Families.

Strengthening Families is focused on the development of “Protective Factors” in children’s lives. It uses a framework of protective factors to shift the focus of child abuse and neglect prevention efforts from family risks and deficits to family strengths and resiliency. By recognizing and building on existing strengths within



communities and families, we can support all families in providing a healthy, safe, and loving environment for children. The Strengthening Families training gives early learning providers tools, tips, and resources for supporting and strengthening the families in their programs.



To date, 403 Early Achievers participants have taken the Strengthening Families training. Of the participants who completed evaluations, 83% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that “as a result of training, I can think of way(s) to enhance my work with children and/or families.”

Thanks for all you do to support young kids in Washington!

Strengthening Families: A Participant Perspective

Caileen Hill is the owner and lead teacher of Adventures in Learning Preschool in Lacey. Caileen took the Strengthening Families training in February and says that she “gained more awareness of my ability to support families.”

Many of the parents at Adventures in Learning Preschool are military families that do not have extended family in the area, and Caileen is in a unique position to provide support.

“After the training it got me thinking about how I can engage the families more and bring them into the program.” She has already started working to be a strong resource to her families. “I’ve really gotten to know the families much better and learned things that I’d probably never have known. It’s really helping us to build a strong community.”

Learn more!

www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop

Washington's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Performance Tracker

Early Achievers: Levels 2 to 5				
	Feb. 28, 2013	2013 Targets	Progress to date	2013 target met?
Total Programs	1,100	2,227	50%	
Head Start and ECEAP Sites	181	388	47%	
Licensed Child Care Programs	929	1,839	51%	
Family home child care	534	1,291	41%	
Child care centers	395	548	72%	
Total Children Served	36,389	53,324	68%	
Head Start	7,175	8,692	83%	
ECEAP	4,014	4,948	81%	
Licensed child care	25,200	39,684	64%	
Family home child care	3,619	8,282	44%	
Child care centers	21,581	31,403	69%	
WaKIDS: 2012-13 school year				
	Projected 2012-13 School Year	Targets 2012-13 School Year	Progress to Date	
Districts	102	N/A	N/A	
Schools	308	N/A	N/A	
Teachers	1,003	1,138	88%	
Students	21,811	25,714	85%	

