

Updates from the Head Start State Collaboration Office

December 2012



PURPOSE: The purpose of this newsletter is to provide updates on Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) projects and to share other relevant information and opportunities to participate in state level activities and events. The HSSCO in the Department of Early Learning helps to develop and maintain state and local partnerships that benefit low-income children and families and works to coordinate federal, state and local policy to help unify the early care and education system in Washington.

Ready Schools Surveys: Head Start/ECEAP and Elementary School Principals

PreK-3 surveys conducted this spring with elementary school principals and Head Start/ECEAP preschool providers reflect a growing interest and focus on PreK-3 alignment and the need for improving the connections between early learning and K-12. [View the surveys.](#)

Early Achievers Head Start and ECEAP Pilot

DEL is partnering with a small number of HS/ECEAP programs to refine and test reciprocity elements and policies. Participants were chosen based upon alignment with Early Achievers roll-out regions and to represent program diversity. The pilot began in July and is coming to a close. In the coming weeks, the University of Washington, our evaluation partner, will wrap up data collection with participating programs and the programs will finalize enrollment and registration process, including staff entry into MERIT. Building upon what we have learned during the pilot process, input from the advisory committee, and ratings data, DEL will make decisions regarding the Head Start/ECEAP Early Achievers pathway and implement consequent system changes in early 2013. Conversations with partners, including Head Start/ECEAP, are underway to develop and refine the resource center concept. DEL hopes to roll out the first wave of resource centers in the spring of 2013. In the meantime, a great way to prepare for Early Achievers participation is to begin encouraging staff to sign up for MERIT as this is a key component of Early Achievers registration. Read more information about [Early Achievers and the Head Start/ECEAP pilot.](#)

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)

Read the most recent [RTT-ELC Update](#) for information on Early Achievers expansion and the RTT-ELC performance tracker.

Advancing Racial Equity in Early Learning

Over the last several months, Thrive by Five Washington has convened a series of community conversations centered around the development of a racial equity theory of change, which will serve as a roadmap for integrating a focus on racial equity into implementation of key components of the Early Learning Plan. The theory of change will be a tool that can be used to guide conversations at both state and local levels. Participants in these community conversations have included parents, practitioners, researchers, community leaders and state partners. Representatives from multiple Head Start and

ECEAP programs as well as WSA have been engaged in this series of conversations and the HSSCO serves on the work team for this effort. The most recent community conversation took place on December 11th in Seattle and was focused on the final steps of development for the theory of change and thinking through how this work will roll out. For more information about this effort, check out the [project progress update](#).

Spanish Guidelines are available!

The Spanish version of the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines document is now available. You can order copies through the [Department of Enterprise Services' website](#). Search "Early Learning" and it will bring up the English and Spanish versions. The books are free, but you will need to pay for shipping and handling. View the [electronic version](#) on DEL's website.

Early Learning Guidelines Roll-Out

A cross agency work team including staff from the three agencies of the Early Learning Partnership (DEL, OSPI and Thrive by Five) has been meeting to oversee roll-out of the newly redesigned Early Learning and Development Guidelines. To ensure the roll-out is well informed by the wisdom and expertise of state and local partners, the partner agencies convened a stakeholder planning day, which took place on October 8. Representatives from Head Start and ECEAP programs participated. The cross-agency work team will meet in January to review input gathered and determine next steps.

DEL Can Help You Find Eligible Children

Annually, DEL provides Head Start and ECEAP contractors with names and addresses of DSHS client families with children who may be eligible for Head Start and ECEAP. If you want to receive this family contact information:

- Send DEL signed [nondisclosure form](#) for each person who will have access to this confidential information.
- Watch for the new *Request for Confidential Client Information* form to be emailed and send to DEL by January 15.

State to Local Coordination Project

The Department of Early Learning, in collaboration with partners at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Thrive by Five Washington (Thrive), has started 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 and child care providers—work together to support children in Washington. Since February 2012, community research was conducted to better understand the barriers and opportunities for building a strong early learning system. In the spring, a summary of the outreach was posted on DEL's website. Based on this work, a set of preliminary recommendations to improve system coordination and communication has been developed. [Review the recommendations and offer comments](#) on the State-Local Coordination webpage. The survey closes on December 21.

Free computer equipment grant opportunity

The CHIPRA Grant project has up to \$4,200 per applicant for ECEAP and Head Start programs to help families enroll in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Programs will serve as access points where families can submit applications, renewals and changes of circumstance electronically. DSHS will reimburse qualifying applicants for the purchase of a scanner and other equipment (laptops, tablets, etc.) to serve CHIP clients. Programs get to keep the computer equipment after the end of the grant

period (8/31/13). For more information, go to [DSHS' website](#) or contact Lynette Richardson at Richala@dshs.wa.gov.

Lead for Literacy Memos

The Lead for Literacy initiative, from Harvard's Language Diversity and Literacy Development Research Group, is a series of one-page memos written for leaders dedicated to children's literacy development. Each memo revisits assumptions that guide current policies and practices, outlines common pitfalls, and presents feasible solutions to pressing issues. [View the memos](#) on Harvard's website.

ECHO's 3-Minute Resource Locating Tool for EHS Programs

The Early Childhood Hearing Outreach (ECHO) Initiative has developed a tool to help EHS programs meet their hearing screening and follow-up requirements. All ECHO resources are free and were developed through funding from the Office of Head Start to serve EHS programs as the National Resource Center on Early Hearing Detection and Intervention. Acknowledging that programs have limited time to search for information and resources related to hearing screening, ECHO has developed a [three-minute TA Tool](#) to help programs locate what they need. Based on your programs current practices and interests, this tool will produce an individualized set of resources to help with hearing screening and follow-up.

Other News

For more information about what's happening in DEL, check out the monthly [DEL newsletter](#).

Contact Information

If you have suggestions for future newsletter topics or feedback/questions regarding any of the HSSCO's activities, please send those thoughts along to Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer at Jennifer.jennings-shaffer@del.wa.gov. We would love to hear from you!