

**Updates from the Head Start State
Collaboration Office
February 2013**



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.

HSSCO Office Staffing Changes

Last month, April (Ritter) Messenger joined our office as the new Project Coordinator, the position formerly held by Kaelyn Bristol. April brings a wealth of experience to this role including her work with the Parent Ambassadors, with the League of Education Voters, a Head Start staff member and as a former Head Start Parent. Please join us in welcoming April to her new role!

Unsung heroes!

This month Strengthening Families Washington in partnership with Seattle's Child is naming one parent each day as an Unsung Hero in recognition of Parent Appreciation month. There were many nominees and we are proud to announce that five Head Start parents were chosen. Congratulations!

- **Curtis Treadwell;** Spokane Valley
- **Victoria Hilt;** Bremerton
- **John Calvin Jones;** Tacoma
- **Christena Evans;** Spokane
- **Alicia Jennings;** Bremerton

DEL is posting the Unsung Heroes each day on its [Facebook page](#) and on its [Twitter page](#).

Early Achievers, Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System

Early Achievers expanded into seven more Washington counties on Jan. 1. Now, more than 80 percent of child care providers in the state may participate in Early Achievers. Providers in the remaining counties will be eligible to participate in Early Achievers on July 1. There are currently more than 900 child care providers and programs participating in Early Achievers.

DEL developed a 30-second public service announcement about Early Achievers. Listen to the PSA [here](#). You can also watch Early Achievers videos posted on DEL's YouTube:

- [Early Achievers for Parents](#)
- [Early Achievers for Child Care and Early Learning Professionals](#)
- [Early Achievers for Stakeholders](#)

Head Start/ECEAP Early Achievers Pilot Update

In July 2012, DEL launched a pilot of a small group of Head Start and ECEAP grantees/contractors to participate in Early Achievers. The purpose of the pilot is to test and refine policies and procedures that encourage participation in Head Start and ECEAP participation in Early Achievers, including opportunities for HS/ECEAP to become training resource centers. DEL will have final evaluation data from UW in March.

In the meantime, DEL is working to develop draft reciprocity recommendations for discussion internally and with partners, including pilot participants. While many aspects of reciprocity will not be finalized until after the ratings are available, other aspects such as modifying Early Achievers to accommodate Head Start/ECEAP's grantee/contractor-based operating structure are under way. ECEAP and Head Start contractors/grantees that are not involved in the pilot will be eligible to participate in Early Achievers in late spring.

Fall WaKIDS Data Released

OSPI, DEL and Thrive by Five Washington released the baseline kindergarten entry assessment data on January 17. The data from the whole child assessment component of WaKIDS shows a wide range of abilities and skills of children entering kindergarten. There are three interactive reports available on the [WaKIDS website](#). You can filter the data by school district and child demographics. The data can help teachers individualize instruction and can act as a catalyst for conversations in the early learning collaboration component of WaKIDS.

Advancing Racial Equity in Early Learning

Over the last several months, Thrive by Five Washington (Thrive) 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 [Washington Early Learning Plan](#). The theory of change will be a tool to guide conversations at 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 11 in Seattle and was focused on the final steps of development for the theory of change and rolling out the work. Next is a public meeting of the work group on February 14. Thrive will share some initial ideas for how to operationalize this work and the group will work on a fuller plan that be brought to the large stakeholder meeting in March. At the March meeting, time will also be spent on learning and practice to support the leadership development (knowledge, skills and confidence) of us as individuals and a larger community to ensure that our work in early learning advances the ideas and concepts mapped out in the RETOC.

To attend or get more information, please contact Dan Torres at dan@thrivebyfivewa.org.

ELAC

The Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) met on January 28. Topics included updates from DEL on Race to the Top, legislative session and recommendations from the Birth to Three Subcommittee; updates from agency partners; WaKIDS; the State-and-Local Coordination Project; and progress in the Infant/Toddler Regions. Materials will be posted on the [ELAC meeting webpage](#). The next ELAC meeting is April 8.

MERIT Incentives

The Department of Early Learning is excited to encourage and support professional development through the **Washington State Career Lattice for Early Care & Education and School-Age Care Professionals**. You can use the Career Lattice as a professional development tool to plan your career in early learning, including training and educational goals. Made available through the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant, early care and education and school-age professionals placed on the Career Lattice are able to request monetary awards as recognition of their education, employment and training accomplishments. [View more information](#), including how to apply.

Lead Care II Loaner Program

The Washington State Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program loans Lead Care II portable blood lead analyzers and testing supplies to Head Starts to conduct lead testing using the capillary blood draw method. There is no cost to use the analyzer. Testing supplies are limited to 500 test kits while supplies last. Additional testing supplies are available for purchase. Due to high demand, analyzers are loaned for one month at a time. Only licensed health care professionals may perform blood lead testing. If you do not have access to a nurse or other licensed health care provider, the program may be able to assist in finding someone in your area who can help with screenings.

For more information, please contact the [Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program](#) at 360-236-4280 or toll free at 1-800-909-9898.

Flu Resources

The Washington State Department of Health reported last week widespread flu activity in Washington. People are catching and spreading the flu in most areas of the state. Influenza A (H3N2) is circulating most and is associated with more hospitalizations and deaths. **People who haven't been vaccinated are encouraged to do so now** and to continue using good health practices like frequent hand-washing, covering coughs, and staying home and away from others when sick. For more information, visit the [DOH Flu News webpage](#) or DOH on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

Use the [HealthMap Flu Vaccine Finder](#) to find a flu clinic near you.

WSA Winter Association Meeting & Advocacy Day

The WSA Winter Meeting is March 12-14 in Olympia, with advocacy day on the March 13. View [registration information](#); or contact Katy Warren by [email](#) or phone at 425.453.1227.

The Infant and Early Childhood Conference to be held May 1-3 in Tacoma

[The Infant and Early Childhood Conference](#) provides high-quality training opportunities for Washington early learning professionals. This year's event is three full days—Wednesday through Friday—at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center and will offer more than 125 sessions featuring local, regional and national speakers. Participants may earn up to 24 CLOCK HOURS or STARS credits. Parents and child care providers may be eligible for a scholarship to attend.

Funding Opportunity: Connecting Kids to Coverage Outreach and Enrollment Grants

On Jan. 7, 2013, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a solicitation for proposals for [Connecting Kids to Coverage Outreach and Enrollment Grants](#). Funded by the Affordable Care Act, these grants will continue efforts to find and enroll eligible children in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). A total of \$32 million is available for states, local

governments, and community-based and nonprofit organizations. Grants are expected to range from \$250,000 to \$1 million over two years, beginning June 1, 2013 and ending May 31, 2015. Native American health care providers and tribal entities may apply. In addition, a separate funding opportunity exclusively for Native American health care providers and tribal entities will be made available for outreach and enrollment grants at a later time.

This round of grants will support outreach strategies in the following areas:

- Engaging schools in outreach, enrollment, and retention activities.
- Bridging health coverage disparities by reaching out to subgroups of children that exhibit lower than average health coverage rates.
- Designing and executing targeted enrollment strategies to streamline health coverage enrollment for individuals participating in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program, or other public benefit programs.
- Establishing and developing application assistance resources to provide high-quality, reliable Medicaid and CHIP enrollment and renewal services in local communities.
- Conducting training programs to equip communities to help families understand the new application and enrollment system and to deliver effective assistance to families with children eligible for Medicaid and CHIP.

Proposals must be submitted by Feb. 21 and the grant award notification is expected on June 1. View the [full solicitation and application instructions](#).

Other news

For more information about what's happening in DEL, check out the [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 to April Messenger at 360.725.3517 or April.Ritter@del.wa.gov. We would love to hear from you!