

ECEAP Expansion Think Tank September 19, 2017 Meeting Summary

This paper summarizes DEL updates and Think Tank member input at the September 19, 2017 ECEAP Expansion Think Tank meeting.

I. Luncheon Discussion Ideas

A number of Think Tank and Contracting Work Group colleagues met together for a working lunch to discuss ways to achieve statewide coverage as ECEAP expands to entitlement (to serve all eligible children by 2023). The following ideas were suggested:

- A. *Region-wide approach.*
 1. Utilize a community planning and mobilization approach. This could help create grassroots community demand. Non-state funds could be used to fund “gray-area kids” (slightly over-income or just shy of eligibility requirements based on other risk-factors). These funds might be generated could come through SB 5107 partnerships from local community foundations or from schools.
 2. Bundle birth to five funds within a community so that the community can deploy funds in a way that is the most effective and efficient for each community.
- B. *Flexible delivery methods.*
 1. Provide more flexibility in delivery modes (e.g., home-based with socialization like Early Head Start), especially in rural and remote areas, as “some preschool” is better for kids than “no preschool”. Have this be guided by the *Community Self-Assessment*. We would need changes to the *Community Self-Assessment* form to collect more of the information needed for these approaches.
 2. Provide mobile preschool for rural and remote areas. (Dominique Alex will send the plan that her team developed at the UW P-3 leadership working session.)
- C. *Braided staff resources and funding.*
 1. Braid ECEAP and SPED staff resources and funds within a district SPED classroom as ESD 113 does. Both ESD 113 ECEAP and the district SPED teachers work together in the same classroom. This also allows both teachers to learn from each other.
- D. *Differential Rates.*
 1. Consider differential rates by region or possibly other factors. This could make it possible for more child care providers, schools and other types of organizations to provide ECEAP.

II. UPDATES

- A. Kelli Bohanon shared the following DEL updates.
 1. *Survey.* DEL will do a survey of all ECEAP contractors asking about interest in additional slots in the near future.
 - a. Some of this year’s 800 slots were not accepted (45) due to, timing of slots offered, inability to take a smaller offer of slots, and schedule conflicts.
 2. *Upcoming RFA.* DEL plans to issue an RFA for 1,000 slots of all three models in the late Fall.
 3. *Exception Requests.* DEL is receiving a large number of exception requests from contractors (SPED/over-income, delayed start dates, etc.).
 4. *Decision Packages.* The state is now developing its next budget. DEL is working on 11 decision packages across the agency. Two relate to ECEAP. (1) Restore the \$1.2M cut from the budget. (2) Seek increase of DEL’s existing ECEAP administrative rate.
 - i. Other requests include:
 - a. An increased rate for Early Achiever’s level 3-tiered reimbursement
 - b. More scholarship dollars
 - c. More HVSA funds
 - d. An increased subsidy rate for infant toddler care
 - e. Continued/maintenance funding for ECLIPSE (previously Medicaid Treatment Child Care) which serves children 0-5 years old who are at risk of child abuse and neglect and may also be experiencing mental health and/or behavioral issues)

- The Eclipse program is now offered by only two agencies. Think Tank members suggested many more children need this service and it could be provided by ECEAP contractors.
- 5. *DEL Transition Reorganization*. There are changes in the DEL team organization as it prepares to transition to DCYF. As part of this, Nicole Rose (who manages the Quality Practice and Professional Growth Division which includes ECEAP) now also manages the subsidy program, a major new undertaking.
- B. Garrison Kurtz offered updates from the Contracting Work Group. (Note: Updates below are expanded from the original updates.)
 1. DEL contracting process changes are underway
 2. DEL is exploring how to best perform the potentially “regionalized” functions
 3. The Work Group is considering “required” thresholds for contractor and subcontractor capacities and their implications
 4. The Work Group is considering “funding pass-through guidance” to ensure equitable funding for functions negotiated between the contractor and subcontractor
 5. The Work Group is exploring regional agreements and support from DEL that will be needed to ensure statewide coverage at entitlement

III. Assessment of Pre-K Quality Results and Next Steps

DEL’s Karin Ganz who leads the *Pre-K Assessment* work led this presentation and discussion. She began by describing the multi-year Partnership for Pre-K Improvement initiative overseen by the Ounce of Prevention Fund. The Partnership includes a three-year grant and peer learning between Washington and three other states (Arkansas, Tennessee and Oregon), and with the Ounce. The Partnership also has a learning objective which is to create case studies about the statewide infrastructure (data collection, continuous quality improvement, etc.) needed to boost quality and child outcomes. Karin then described the *Self-Assessment*, which includes indicators based on research about the essential elements of high-quality pre-k programs that result in improved kindergarten readiness and greater academic success.

Karin next described the process for completing the *Self-Assessment*, extending appreciation to the core team (representatives from early learning, OSPI, K-12 and advocacy organizations) and noting that surveys of directors (20 responses) and of teachers (129 teachers) were used to populate the assessment.

Teacher Survey Highlights

- Teachers noted that the area where they would most like additional training and support was around children with special needs, including challenging behaviors.
- Most teachers attended most of their training at their contractor locations. The second most frequent location was at ESDs.
- 70% now participate in observation and feedback.

Director Survey Highlights

- Most contractors use multiple instructional leaders in multiple positions.
- Most programs engage in multiple quality improvement practices quarterly or more often.
- Almost all respondents said that they provide job-embedded professional learning (JEPL) for direct service staff. Most provide JEPL for teachers and some provide it for family support staff. Fewer provided it for center directors, program managers, coaches, health staff, instructional leaders and administrative staff.

Areas of Strength

Karin noted that the preliminary *Self-Assessment* results found the following areas of strength:

- Professional development provider qualifications
- Curriculum & assessment requirements
- Information in DEL data systems
- Quality assessment
- Contractor CQI
- Comprehensive services and family engagement
- Family access and outreach

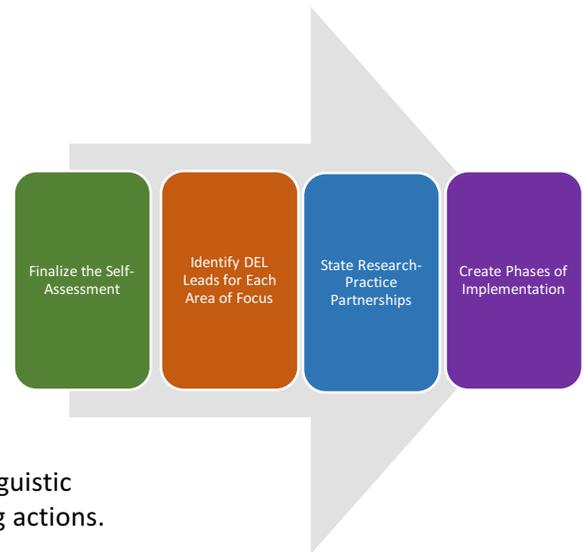
- Teaching quality
- Child outcomes

Areas for Growth

Karin noted that the preliminary *Self-Assessment* results found the following opportunities for growth.

- Instructional leadership/professional learning system
- Cultural competency/dual language learners
- Support for children with special needs in inclusive settings
- Data collection and analysis
- Educational requirements/scholarships/compensation parity

Karin noted the next steps to the right. She also shared that Washington is far ahead of the other three states in the Partnership (Arkansas, Tennessee and Oregon) in completing the *Assessment*. The full group asked DEL to keep racial equity and linguistic equity closely in mind when interpreting results and implementing actions.



Please see meeting PowerPoint slides 7-17 for more information.

IV. Input on OSPI's School District Preschool & Birth-3 Services Survey

OSPI's Karma Hugo shared OSPI's plans to conduct a survey of school districts about their early learning activities. The survey is planned for early November 2017. Karma asked the Think Tank for input about what members wanted to know about district early learning programs and activities. She noted that OSPI would like to use the survey to track change over time about district's engagement with early learning and their use of ESSA funds for early learning. She brought and collected worksheets for individuals to offer their ideas. The full group offered these ideas.

1. Collect information about programs operated by districts and about those in district facilities operated by others.
2. Add instructions for different types of providers (e.g., ESD's who will have to check with districts about their B-3 services).
3. Note that the Rural Alliance recently completed a similar survey (Sandra Szambelan will send to Karma.)
4. Consider asking about early learning partnerships. For example, for joint professional development.
5. Since the survey will be going to a wide range of people, consider testing the survey tool before conducting the full survey.
6. It would be helpful to learn about compensation by position.
7. Consider perhaps asking different questions on annual and periodic surveys.
8. Add community and technical colleges and public health districts to the list of those surveyed.

It was also recognized that a very long survey will reduce response rates, so questions should be chosen carefully.

Please see meeting PowerPoint slide 18 for more information.

V. Readiness Pathways for Different Types of Providers

Developing ways to help potential new providers determine if ECEAP is a good fit for their organization, submit a strong proposal, and prepare to deliver high-quality ECEAP services is essential to ECEAP expansion. Provider types include child care centers, family child care homes, school districts, and rural and remote providers. Bea Kelleigh appreciated Think Tank members and others who participated in small groups that developed the draft pathways. She then asked Think Tank members to divide into small groups by interest areas to review the draft readiness pathways and share ideas and advice about how to strengthen them.

The full group highlights are below, followed by detailed advice from each small group.

- A. Rural and Remote Pathway. Revive the home-based model (e.g., home-based Early Head Start) and include online resources and "play and learn" groups for socialization.

- B. Child Care Centers. Change the pathway to becoming an EA Level 4. The Level 3 range is too large. Compare initial ratings to re-ratings trends. It is even more difficult.
- C. K-12. Identify and promote school district superintendents as champions and mentors. Differentiate the licensing requirements for school districts.

Please also see the **Summary of Small Group Readiness Pathway and Early Action ideas and advice on Page 5.**

VI. Expansion Action Plan

The *Enable Readiness and Expansion Action Plan* has been extended to 2022-2023 to align with the extended date for when ECEAP will become an entitlement program (per 2017 legislative action).

- A. 3b- (Refine definition of entitlement). Describe and clarify meaning.
- B. Change eligibility (See *Integrate Policy and Programs Action Plan*)
 1. The minimum wage impact is now included in the Caseload Forecast Council June 2017 forecast. Per a literature review, it assumes “that a 10% increase in the minimum wage will result in a 1.5% reduction of the population eligible for the ECEAP program.”
 2. Increase the focus on slightly over-income children.
 3. Consider indexing of income (weighing variations by region or county, perhaps compared to livable wage for each area).
- C. Slot type flexibility is important. (State Budget provisos specifying the exact number of slots for each model contributed to the \$1.2 M underspend.)
- D. Add, or hold more discussion about, factors to be included in the enhanced projection approach (provider readiness, access to facilities, upcoming changes to local economies such as new employers or closure of a major source of employment, etc.)
- E. Add: Change Early Achievers (EA) for those parts most associated with future ECEAP provision. (The very wide spread from 30-69 points for Level 3 is an issue.)
- F. Providers need more time to reach a EA Level 4
- G. Better coordination and more coordinated schedules between ECEAP and CCA around training and coaching would be useful.
- H. Consider differential rates by region for dually-funded programs.

VII. Questions about DCYF

- WSA asked about family and staff focus groups concerning DCYF organization.

VIII. Meeting Evaluation

The meeting was productive, but the participation was not as large as other meetings. So, Think Tank members were asked for ideas about improving turnout. Suggestions include the following:

- Starting earlier
- Shorten the meetings so that it doesn't take so much time
- Lengthening the meetings to allow more time for deep discussions.
- Consider using Skype technology so that folks could participate without having to travel.
- Add FCCH and parent representation

It was also noted that the ECEAP year is just starting, so it is a particularly busy time for folks. Two people were also caught in the Alaska Airlines flight cancellations.

IX. Next Steps

- A. The next meeting will start at 9 am.
- B. We will do a Doodle poll to set November and January meeting times.
- C. The timeline for the *Expansion Plan* will be extended. The Think Tank will have an opportunity for final comments on the 2017-18 plan at the November meeting.
- D. DEL will make decisions about the early readiness actions and the DEL expansion team will go to work on the agreed upon actions.

ECEAP Readiness Pathways and Early Actions by Provider Type

Think Tank members divided into small groups to provide advice on the draft readiness pathways for child care centers, family child care homes, K-12 and rural and remote providers. Each group considered the questions below, keeping the *ECEAP Expansion Guiding Principles* in mind. Think Tank ideas and advice for each provider type are noted below. Numbers refer to numbers in the Readiness Pathways. No group worked on the Family Child Care Home Pathway.

Readiness Pathway Questions		Early Actions Questions	
Are the variations and supports suggested for your pathway on target? Do you see anything that is missing or is not needed?		Do you have any changes or additions to the suggested early actions that you think are doable within the next six months?	
Child Care Center Readiness Pathways		Child Care Center Early Actions	
Location	Comment	Location	Comment
A1a.	<u>Eligibility</u> . Increase eligibility income levels to 200%.	1.a	<u>Early Achievers Ratings</u> . Allow child care centers with an EA rating of 3 to participate in ECEAP. (Note: Requirement to achieve an EA rating of level 4 is in state statute.)
A1c.	<u>Early Achievers Ratings</u> . i. Consider how to allow child care centers with an EA rating of 3 to participate in ECEAP. Align/strengthen communication between contractor support to child care partners and Early Achievers coaches. (Note: Requirement to achieve an EA rating of level 4 is in state statute.)	1.c.	<u>Eligibility</u> . Increase eligibility income levels to 200%.
A2m.	<u>Business Model Examples</u> . It is good that this calls out providing business model examples.		
A2n.	<u>Exploring with Peers</u> . i. Can incentives to provide peer support be provided to existing ECEAP programs? ii. How will potential providers find these peers? How will they be connected?	A2n.	<u>Exploring with Peers</u> . i. Can incentives to provide peer support be provided to existing ECEAP programs? (Time way from one's own program is a challenge.)
B2j.	<u>Substitutes</u> . Use of substitutes raises a host of questions about implementation and the challenges of having someone unfamiliar in the classroom.		
		Overarching	It is super important to articulate the actions that will require policy change and/or additional funds so that we don't lose sight of them. Focusing first on early actions that don't require policy change and financial resources is great, but we often stop there. Could mapping this out be a short-term action?
K-12 Readiness Pathway		K-12 Readiness Early Actions	
A1c.	<u>Alignment</u> . Consider developing a school-based ECEAP model that aligns ECEAP and K-12 expectations.		
2Ah.	<u>Communication and Outreach</u> . Identify champion superintendents who can carry messages (This will also help with A2o, A3q, A3s, A3u).		
Rural and Remote Pathway		Rural and Remote Early Actions	
A1f.	<u>Model Adaptations</u> . i. Develop a home-based model and link it with Kaleidoscope Play and Learn for socialization and online resources similar to home-based Early Head Start. ii. Develop a combination of a mobile preschool unit for fair weather months and Skype resources for bad weather months.	A1a	<u>Eligibility</u> . Allow just adopted children who are over-income to remain eligible. (Note: This request will need to be clarified and related policy issues will need to be explored further.)
A1j.	<u>Facilities</u> . Consider low-interest loans for FCCH's in rural areas.		
ADD:	<u>Transportation</u> . Explore ways to make transportation available for part-day ECEAP in rural kindergarten classrooms.	ADD	<u>Weighted RFA Ratings</u> . Set a method for weighting applications for service to rural and remote areas in RFA process.
		ADD	<u>Director Waivers</u> . Allow waivers for qualified center directors to oversee several sites under the aligned WACs (vs. current 51% of time on site). Can the lead teacher help to meet the WAC requirements?