

**ECEAP Expansion Think Tank**  
**December 4, 2017, Meeting Summary**  
 Red Lion Sea Tac location, 9 – Noon

### **Welcome and Meeting Overview**

Kelli Bohanon welcomed Think Tank members and expressed her appreciation for devoting their time to the Think Tank's work. Bea reviewed the Think Tank charge and norms.

The meeting focused on the following topics:

- I. Updates from DEL
- II. ECEAP Expansion Communication Plan
- III. Assessment of family needs for ECEAP models
- IV. Potential ECEAP model adaptations
- V. K-12 (P-12) ECEAP pathway.

### **I. Updates from DEL**

#### **A. Upcoming ECEAP RFA process**

1. DEL surveyed current contractors about their interest and capacity to add more ECEAP slots. Results: Current contractors are interested in an additional 1,800 slots.
2. DEL will publicize the upcoming RFA process broadly.
3. The RFA will be released this winter (likely between mid-December and early January).

#### **B. Child Care Pathways**

1. The Indian Policy Early Learning (IPEL) committee has agreed to work with DEL to develop a Tribal Readiness Pathway.

#### **C. Update on Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)**

1. The focus to date has been on needed infrastructure changes.
2. DCYF is now focusing on shaping the mission for the new department. Secretary Hunter is engaging DEL, Children's Administration and Juvenile Justice staff in shaping this mission, and asking for public input from across the state.
3. Kelli noted that the new department was not established as a cost saving measure.

### **II. ECEAP Expansion Communications**

Bea Kelleigh provided an overview of the *Draft ECEAP Expansion Communications Plan*. She asked the Think Tank for feedback and to establish a communications work group.

**A. COMMENTS ON THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.** The Think Tank worked in small groups to provide feedback on each audience section of the draft plan. Summaries of small group report-outs to the full group are below, followed by the notes in each small group's worksheets.

1. **Current ECEAP Partners:** The Work Group said that it is important to ensure that there are feedback loops to share results with and appreciation to the partners from whom information is gathered. The group highlighted the existing coalitions and the monthly call with ECEAP directors as ways to leverage existing channels for communication.

#### *Worksheet Information*

- a. Objectives
  - i. Strategic Questions: Include "what is working well?" and "what can be improved?"
  - ii. Taking Action: What does it mean to fulfill their role successfully? Can we define the role of the provider for them to be able to see what success means?

- b. Strategies
    - i. We need to make sure that there are feedback loops to the people/organizations that are surveyed.
    - ii. The website can be a conduit for consistent communication.
  - c. Channels
    - i. Is there a role for the coalition in this process? If so, how can we ensure that messages delivered through the coalitions are consistent so everyone receives the same information?
  - d. Tools
    - i. Surveys were voted as the highest priority with a required feedback loop for results and appreciation for those that completed the surveys.
    - ii. Monthly calls with providers/contractors is an effective tool (consider leveraging existing or implementing a call with a specific focus on communication to ECEAP directors or define the audience as seen fit to deliver consistent messaging).
    - iii. The website can be a consistent way of delivering the same information to everyone. However, there needs to be a way to highlight new information. The frequency of other forms of communication can vary depending on the what is happening. It was suggested to start with every other month.
2. **ECEAP Families:** Include a role for family advocacy. Increase web-based self-serve access to updates and information about ECEAP expansion. Consider establishing a campaign focused on why eligible families should engage in ECEAP.

*Worksheet Information*

- a. Audience
  - i. ECEAP families have diverse languages, diverse ideas about parental and preschool roles, many points of entry to gain information, diverse need for different preschool models. Interest in particular locations/models is based on convenience, location and child needs. Many families do not know about ECEAP at all.
- b. Objectives
  - i. Add and prioritize: Share anticipated needs (enroll/sign up at birth/WIC/Medicaid) online for better forecast and match.
  - ii. Add and prioritize: Engage families in advocacy.
- c. Strategies
  - i. Add and prioritize: Recruit families to ELAA and other advocacy efforts and groups.
  - ii. We need a public relations campaign to bring more families to ECEAP.
  - iii. We need an easier path to enroll in ECEAP – shared registration/enrollment.
- d. Channels
  - i. The highest priority channels are social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), self-serve online portals, and the CCA WA resource line.
- e. Tools
  - i. Provide more self-serve online options.

*Other notes:* The minimum wage increase makes families fall out of eligibility even though it is not a pay raise because cost of living goes up

3. **Potential Contractors/Partners:** Videos of success stories and materials focused on key things that make partners successful in their work and in contracting with DEL were highlighted as examples of successful communication mechanisms.

*Worksheet Information*

- a. Objectives
    - i. Ensuring that all actions and strategies are accessible to a range of provider types may require different approaches for different types of providers.
    - ii. Clarify “readiness assessment.” What is it? We need to make sure that messaging is clear for providers.
  - b. Strategies
    - i. Share success stories for different types of providers.
    - ii. We need coaches and licensors involved in recruitment and information sharing.
  - c. Channels
    - i. Designate folks that can serve as a mentor to providers in the field (of same and different provider types).
  - d. Tools
    - i. In the “Do you want to be an ECEAP provider?” on the website, include a wide array of items: videos of success stories; messages about challenges to expect and possible barriers. Include: “What do I need to learn to be successful?” and FAQs.
    - ii. Continue to focus on clarity in messaging with a focus on multiple provider types.
4. **Community Leaders/Elected Officials:** The communication plan needs to highlight what needs to be addressed to successfully move forward. Elected officials need to see, quickly, what items they need to prioritize if they want this work to continue to move forward.

*Worksheet Information*

- a. Objectives
  - i. To more effectively engage community and elected officials.
- b. Strategies
  - i. The Expansion Plan needs an executive summary.
  - ii. We need talking points, pull-out graphics to use in advocacy presentations; information to counter the fade-out argument; cost saving data.
  - iii. Need coordination around data and strategy between advocates and DEL, with a specific focus on the rationale for slot expansion: how much, how fast.
- c. Channels
  - i. Coordinate with existing channels: Early Learning Action Alliance, Excellent Schools Now, etc.
  - ii. Connect families with appropriate places to advocate for ECEAP leadership development.
- d. Tools
  - i. ERDC data; Ready Nation data distillation; social media. Use these to tell the story and frame the data.

*Other Notes:* The communication plan needs to point to a larger vision for ECEAP. We don’t need a recommendation but leave space for a vision for the future. Encourage development of regional differentiated ECEAP rates for slots, and of a regional differentiated family eligibility model.

5. **Potential Workforce:** The real challenge in finding staff. Successful tools for engaging current and potential workforce members are items that leverage inspiration. Videos and blogs and other social media platforms some of the small group members have been used successfully with this audience.

*Worksheet Information*

- a. Objectives
  - i. To find new/more qualified people to work in the field.
  - ii. To attract more entry-level people to the field.
- b. Strategies
  - i. Develop a recruitment campaign to entice more teachers to ECEAP. (Use social media and web-based strategies.)
  - ii. Strengthen partnerships with EC teacher prep councils, and community colleges and universities (WSU – Jeanne Pittman).
  - iii. Provide incentives to people who might be interested in entering the field. Consider: Conditional loan strategies (or loan forgiveness; teacher retooling funds in K-12 (P-12). Advertise benefits to potential teachers (conditional loans) – “Early Achievers will earn money for teachers to continue their education.”
- c. Channels
  - i. Inform recruitment by doing exit surveys with teachers leaving the field.
  - ii. Create videos to share with potential ECEAP professionals. Sally Holloway, Whatcom, has already contracted with someone to create videos for conditional loan or loan forgiveness strategies. We should follow-up with her!
- d. Tools
  - i. Use videos to inspire potential teachers on the benefits/values of Early Achievers. Create a campaign to reengage those that have left the workforce (leverage exit survey, if implemented).
  - ii. Present a clear and affordable pathway to employment.
  - iii. Use Early Achievers as a hiring tool – after 6 months provide a funded avenue to return to school “campaign” (conditional loan).
  - iv. Provide avenue for communication between center directors and the community.

**B. ECEAP Expansion Communications Work Group**

1. The group voted to approve the formation of a Communications Work Group with the following charge:

*Provide advice on communication plans and tools to:*

- *Keep DEL, DCYF, ECEAP contractors, partners, families and community leaders up-to-date and informed about ECEAP expansion.*
  - *Encourage participation in expansion opportunities that fit the intended audiences.*
2. Targeted, advocacy-focused communication should be done separately from this communication work group.
  3. Members who volunteered for the Work Group are: Lauren Hipp, Molly O’Connor, Karma Hugo, Karen Rutherford; Krissy Kim will work to identify a designee.
  4. Members were invited to suggest others who would make good contributions to ECEAP expansion communications work. DEL will identify members.

### III. Assessment of Family Needs for ECEAP Models

DEL plans to conduct an Assessment of Family Needs – both overall and for ECEAP – and asked Think Tank members for questions to ask families that can help DEL identify the right balance of slots of each model type, and other information to identify models that fit family needs and contribute to high attainment of child outcomes.

Members suggested that the following questions/topics be asked of ECEAP-eligible families:

- A. What **length of time per day** do you want your child engaged an early learning program? (Note: This answer can vary depending on the child’s age, whether a parent is at home full-time, or whether there are other siblings in the home.)
- B. Ask about the **family’s “wants”** rather than their “needs” (e.g., What length of time do you *want* your child in an ECEAP program?).
- C. Explore **why eligible families are not enrolling**. Ask in a way that is not guilt/shame inducing, such as: “Do you know of families that are not enrolling their children in ECEAP? If so, would you know why they are not?” (Initial thoughts are: transportation, availability, and lack of awareness.)
- D. Are there **other children in the home**? How does that impact your decisions about ECEAP enrollment? (Note that some classrooms have limitation issues with siblings being enrolled in the same class.)
- E. Ensure that there are **cultural and linguistic matching** processes as part of connecting families to ECEAP.
- F. **Parent engagement**: How important is it for you that your child’s ECEAP program prioritizes parent engagement or has a family engagement specialist?
- G. **Outcomes**: How important is a high outcome/high achieving early education program for your family? (Gets at possible variations in parent beliefs/values in early education.)

### IV. Potential ECEAP Model Adaptations to Meet Legislatively-Mandated Timeline

The Think Tank discussed the model adaptations needed to make ECEAP expansion a success. Three areas were highlighted where feedback is needed: **(1) rural and remote settings; (2) improvements in child outcomes and choice; and (3) actions when nearby sites are full**. The Think Tank divided into small groups to focus on these three areas. The following is a summary of the results.

- **Rural and Remote Settings**
  - Flexibility and local choice – The ability for communities to shift the kinds of slots available, for example, depending on the demand of local families.
  - Length of time – Programs should be flexible to vary the weeks/months the program operates depending on feedback from local families and providers.
  - Type – Flexibility to integrate home-based programs.

#### *Worksheet information for Rural and Remote Settings*

- 1.) Model Adaptation: Consider the unique needs of marginalized populations (Migrant/Seasonal workforce; tribal members; immigrant populations, etc.)
  - a. Benefits: Responsive to community needs; can increase outcomes for targeted populations.
  - b. Changes to standards that need to happen: More flexible around attendance; more funding for transportation; support for recruitment of qualified instructors; increases in income eligibility to adjust to the unique needs of a rural community; flexibility around the number of weeks a program would need to be operational (possibly look at moving to align with time when more migrant populations are present in rural communities); flexibility around

- EA standards; provide waivers for troubled communities or more flexibility to help them be successful; flexibility around “fill date” and calendar of services (e.g., Tribal April – October).
- c. Research: How have other rural communities addressed early learning standards?
- 2.) Model Adaptation: Multiple service types (mobile, outside, traditional, home-based)
    - a. Benefits: Help rural communities respond to the changing needs of their community.
    - b. Should be driven by the different populations that the providers are looking to serve (see model adaptation #1).

- **Child Outcomes and Choice**

- Income eligibility needs to be adjusted up (possibly aligned with the “Working Connections” income eligibility level).
- More supports for high needs students, such as: mentoring and PD for teachers; enriching models to pay attention to cultural and language variations and needs
- Leverage Medicaid funding to support high needs students and classrooms.

*Worksheet information for Child Outcomes & Choice*

- 1.) Model Adaptation: Raise income eligibility – different level/number of services at different income thresholds.
  - a. Changes to standard needed: Income eligibility
  - b. Research: Mixed income classrooms are more likely to achieve outcomes.
- 2.) Model Adaptation: More interventions/intensities (targeted 1:1 services).
  - a. Benefits: Provide high-needs students with services they need to be successful.
  - b. Changes to Standards: PD or coaching for behavioral support; different dosage options for kids “behavioral support team”; CTC preservice trainings to better equip teachers with strategies and tools; regionalization to customize program; dual language support; anti-bias PD/coaching; PD delivery model needs to shift with full-day & extended day – look at sub-pools.
- 3.) Model Adaptation: Mirror Head Start (where if there are more 3-yr-olds, there are less enrollments) to vary class/enrollment size. Factors that could trigger lower enrollments are: ACEs scores, age, multiple language needs, diagnosed ability challenges.
  - a. Benefits: Better able to support children with varying needs.
  - b. Changes to standards needed: Vary on class size dependent on population served and information (ACEs, etc.) gathered at entrance.

- **Full Sites Nearby**

- Phased-in models with some elements waived at entrance (prioritize requirements around safety and provide technical assistance with a timeline to meet other expectations) to incentivize more slots being available.

*Worksheet information for Full Sites Nearby*

- 1.) Model Adaptation: Phased in pathways model
  - a. Benefits: Could encourage more providers to join with a lower level of items that need to be in place right away.
  - b. Changes to standard needed: Provide waivers, with standards identified as critical to be in place at time of implementation, then create a schedule along with technical assistance opportunities for providers to get to full alignment within a certain time frame.
  - c. Research: Are there other “phased in” models being implemented across the country?

### **Model Adaptation Work Group Formation**

After the small groups reported, the Think Tank voted to form a work group to address model adaptation issues associated with ECEAP expansion. The participants that volunteered to be a part of the model adaptation work group were: *Sandra Szambelan, Sandra Nelson, Katy Warren, Karen Minnich, Matt Bona, Matthew Solomon, Kevin Rutherford, Talena Dixon, Mary Curry, Cynthia Juarez, Kristin Wiggins, Phoebe Anderson, Nancy Williams, and Kathy Schuknecht.*

### **V. K-12 (P-12) Pathway Work Group Formation**

The focus of this session was to highlight the need for a K-12 (P-12) pathways workgroup with a charge to provide advice on strategies to increase and sustain the number of high quality K-12 (P-12) providers. The expected time commitment is five to six meetings between now and June 2018. It was noted that currently, only 55% of ECEAP slots are provided by K-12 (P-12) providers. A comment was made that this work should be referred to as P-12, as the focus is not simply beginning at kindergarten. The framing of the K-12 pathways is in relation to how the formal schooling system self-identifies.

The Think Tank voted to form this Work Group. The following participants volunteered to be a part of this work group: *Alicia Brender, Krissy Kim, Cynthia, Juarez, Sandra Szambelan, Talena Dixon, Kevin Rutherford, Matthew Solomon, Katy Warren, and Matt Bona.*

*Note: The Think Tank group requested that membership for the K-12 Pathways work group be reviewed with the idea of adding both a successful and an unsuccessful K-12 provider to the group. Dovetailing will work with DEL and other Think Tank members to explore additional members.*

### **Wrap-up & Next Meeting**

The group discussed the length and start time of the meetings, and concluded that meetings should be 3 ½ hours long and begin at 9 am. **The next meeting be held from 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM in the week of January 22. Dovetailing will send a Doodle Poll to identify the date.**

There was a request that if a February meeting is required (instead of the typical every-other-month schedule), it take place online. Dovetailing will review this option with DEL depending on the results of the January meeting. There was also a request to schedule out the meetings for the remainder of 2018. Dovetailing will work with DEL to set these Think Tank meeting dates.

The group adjourned with a note of appreciation and well-wishing from Kelli to enjoy the end of December celebrations.