Think Tank Meeting Summary
March 30, 2017

This paper summarizes the proceedings and work of the first meeting of the ECEAP Expansion Think Tank.

A. Our Hopes for ECEAP Expansion

At this first meeting, Think Tank members shared an array of different but complementary visions for ECEAP expansion. In response to the question *"What do we want to be different when ECEAP is expanded to an entitlement program and all eligible children can be served?",* members shared the following hopes:

1. We will have a strong next generation of leaders
2. The opportunity gap will be closed***
3. There are choices for parents that address the diversity of children and family needs****
4. There are significant advances for children and professionals*
5. We will have universal preschool
6. There is a level playing field for kids
7. There will be a greater awareness of the value of ECEAP**
8. ECEAP will be integrated with other services and ecosystems***
9. We will see the ripples that result from our actions
10. There are some peaceful moments for leaders and communities*
11. There is smooth sailing and a clear path for ECEAP expansion**
12. We work together to reach our goals*
13. We will take a community-based service approach
14. We will take some risks and accelerate the benefits of ECEAP
15. We leave an indelible mark for children that leads to their success and joy**
16. We use our best research in designing ECEAP expansion plans
17. We will use both a near-term and long-term focus to chart our path**
18. We will reflect upon and build upon our history***
19. We will proceed with determination and advocacy on behalf of children and families***
20. ECEAP will be sustainable

Note: "" denotes hopes offered by more than one person.*

B. Setting the Context

1. Nicole Rose and Kelli Bohanon set the stage, recognizing that DEL has invited people with different backgrounds and perspectives to be part of the Think Tank. They:
   a. Introduced Dovetailing's Bea Kelleigh and Garrison Kurtz as the Strategy Leads for ECEAP expansion, noting that Bea will be the lead for the Think Tank and Garrison will be the lead for the Contracting Work Group.
   b. Described the ECEAP Expansion Think Tank's roles:
      i. Provide insights and advice about obstacles to becoming an ECEAP provider and how to overcome them.
      ii. Serve as a venue to explore potential changes to ECEAP processes that can support expansion of high-quality ECEAP services along the legislatively-mandated timeline.
   c. Presented information and context about ECEAP and ECEAP expansion using the PowerPoint presentation attached to this *Meeting Summary*.
      i. Think Tank members noted that the changes in minimum wage will increase slot rates and reduce the number of families who will be eligible. Members encouraged that:
         ▪ DEL explore the cascade effect of increasing minimum wage leading to higher pay for staff.

- Data about the relationship between changes in minimum wage, model cost of models and family choice of models be analyzed and shared. (NOTE: DEL just completed a survey of the impact of minimum wage on Click this link for DEL's recent survey of licensed child care providers on this issue: *Provider Minimum Wage Impact Survey*.)

C. **Setting Our Norms and Voting Method**

Think Tank members agreed to set the following group norms and voting method

1. **Norms** - We commit to listening to understand, learning from each other, sharing openly and speaking constructively in all matters, even when disagreeing.
2. **Voting Method** - Members use their "thumbs" to indicate their position
   - Thumbs Up - Means agreement
   - Thumbs Sideways - Means can live with it, and can support it publicly and privately
   - Thumbs Down - Means do not agree/cannot accept this proposal

D. **Shaping Principles to Guide ECEAP Expansion**

Think Tank members discussed the following draft guiding principles and suggested the following changes and additional principles to consider.

Draft Principles	Your Ideas and Improvements
1. **90% Goal/Outcomes.** ECEAP will be expanded in ways that make the largest possible contribution to meeting DEL's goal of "90% of children are ready for kindergarten by 2020 with race and family income no longer predicting success." This means we need to: a. Amplify program quality and continuous quality improvement while expanding slots. b. Continue to deliver comprehensive education, health and family services necessary to improve child outcomes, family stability and family engagement in children's learning.	a. Consider adding transportation for isolated/ immigrant families. b. Add capital funding to improve environments. c. Change b. Continue to "improve upon" comprehensive services … d. Add: Improve upon accountability and flexibility with non-negotiables. e. Add: Collaborate with OSPI and ensure cross training with OSPI. f. Add: Build the capacity of the workforce to meet local community needs.
2. **Equity**. Children furthest from opportunity are prioritized and a racial equity lens informs ECEAP expansion policy, program and funding. This means we need to: a. Prioritize efforts with the greatest impact on closing opportunity gaps and removing barriers for children, families and professionals of color. b. Prioritize efforts to improve outcomes for children who are disadvantaged for other reasons such as children from low-income families and English language learners.	a. Move equity to #1. b. Consider whether transportation goes here. c. Add: Build a workforce that is culturally representative of the children and families that ECEAP serves. d. Add: Prioritize equitable pay for early childhood providers across settings (ECEAP, Head Start, child care, etc.).
3. **Access at Entitlement**. At entitlement, all families with eligible children will be able to access ECEAP. This means that we need to: a. Broaden the existing mixed-delivery settings and organizations that provide ECEAP. b. Strengthen the integration of the birth to 3rd grade early learning system as envisioned in our State's 10- year *Early Learning Plan*. c. Create pathways for populations and communities with unique characteristics. Examples include tribal entities and rural and remote communities. d. Create mechanisms to address shifts in population and	a. While broadening settings, acknowledge that centers with ECEAP slots keep their individuality and "specialness "to the families and communities they serve.

Draft Principles	Your Ideas and Improvements
changes in demand.	
4. **Partnership and Collaboration.** Promote cooperation and collaboration at the community-, contractor-, regional- and state-levels. This means we need to: a. Engage stakeholders in developing the vision and plans for ECEAP expansion. b. Build on current contractor and community expertise and capacity to support rapid and high-quality expansion. c. Value and encourage local in-kind and cash support, including facilities.	a. For a, add higher education as a key partner. b. Link with health care. c. Add: Build continuity within and among communities. d. Add: Ensure strong transitions and warm handoffs across the continuum of services.
Suggested New Principles 1. Workforce equity and capacity a. Include additions 2 d and e from above b. Skills and capacities to prepare children for school c. Build the capacity of the workforce to meet local community needs. 2. Ensure that efforts are well-resourced. (Keep resources at the forefront of all strategies. 3. Keep interdependencies in focus as we propose policy changes and recommendations. 4. Family choice- Keep children and families at the center. Some families might want part-day ECEAP.	

The following actions and observations/questions were offered as members discussed the draft guiding principles.

Suggested Actions

a. Recruitment. Use Kristie Kaurez's P-3 Think Tank model to connect with eligible families in the birth-to-5 age range. Look at eligibility, uptake and attendance together. Providing access to transportation will increase uptake and attendance.

b. Federal Policy. Consider how changes in federal immigration policy will affect eligible families and ECEAP uptake.

c. Equity. We need to be intentional about equity and cultural responsiveness. We need to determine what is our equity lens and what tools we will be able to use for our equity lens. Create and use a "Principles Score Sheet" to weight recommendations.

d. Communication and Value. We need to articulate the value and need for ECEAP expansion. We need a communication strategy and plan to change hearts and minds and engage the broader community.

e. Change. We need to consider change management issues. Build the capacity of agencies for change and to help their communities through these changes.

f. Comprehensive Services. Consider which parts of "comprehensive services" come first. If we build

one/some first are others compromised?

g. <u>R & R System</u>. We need to strengthen the resource and referral system
h. <u>Resources</u>. Consider how to secure resources for the rest of the system (e.g., pay enhancements for child care teachers).
i. <u>Unintended Consequences</u>. Be vigilant about unintended consequences.

<u>Observations and Questions</u>

a. <u>Trade-Offs</u>. There will be trade-offs in dosage vs. serving more families. Also in sequencing and political/fiscal viability. Elements outside our control will need to be considered.
b. <u>Workforce</u>. MERIT does not equal a qualified ECE workforce. Funds are needed for continuing education. Non-ECEAP teachers make less than ECEAP teachers. This is an equity issue.
c. <u>Communication</u>. Communication will be critical. We need to make sure we are not just preaching to the choir.
d. <u>Families</u>. This must be broad and flexible so that it works for all families.
e. <u>How We Move Forward.</u> It needs to honor our past and move forward with strength. Break the walls of competition across all levels of services and communities. Create a network approach where different agencies can provide different services with smooth cross-referrals.
f. <u>Use of the Principles.</u> Do the recommendations need to fit within all principles? They are interdependent.

E. Identifying and Scoping Issues: Barriers and Potential Solutions

In table conversations and report outs, Think Tank members identified key barriers and potential solutions to one of three large and time sensitive issues facing ECEAP expansion (from the *Preliminary ECEAP Expansion Issues for Think Tank Consideration):*

- Facilities Development and Improvement (C2)
- Provider Recruitment (C3)
- Eligibility Requirements (D1)

Members offered the following thoughts about the biggest barriers facing each of the three issues and the best ways to address these barriers.

Facilities	
Barriers	Best Ways to Address Barriers
1. Lack of funding	a. Support capital budget request with action to educate legislators about the need for capital funding. b. Work to include ECEAP classrooms in school bond requests. c. Allow preschool classrooms to be considered in state K-12 capital funding. d. Promote local opportunities to invest.
2. Lack of capital funding and investment for renovation of existing facilities	a. SB5107 (allows for provision of local and community funds for ECEAP slots) could help with this. b. Include local school districts to invest early c. Braid and blend funding d. Provide business coaching and management support e. Allow licensing space exceptions to align with other systems

Facilities	
Barriers	Best Ways to Address Barriers
3. Lack of local funding and community-wide buy-in	a. Local organizing and partnerships b. Diversifying funding and blending/braiding of funds c. SB 5107 with localized buy-in
4. Conflicting county, state, ECEAP and licensing building requirements	a. Contract with an agency that has the expertise to help those building facilities to navigate these building issues b. Alignment of conflicting requirements c. Smoother approval processes
5. Need for increased system-level collaboration and communication between OSPI and DEL in the understanding requirements and the differences between early childhood and K-12. For example, there can be 28 children in a kinder class but only 16-17 in ECEAP depending on the square footage	a. Collaboration between OSPI and DEL
6. District-level special education for 3-5 year olds may not be interested in incorporating ECEAP if the systems/standards are divergent and overly burdensome.	a. Align DEL and OSPI align systems and requirements under a P-3 systems umbrella
7. Licensing and ECEAP WAC's (WAC 170-100 (specifies ECEAP) requirements, and misalignment. There are few spaces in cities with adequate outdoor space. This makes siting/building almost impossible and raises costs	a. Exceptions for playground requirements in cities.
8. Equity- Districts and large organizations have more capacity to build and renovate. We need to level the playing field for child care providers and non-profits	a. Funding and financing incentives for smaller programs including a streamlined process from a small business perspective
9. Lack of facility development expertise	a. Building design consultant b. Business coaching for providers c. Cost allocation and fiscal education and support
10. Some do not see the value of improving facilities. For those who do it can be almost impossible to navigate	a. Collaborate with partners about the benefits of renovating and improving facilities. b. Explore ways to do cost allocations without creating "haves" and "have nots."
11. Changing demand - What happens if a facility is built/improved and down the line the demand for services in that community decreases or the provider closes	
12. Ownership issues - What is the relationship between the state and the agency when the state invest partial funds in facilities?	a. Explore the option of having the state own and develop facilities so that ownership is constant even if the contractor changes.
13. Lack of transportation	

Additional Observations
1. We need to move forward with facilities very, very soon.
2. ECEAP is a strengths-based program based on a deficit based eligibility model.
3. Who will be eligible? Who will take ECEAP
4. Consider simplifying the ECEAP Standards.

Provider Recruitment	
Barriers	Best Ways to Address Barriers
1. WAC 170-100 (ECEAP WAC) and Licensing requirements	a. Start by aligning the standards across licensing and ECEAP b. SB 5107 with localized buy-in
2. Cost allocation and the inequity of pay between child care and ECEAP make it too difficult to make ends meet with only a few ECEAP children in a licensed child care program. For example, the lack of matching child care funds for playground equipment inhibits level EA 4 attainment. (There was wide agreement on this issue.)	a. More flexible funds are needed. b. In classrooms with a few ECEAP children, ECEAP should be able to support 100% of the teacher's salary. c. SB5107 could help
3. Provider readiness	a. Align ECEAP and Licensing
4. Schools are overwhelmed with full-day kindergarten and reducing class size.	a. Secure capital funds to renovate and build facilities
5. Lack of tribal and other unique population approaches	a. Create a pathway that engages tribal stakeholders and creates a feasible approach and plan
6. Isolated communities do not have enough children to fill an ECEAP classroom	a. Create a home-based model like Early Head Start
7. The "strings" and requirements attached to ECEAP and lack of support to navigate the requirements	a. Start-up funds to get ready for new programs b. Technical assistance and support, particularly around management and fiscal issues c. Make it possible for ECEAP funds to support staff and pay for materials for all children d. Support to reach and sustain attainment of the ECEAP Performance Standards.
8. Fear-based on rumors, about the burden of having an ECEAP program. For example, some child care providers who are looking at the licensed pathway think that that they need to implement ECEAP standards across all of their classrooms	a. Marketing campaign with success stories about ECEAP as part of a child care program
9. Families and children need more services that providers are able to provide.	a. Prepare teachers to fully support children with special needs, Dual language Learners and children with trauma and challenging behaviors. b. Build referrals to Medicaid for more intensive services c. Consider program modifications (class size, mental health services and aides for children with higher levels of need

Provider Recruitment	
Barriers	Best Ways to Address Barriers
10. The comprehensive services requirements seem overwhelming to child care providers	a. Extend the pathways project beyond the current limited sites b. Focus on connections to other services including social and health services.
11. Separation of church and state	a. Make it easier for faith-based organizations to become ECEAP providers b. Look at New York City and other preschool models that have bridged this issue. Revise ECEAP WAC 170.100. Also look at parochial school space, even if the schools are not the contractor/subcontractor.
12. Staff qualifications and pay	a. Continued grants and scholarships (pre-service and in-service) b. Make pay consistent with the K-12 pay scale
13. Lack of provider awareness about expansion and lack of communication about expansion	a. Use licensors to disseminate information about ECEAP expansion. Have Early Achievers coaches share information about expansion opportunities b. Create a pro's and con's handout about becoming an ECEAP provider (for child care providers)

Additional Observations

1. Use ECEAP as a lever to improve quality for all and to professionalize the field.

Eligibility Requirements	
Barriers	Best Ways to Address Barriers
14. Minimum wage increases	a. Develop a better understanding of the underserved population
15. Eligibility requirements are outdated. Income may not be the best indicator. Consider situational vs. generational poverty. Fix the three-year old gap.	a. Coordinate eligibility and recruitment across the state.
16. Recruitment methods	a. Change the recruitment methods for example engage trusted messengers in recruiting families. b. Create statewide structures to support cross referral c. Develop state supports for recruitment
17. Uptake rates	a. Backwards design of what you want to get to outcomes
18. ECEAP is a strengths-based program based on deficit model of eligibility. Income may not be the best indicator. Consider situational vs. generational poverty	a. Change the eligibility definitions and focus b. Identify the ways a family lives and design services around that
19. Immigration laws and searches	a. Change federal laws

4.12.17

F. **Next Steps**
   1. Set meeting times. Suggest every other month schedule for 2017. A Doodle Poll will be sent to ask your availability for these meetings so that we can get the dates set.
   2. Develop a draft ECEAP expansion plan with the next draft of guiding principles, actions and a timeline. The draft will have some placeholders and open questions. This will be one of the major topics for discussion at the May meeting.