

Connector



PSESD Early Learning Monthly Newsletter

September 2021

Welcome to the 2021-2022 Program Year!



We'd like to warmly welcome you to the new program year. Last year brought challenges that we never could have predicted, and you all rose to the occasion to support children and families in incredibly unique ways! This year may also bring challenges as we're not completely through the pandemic yet. Although we won't have all the answers and certainly can't predict all that will happen, we will continue to support you in whatever ways we can. We hope this first Connector edition will give you the guidance needed as you begin the new year. As always, we're here for you!

~ Your PSESD Early Learning Team ~

PSESD Early Learning Connector

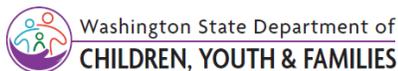
Editing

Venissia Buyco

Production

Cammy Ariola-Moku

The Early Learning Connector e-newsletter is produced monthly throughout the school year, providing information for the PSESD Early Learning Program.



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What's New in General



COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement – All Early Learning and Child Care Staff

Cheryl Polasek, Program Manager | Health, Nutrition, and Safety

On August 18, 2021, Governor Inslee issued a requirement that most childcare and early learning providers **must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or obtain a religious or medical exemption by October 18, 2021**. The requirement also includes those who are working in K-12 public, private, and charter schools. For more information about the requirement, please reference [DCYF's Bulletin](#), also available in [Somali](#) and [Spanish](#).

Childcare and early learning providers affected by the vaccine requirement include:

- Licensed and certified childcare centers and family homes
- Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Early ECEAP, Head Start, and center-based Early Head Start programs
- License-exempt early learning settings, childcare, and youth development programs
- Contractors, including coaches, consultants, volunteers, trainers, etc.

This mandate does not apply to:

- Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers, including those that accept childcare subsidy, at this time
- Tribal or federally licensed programs
- Non-licensed drop-in care for children offered on-site at religious organizations (such as Sunday school)



- **If you are unvaccinated and plan to get a two-dose vaccine series, you must get your first dose by early September (see chart below).**
- **Make sure childcare and early learning staff know when to start their vaccine schedule to meet the October 18 requirement.**

Vaccine	Series Dose Requirement	First Dose No Later Than	Second Dose No Later Than	Completed Series	Fully Vaccinated
Pfizer	2 doses, 21 days apart	09/13/21	10/04/21	10/04/21	10/18/21
Moderna	2 doses, 28 days apart	09/06/21	10/04/21	10/04/21	10/18/21
Johnson & Johnson	Single dose	10/04/21	N/A	10/04/21	10/18/21

Documentation & Accommodations: Staff must work with their own agency/organization's Human Resources department regarding the vaccine verification process **or** to obtain information on medical or religious accommodations.



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Interdisciplinary Staffings

Dani Hoffman, Disabilities Consultant and Interdisciplinary Staffing Workgroup

Going into the new Program Year, teams will be focusing on promoting the ongoing implementation of Interdisciplinary Staffings to support center staff in communicating about children and families on a quarterly basis. The [Interdisciplinary Staffings Procedure](#) and Staffing Checklists for [EHS](#) and [Preschool](#) have been updated and are now available. Staffings are an important and valuable requirement for center staff to meet, discuss, and determine necessary supports for children and families across multiple content areas on a regular and ongoing schedule. PSESD Site Support Staff are available to join Staffings by request, and we will continue to offer supports to ensure that these crucial processes are taking place. Also note, Interdisciplinary Staffings have recently been moved to the [Center Director To-Do List](#) as they are responsible for creating the time and space for Interdisciplinary Staffings. Center staff, reach out to your Center Director to clarify time and scheduling. Center Directors, reach out to your Team Manager for any questions. We look forward to connecting with you in the coming year!

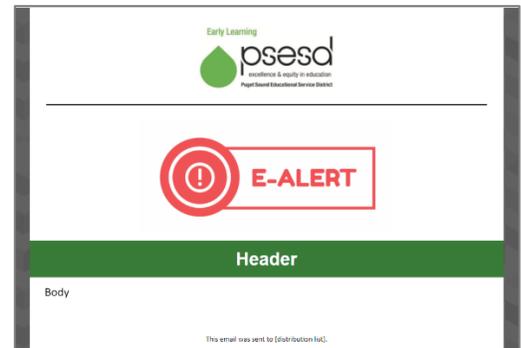
Why Do Emails from PSESD Early Learning Look Different?

Venissia Buyco, Senior Coordinator | Management Systems

Connector emails, E-Alerts, and miscellaneous Early Learning mass mailings have a new and improved look! We are now using an email platform that allows us to do the following:

- Reduce the likelihood of PSESD Early Learning being marked as a spammer. We've included the Early Learning logo, so you know it's from us!
- Use data analytics to help us determine if our messages are being received and read.

Note: New staff are automatically subscribed to the Connector once a [Staff Information Form](#) is received. If your personal email address was entered in the [Staff Information Form](#), make sure to [submit an update](#) with your work email address as soon as it is activated.



Three-Part Virtual Training: Caring for Children with Autism (0-5 Years)

Tamara Griffith, Disabilities Consultant

We want to share an incredible training opportunity hosted by Seattle & King County Public Health in partnership with the UW Autism Center, with live interpretation in Spanish and Somali.

All center staff – teachers, family support, and leadership – are encouraged to attend a free, live 3-Part virtual series exploring care, development, and support for children with autism birth through five years. If you cannot make the live sessions, they will be recorded to view at your convenience (**see next page for schedule**).

Please reach out to anyone on the Disabilities team if you would like a calendar invite (created by the PSESD Disabilities Team) detailing the sessions and links.



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Caring for Children with Autism Birth-5 Years: 3 Part Virtual Training		
September 14 1-3 PM	October 12 1-3 PM	November 9 1-3 PM
Zoom Link for All 3 Sessions Passcode: 035602		
Session 1: Learn the basics of caring for children ages 0-5 with Autism Spectrum Disorders in a childcare setting.	Session 2: Learn how to promote healthy social-emotional development in children ages 0-5 with Autism Spectrum Disorders	Session 3: Learn how to address challenging behaviors in the classroom effectively, using developmentally appropriate strategies.

Data



Make sure to review the [E-Alert about Electronic Attendance.](#)



Policy & Legislative Updates

2021 Legislative Session Review – Preparing for 2022 Legislative Session

Lori Pittman, Governance and Advocacy Advisor

In the 2021 legislative session, we advocated for a comprehensive policy and budget agenda focused on addressing affordability and access to high quality and culturally and linguistically relevant early learning options. The policies and budgets passed by the legislature moved us forward with the passing of the Fair Start for Kids Act. See below for highlights of the 2021 Session!

The work is far from done as we continue to work hard to ensure we have a healthy and functional early learning and care system in the future. Early learning and care are the backbone of so many of our communities – we cannot let COVID-19 break it.

PSESD is partnering with the Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP and the Early Learning Action Alliance to move advocacy forward in these priorities both at the state and federal level. Here is an update from the Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP:

The 2021 state legislative session concluded on April 25, 2021, with many policy and funding “wins” supporting children, families, and school staff across Washington.



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Policy & Legislative Updates

2021 Legislative Session Review – Preparing for 2022 Legislative Session

Lori Pittman, Governance and Advocacy Advisor

- **Fair Starts for Kids Act ([E2SSB 5237](#))**: Expanding accessible, affordable childcare and early childhood development programs. This legislation:
 - Establishes a new account for childcare and early learning purposes.
 - Increase funding for ECEAP, a 10% increase per enrollment and future increases.
 - Expands eligibility and decreases copayments in the Working Connections Child Care Program and expands eligibility in ECEAP.
 - Provides for increased rates, training, grants, supports and services for childcare and early learning providers.
 - Increase eligibility for Working Connections Child Care and improves the families system for co-pay.
 - Increases supports for families of children birth-3 and their providers.
 - Establishes a new account for childcare and early learning purposes and is funded in part by a new capital gains tax ([SB 5096](#)). This could be repealed by a citizens referendum.

For DCYF Fair Start Highlights and Implementation Timeline, [click here](#).

- **Juneteenth Holiday: [HB 1016](#)** makes Juneteenth a state holiday, funded beginning in 2022.
- **Equity Training for all school staff & Board Directors: [SB 5044](#)** requires all school district staff and school directors, including ESDs, to participate in training regarding cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion. School directors must complete the training once per term, beginning with the 2022-23 school year. Additionally, one of three professional learning days in districts must be used for training, beginning in 2021-22 and every other school year thereafter.
- **Pupil Transportation Funding -- \$151.1 million**: One-time funding for emergency payments to address lower payments in 2020-21, and additional funding for payments in 2021-22.
- **Digital Equity -- \$47.5 million**
 - Directs OSPI to develop and administer a technology grant program to attain a universal 1:1 student to learning device ratio, expand technical support and training of school staff, and develop capacity to assist students and their families with accessing and using technology to support student learning.
 - Requires each ESD to provide technology consultation, procurement, and training according to local public schools, in consultation with teacher-librarians.
 - Provides for 1.0 FTE Ed Tech Coordinator for each ESD.
- **ESSER Set-Aside -- \$35.5 million**: Set aside to support community-based organizations, dual language expansion, Career and Technical Education pathway options, and access to summer meals.



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Photo by PSESD Early Learning

Policy Council Updates

Visit the [Policy Council page](#) regularly for a calendar of Policy Council events, information, recruitment tools, meeting materials, and more!

Policy Council 2021-22

Lori Pittman (on behalf of Quincy Stone, Parent Leadership Manager)

Policy Council is a key decision- and policy-making body for PSESD Early Learning and promotes parent engagement and leadership development. Parent representatives are elected by their peers and participate in the decision-making processes that directly impact our children and families. Policy Council members work in partnership with program administrators and the PSESD Board to develop, review, and approve the following: policies, strategic directions, criteria for ERSEA, funding applications, budget recommendations, personnel, and much more!

Policy Council is made up of parents with currently enrolled children, parents with previously enrolled children, and community agency representatives drawn from organizations which provide services, support, and resources to the children and families we serve. At this time, **Policy Council meetings for the 2021-2022 representative term are scheduled to be held virtually via Zoom**. While using Zoom as our platform, we will meet from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Representatives will be reimbursed an hourly rate for their time, in addition to a \$10 technology reimbursement and a lunch allowance of \$23 per meeting. The plan is to re-evaluate in person options in January 2022 and decisions will be made based on public health and safety recommendations from the state and CDC.

The first Policy Council meeting for newly elected parent representatives is Tuesday, November 16, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Please submit the **required** [Policy Council Representative Notice and Verification Form](#) for each of your site's representatives so that we can have everything prepared for them at the first meeting.

To confirm the number of elected Policy Council representative your local center is required to have, and the maximum reps allowed, please see the [Policy Council Composition Chart](#) (2021-2022 coming soon). The Policy Council Composition Chart aligns with Policy Council Bylaws and as approved by all Early Learning governing bodies. Please note, **there is no longer a position of Policy Council Alternate**, only elected representatives as outlined on the Policy Council Composition Chart and Policy Council Bylaws.

Do you have parents interested in Policy Council? As staff, do you want to learn more? Attend a virtual information session!

September 29, 2021
11:00 am – 12:00 pm
[Join via Zoom](#)

October 14, 2021
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
[Join via Zoom](#)

Please join us for Policy Council training for elected parents or prospective elective parents, and staff.

October 26, 2021
10:00 am – 1:00 pm
[Join via Zoom](#)

November 9, 2021
10:00 am – 1:00 pm
[Join via Zoom](#)

Need help recruiting? We can help you line up a current or past parent representative to speak at your orientation or parent meeting. Contact your Family Engagement Coach to submit a request.



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Center Directors

Review the E-Alerts for July - August 2021

Also check your inbox for any additional emails sent by your Team Manager.

[8.20](#) Topic: Action Required – Electronic Attendance and Online Classes

[8.17](#) Topic: Getting Started for the Year

[8.13](#) Topic: Outdoor Air Quality and Excessive Heat Alert

[8.04](#) Topic: New Requirements and Updates

[7.27](#) Topic: Helping with Hiring Needs

[7.07](#) Topic: ECEAP and HS Contract Updates

[7.06](#) Topic: Tyson Foods Recalls Ready-to-Eat Chicken

Center Director Meetings

Check the [Center Director page](#) monthly for Zoom links, recorded updates, and recorded meetings.

Center Director Resources to Start the Program Year

Talena Dixon, Director | Program Operations

In past years we've included lots of text in this section to get you started for the new program year. In reality, this information is already contained in the E-Alert links above and the [Center Director Update recorded on August 31](#). Please take a moment to review the E-Alerts and watch the Center Director Update that includes the following topics:

- Racial Equity Foundational Series for Center Directors
- Center Director deliverables in Moodle
- Hiring requirements (new PBCs for Head Start)
- Contracts and Supplemental Claims
- Upcoming Reviews for HS/EHS and ECEAP
- Monitoring 2021-22
- ASQ Online
- Updated Family Engagement Procedure
- Family Engagement Resource Tab
- ECEAP Performance Based Contracts
- Enrollment expectations for HS/EHS vs. ECEAP
- ChildPlus Electronic Attendance



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Staff Information Forms

Venissia Buyco, Senior Coordinator | Management Systems

Reminder: Please complete the appropriate online [Staff Information Form](#) as soon as you know of any staff changes.

Contact the following with questions:

Qualifications:

[Cheryl Habgood](#)

Portable Background Checks/ Staff Member Safety Plans:

[Beth Larsen](#)

All Other Hiring Questions:

Your Team Technical
Assistance Coordinator
(Monitor)

Assistance with Document Uploads:

[Venissia Buyco](#)

Early Learning Facilities (ELF): New ELF Applications Coming this Fall

Shared from [DCYF ECEAP Reminders and Links – August 2021](#)

The competitive [ELF grant](#) enables ECEAP contractors and Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) providers to expand, remodel, purchase, or construct early learning facilities and classrooms. The program is collaboratively coordinated between the Department of Commerce and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The Department of Commerce manages the grant and contracts and DCYF provides technical support for ELF applicants and grant recipients, and provides services for early learning. The grant selection committee uses the current [ECEAP Saturation Study](#), information on extreme desert child care zones, low-income household information, and uses an equity lens to prioritize and allocate funds statewide.

- ELF grants in [2017-19](#) provided \$5.6 million to 16 organizations and \$4.2 million to nine school districts.
- ELF grants in [2019-21](#) provided a total of \$35,796,000 to 60 organizations and nine school districts.
- ELF grants for 2021-23 will equal a total of \$22 million and will be available this fall for [eligible organizations](#).

[Learn More About the 2021-23 Grant Here](#)

For all program-related questions, please email earlylearningfacilities@commerce.wa.gov.



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Education



Update: Required 45-Day Development Screenings Procedure

Tamara Griffith, Disabilities Consultant and Education Services Team

The [Required 45-Day Developmental Screenings Procedure](#) has been updated to reflect new processes supporting teaching staff and enrolled children. Please review the entirety of the revised procedure. Below are the highlights:

ASQ Online

- All programs will use the ASQ-Online to share screenings with families and record all screening/re-screen results.
 - Staff will no longer document ASQ-3 or ASQ-SE screening results in ELMS (ECEAP) or the *Health and Developmental Screening Results Form* (EHS, EHS-HB, HS).
- When adding a Child Profile, staff will indicate whether the child has an IFSP/IEP, and if the child received a comprehensive evaluation of all 5 areas, or if only in one or some areas.

ASQ-SE

- All programs have equitable access to use the ASQ-SE.
 - ASQ-SE screening is now expected across all programs, including ECEAP.
- All enrolled children, regardless of IFSP/IEP status, will be screened with the ASQ-SE.
 - See [Required 45-Day Screenings Guidance on Children with Current IEPs or IFSPs](#) for more information.
- Guidance for ASQ-SE screening follow up has been updated. Contact your primary PSESD Mental Health Consultant for technical assistance.

ASQ-3

- For children whose screening results fall within Rescreen/Monitor, rescreen 6-8 weeks after the administered date **in all areas**.
- ASQ-3 screening for children with current IEPs and IFSPs remains the same: children who have received a comprehensive evaluation in all five areas of development (the same as the ASQ-3) do not require an ASQ-3 screening.
 - Children who have only received an evaluation in one or some areas still require an ASQ-3 screening (see [Required 45-Day Screenings Guidance on Children with Current IEPs or IFSPs](#) for more information)
- **HS/EHS-HB/EHS:** Guidance for follow up for ASQ-3 screening results remain the same:
 - Initiate a [Developmental Concerns Checklist](#) and update with each action item and family decision.
 - More instruction to come Fall 2021 to document the [Developmental Concerns Checklist](#) in ChildPlus to meet new PIR requirements.
 - Continue to record children who have an IFSP or IEP in ChildPlus (See [IFSP and IEP Data Entry in ChildPlus](#)).
- **ECEAP:** Continue to record children who have an IEP in ELMS (See [IEP Data Entry in ELMS](#))

For ASQ-3 technical assistance, please reach out to your assigned PSESD Education Coach or primary Disabilities Consultant. For ASQ-SE technical assistance, please reach out to your assigned PSESD Education Coach or primary



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Mental Health Consultant. For ASQ-Online technical assistance, reach out to your center leadership or PSESD Education Coach.

ASQ Online for 2021-2022

Julie Gretchen, Education Coach | Team C

As we move into a new school year, we embrace a full transition to utilizing ASQ Online for sending, submitting, and tracking all developmental screenings for 2021-2022. With efficient data management, online questionnaire completion, and powerful reporting abilities, ASQ Online helps you build a smooth and streamlined program that screens every child and supports every parent. We will provide video training, along with smaller learning labs and technical assistance from Education Coaches to support this process. Below, you will see part of the rationale behind this change, along with some helpful videos to watch prior to the training.

We hope this change will:

- Raise screening rates by empowering parents to fill out ASQ questionnaires online, anywhere, and from any device – boosting completion rates and accuracy.
- Streamline your workflow by saving time, reducing paperwork, and reduce human error with automated scoring, reminders, questionnaire selection, and more.
- Create an easier way to send, collect, and save results through Family Access landing pages.

How-To Videos:

- [How to set up Family Access](#)
- [How to send out Family Access Link](#)
- [How to add a Child and Caregiver Profile](#)

Welcoming Dual Language into the Classroom

Michelle Williams-Nelson, Jesse Acosta, Maha Shamdeen, and Lindsay Belden | DLL Coaches

Dual Language Learners (DLLs) will bring a plethora of experiences from their homes, families, and communities to your class. Children with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds have stories and experiences that are unique. Dual Language Learners are adjusting to new ways of saying and doing things daily. As their teacher, you are an important bridge to this unknown culture and classroom environment. One of the most important first steps in helping DLLs succeed is to make them feel welcome in your classroom. Feeling welcome will increase their confidence, make them feel more comfortable in the classroom, help to lower the affective filter, and build a foundation for positive relationships with you and their peers! Here is more information on [Welcoming Dual Language Learners](#).

Home Language Surveys

Michelle Williams-Nelson, Jesse Acosta, Maha Shamdeen, and Lindsay Belden | DLL Coaches

Home Language Surveys are to be completed within the first two weeks of a child's enrollment in your program. Home Language Surveys are a requirement for every child in your classroom. The Home Language Survey determines whether the *GOLD*® English language acquisition objectives, Objective 37, "Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English," and Objective 38, "Demonstrates progress in speaking English" will be included in a child's record in *MyTeachingStrategies*®.

If you have questions or need support in completing the Home Language Surveys, please reach out to your Dual Language Learner Coach.



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The Rights of Students with Disabilities: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Tamara Griffith, Johna Rhooms, and Dani Hoffman | Disabilities Consultants

Welcome to a new year and boldly committing to inclusive practices for each child and family in your program. As families navigate early intervention and special education referrals this year, partner with families to advocate for the child's and family's rights upheld under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act through the [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(8/24/2021\)](#):

- "...infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families and children with disabilities retain their rights to receive appropriate services under IDEA.
- This includes ensuring that IEPs are in effect for children with disabilities at the start of the upcoming school year, and all other rights of children with disabilities and their parents under IDEA Part B are protected.
- Similarly, IDEA Part C requires IFSPs to be implemented and that all other rights of parents and their infants and toddlers with disabilities must be protected." (OSERS, 2021, p.3)



If you or families are experiencing barriers to referral, evaluation, and services for early intervention and special education, please reach out to your primary Disabilities Consultant for technical assistance.

Disabilities Consultation and Virtual Observation

Tamara Griffith, Johna Rhooms, and Dani Hoffman | Disabilities Consultants

Your primary Disabilities Consultant is available by request for individual and classroom-wide consultation and virtual observation for inclusive recommendations, strategies, and support for children with identified or suspected disabilities. We continue to support center staff in all aspects related to referral, evaluation and early intervention/special education services, and ECEAP/Head Start Performance Standards through technical assistance.

Disabilities Consultants Office Hours

Tamara Griffith, Johna Rhooms, and Dani Hoffman | Disabilities Consultants

We will be hosting two live office hours in September to discuss serving students with disabilities. Our hope is to be available to answer any questions you may have. These office hours are open to all center, Home-Based, FCC, and WCCW staff. PSESD staff may also join the call. Examples of topics you can bring to this space:

- Recruiting & Enrolling children with identified disabilities
- Data entry for ChildPlus and ELMS around IFSPs/IEPs
- Questions around ASQ-3 screening and follow up
- Service delivery and inclusive practices
- Requests for specific trainings

We look forward to the opportunity to connect with you and discuss your questions and thoughts going into the new program year. If neither of these timeslots below meet your needs, remember you can request to virtually meet with your primary Disabilities Consultant at another time. Click one of the times to join us.

[Tuesday, September 28 9:30-11:00 AM](#)

[Wednesday, September 29 1:30-3:00 PM](#)



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ERSEA

New Staff Eligibility Training

Martha Waiters, ERSEA Consultant

New Staff Eligibility Trainings will be available monthly starting September 17. This training is required for new staff who will be processing applications and determining eligibility. Please sign up on the [PSESD Early Learning Training and Meeting Calendar 2021-2022](#), and connect with your Family Engagement Coach if you have any questions.

Survey for Experienced ERSEA Staff

Martha Waiters, ERSEA Consultant

We have trainings for new ERSEA staff, but what about experienced staff? Please take the [Survey for Experienced ERSEA Staff](#) and let us know if you would like us to set aside some times to provide you with updates and refreshers.

New: Allowable Children for ECEAP

Martha Waiters, ERSEA Consultant

We've received notice from the Department of Children, Youth, and Families that there are now additional children that are allowable for enrollment. These changes will be fully integrated into the Early Learning Management System (ELMS) for the 2022-23 program term. They are allowing them for the 2021-22 program term, but they will use over income slots. Please submit [Over Income Requests](#) to ERSEA@psed.org when you are ready to enroll the following children and families. Data Technician, Sue Gettmann, will enroll these children after receiving approval.

- Families with income at 110-140% Federal Poverty Level without priority factors.
- For tribal contractors and subcontractors, any tribal family up to 384% FPL.
 - For all sovereign nation ECEAP contractors/sites enrollment in ELMS, children are considered tribal if they are a member of a tribe per parent report and per tribal approval.
- For non-tribal contractors, any tribal family up to 384% FPL.
 - For all non-tribal ECEAP contractors/sites enrollment in ELMS, children are considered tribal if they are a member of a tribe per parent report.
- Families experiencing homelessness.
- Children that meet ECEAP age eligibility and have participated in:
 - Early Head Start, Early ECEAP, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT), IDEA Part C services from another state, ECLIPSE (Early Childhood Intervention and Prevention Services).

If you have questions, please contact ERSEA@psed.org.



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EHS/HS: Requirements Around Recruitment & Enrollment of Children with Disabilities

Tamara Griffith, Disabilities Consultant

Head Start is the oldest public inclusive early childhood program in the US – and Head Start requirements continue to prioritize recruitment and enrollment of children with identified disabilities (children with Individualized Family Service Plans and Individualized Education Programs) and suspected disabilities.

- **The requirement to fill 10% of total funded enrollment slots remains for the 2021-2022 Program Year** ([Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.14 Selection Process](#)).
- Head Start produced a great webinar [Enrolling Children with Disabilities of Suspected Delays: Challenges and Solutions](#) that provides strategies and answers for meeting this requirement.
- Please note: Throughout the program year, your primary Disabilities Consultant will contact you to clarify your percentage of students you have enrolled with IFSPs or IEPs.
- Your center is ultimately responsible for acquiring copies of IFSPs and IEPs for enrolled children, data entering and attaching the IFSP/IEP to ChildPlus, and utilizing the IFSP/IEP to inform individualized instruction and support.

Please reach out to your Family Engagement Coach regarding questions about recruitment and enrollment. Please contact your primary Disabilities Consultant for all other questions regarding support.

Multilingual Services

Interpreter & Bilingual Instructional Assistant Updates

JoAnna Williams-Diggs, Senior Coordinator | Multilingual Services

Due to the high language diversity of the children and families enrolled in our Early Learning Program, we provide two types of language supports to sites and centers. The Interpreter and Bilingual Instructional Assistant (BIA) programs both enable us to provide higher quality services to families and children impacted by the opportunity gap.

Bilingual Instructional Assistant Program Updates:

If you have at least one Dual Language Learner enrolled in your classroom, you might need BIA support. BIAs are available to support classrooms delivering services remotely, as well as in person. If children need language support this year, read the [BIA Support Procedure](#) and fill out an electronic [BIA Request](#). Once submitted, all BIA Request forms will automatically be sent to JoAnna Williams-Diggs. Please see [Working Effectively with a Bilingual Instructional Assistant](#) for more information on how to work effectively with a BIA. Please note that BIA placement and start date will depend on BIA availability.

Interpreter Program Updates:

Teachers and staff have access to a list of internal interpreters to provide language support for all non-English speaking families. The interpreter list is sent out every month with the Connector Newsletter. Please disregard any previous lists, as changes have been made over the summer. The following are reminders for staff accessing interpreter support:

1. Interpreters are available for both remote and in-person services.
2. Teachers and staff are responsible for calling and making appointments with interpreters directly.



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- Interpreters are instructed to leave a pink copy of the timesheet with centers/sites for their records if they are providing services in-person. For staff that are using interpreters remotely, please email [JoAnna Williams-Diggs](#) the name of the interpreter, date worked, and total hours worked. **All centers and sites (both remote and in-person) are required to adopt and maintain a timesheet collection system for audit purposes.**
- If an interpreter is not available, staff may have access to a new over-the-phone interpretation service called Language Link. Please contact your DLL Coach for information on how to access Language Link.

Contact [JoAnna Williams-Diggs](#) for any further assistance. **Please do not use Linguistica Language service for phone interpretations. PSESD Early Learning no longer has a contract with this company.**

Family Engagement

Exciting Updates in Attendance!

Debret Harrison, Family Engagement Coach | Team C

Let's give a big cheer and welcome Electronic Attendance! We are transitioning from paper to an electronic system.

Some of you might be thinking...why the change? Change is a necessary process and it's needed as we make quality improvements to our programs, which in return, will benefit children and families. Electronic Attendance is an equitable attendance process for all programs, efficient to attendance submission, improves USDA reporting requirements, and provides data-informed support for children and families. Just think, no more hassle with faxing and/or scanning meal/attendance sheets, only to hear, "We have not received your attendance/meal count for the week of..." Not to mention the number of trees we will be saving!

In addition, we now have a system in place to track absences, including children who are chronically absent! We will be able to identify attendance concerns and responses, share tangible data (real-time) with parents as we educate ourselves and parents about the importance of regular attendance, and identify potential barriers and support strategies. It will enhance our ability to address these same things on a programmatic level as well. Lastly, **attendance is everybody's responsibility**, and the new electronic system supports the interdisciplinary lens.

[Please click on this link for more information.](#) Please reach out to your FE Coach for further assistance.

What's New in Family Engagement?

Kathy Binkley, Family Engagement Coach | Team A

Family Engagement Procedure	<p>Page 1: Foundational Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining Family and Community Engagement (Please see special note for Supervisors and Administrators) Family Engagement Center Staff Collaboration <p>Page 13 – 16: Family Engagement Transition Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitions – Building a Successful Transition Action Plan
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FE Documents	<p>Family Activities Tab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parent Fund and Expenditure Guidance</i> (New!) • <i>Parent Fund Budget Form</i> (Revised) <p>Transitions Tab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transition Action Plan Guidance EHS to Preschool</i> (Revised) • <i>Transition Action Plan Guidance Preschool to Kindergarten</i> (New!)
FE Resource Tab	<p>Tools to support Professional Development and work with families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Family Events and Parent Leadership</i> (New PowerPoint) • <i>Home Visiting</i> (New PowerPoint) • <i>The Benefits of Regular Attendance – Parents</i> (New Handout) • <i>The Benefits of Regular Attendance – Staff</i> (Revised Title)

Health, Nutrition, & Safety

Keeping Children Safe: Mealtime and Toothbrushing

Kristi Walters, Health, Nutrition, and Safety Consultant

Although we would love to offer family style meals and in-class toothbrushing, our priority is keeping children safe. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, please consider the following guidelines:

- 1. No Family Style Meals** – please continue to offer pre-plated meals and snacks.
 - **Wash hands** – Remember, children will be touching their mouths and hands during meals, so washing before and after each meal is especially important.
 - **Wear masks until eating begins** – Limit the amount of time children are inside without masks as much as possible. Adults must wear masks while children are eating. Adults should not eat with the children.
 - **Open the windows and maximize ventilation** – Think about keeping a box of extra sweatshirts or warm clothing items for children who are cold.
 - **Distance children 6-feet apart while unmasked, if possible** – With full enrollment, the extra mealtime distancing will require some creative thinking.

Outdoor Meals

Consider eating outside where children have space to distance and enjoy fresh air.

Indoor Picnics

If table space is limited, ponder the possibility of spreading children throughout the room for an indoor picnic.

Small Group Meals

Try eating in shifts if staffing allows. Remember to mark meal attendance while children are at the table.

- 2. No In-class Toothbrushing** – Please continue to offer children a toothbrush to use outside of class time.



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- **Continue ‘Cavity Free’ curriculum** – Oral healthcare learning and activities will help motivate children to continue brushing daily.
- **Remind children and families to complete their dental exams** – Onsite dental screenings may be possible. Contact [Leticia Salcido](#) for more information.
- **Swish and Swallow** – One possibility could be offering children a small cup of water to use after the meal. They can take a small drink, swish it around in their mouths, and swallow to give teeth a gentle rinse.

Thank you for keeping our children nourished and safe. You have absolutely earned official superhero status! For questions or concerns please contact your HNS Coach.

New Flu Vaccine Update

Sarah Carter and Xinying He | Nurse Consultants

The flu vaccine is an important tool used to protect children, their families, and the community from the flu. Although getting the flu vaccine is **not mandatory** for attendance, it must be discussed with families. The [DOH](#) and the [CDC](#) offer informational sheets to help guide the conversation around the benefits of getting the flu vaccine.

The [Health History form](#) now includes an area to document the flu vaccine educational resources we provide to families. If Health Histories were already printed for this program year, handwrite in the “other” row that flu vaccine educational resources were discussed.

Health and Nutrition Education Resources Shared with Parents	
Flu Vaccine Educational Resources:	<input type="text"/>
Lead Information:	<input type="text"/>
Nutritional Information:	<input type="text"/>
Fluoride Information:	<input type="text"/>
WIC:	<input type="text"/>
Safe Sleep Information:	<input type="text"/>
Oral Health Care:	<input type="text"/>
Other (e.g., tobacco cessation, helmet, car seat, safety, etc.):	<input type="text"/>

Selecting a Sunscreen

Sarah Carter and Xinying He | Nurse Consultants

Applying sunscreen continues to be of importance. With the abundance of sunscreen options, use the [EWG Guide](#) to help direct your decision regarding which sunscreen is best for your site. The EWG Guide to Sunscreens rates the hazards and efficacy of recreational sunscreens. **We recommend that you do not use aerosolized or compact (stick) versions of sunscreen.** Please refer to the [Classroom Health Routines](#) for current sunscreen policies/procedures, and the [OTC Non-Medical Items](#) form for consent and documentation purposes.



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New: Reimbursable Ripple Milk for Families Requesting Soy-Free Options

Kristi Walters | Health, Nutrition & Safety Consultant



USDA Approved

- [Ripple Plant Milk](#) [Pea Protein]
- 32oz or 8oz Plain [Shelf-Stable]
- No medical note needed
- Contains added protein + nutrients
- Additional [milks](#) include cow, goat, lactose-free, and soy



Not USDA Approved

- Almond/Rice/Hemp/Coconut/Oat Milks
- Requires a medical note for Reimbursement
- Low protein + low nutrients

Whichever choice our families make, please remember to complete the [Milk Substitution Form](#) and [Special Diet List](#). Each young, growing, and learning mind thanks you. You are appreciated.

Additional information is available in [Accommodating Special Dietary Needs](#).



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Mental Health

Welcome back to program year 2021-2022! We know this continues to be a challenging time to support young infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. We appreciate all you do and are for them!

Mental Health Services for Enrolled Early Learning Program Families

Melissa Russell and Laurel Benz | Mental Health Consultants

We are happy to share that our Mental Health contracts for our contracted therapists are in place and **we can refer families for up to 10 free therapy sessions as of September 1**. These are provided by contracted mental health therapists, which focus on the enrolled program child, and can support the child and their immediate family. Services are primarily remote but may be done on site, or in homes depending on current health protocols and the provider and family's comfort. We do have an increase of languages available this year and can access interpreters as well.

If you would like to refer an enrolled program child and family for 10 free sessions of therapy, please do the following:

1. Discuss this with the caregiver and consider any language or cultural practices.
2. **Call your PSESD Mental Health Consultant to be given the name of the Therapist** to be listed on the Release of Information (ROI).
3. Complete a [Referral for Contracted Mental Health Services](#) and a [Release or Exchange of Confidential Mental Health Information](#) with the name of the therapist listed.
4. Have the caregiver sign the ROI.
5. **Fax only** to 1-855-881-7904.

Lunch & Learns for Direct Service Staff

Melissa Russell and Laurel Benz | Mental Health Consultants

Please join us at our first Lunch & Learn for this program year on **September 28, 12:00 – 1:30 pm**. We will be sharing and reading the book, "**I am Enough**" by Grace Byers.

We have shifted our schedule for this year; each **Lunch & Learn will be on the last Tuesday of the month**, so for the next few months it will be September 28, October 26, November 30. We will skip December due to the holiday.

Observations and Consultations

Melissa Russell and Laurel Benz | Mental Health Consultants

We will be scheduling regular informal classroom observations and are available for individual child observations by request. If you have concerns regarding a specific child, please fill out a [Request for Mental Health Observation or Consultation](#) and have a discussion with the caregiver. Complete and sign the form and fax to us at 1-855-881-7904. All observations are virtual at this point.



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Trainings

Melissa Russell and Laurel Benz | Mental Health Consultants

Please let us know if you are interested in scheduling a virtual training on Components of Trauma Informed Practice, Reflective Practice, or another subject. Calendars fill early so reserve your spot now!

Resources

For Staff and Families

Most resources will be moved to their respective content area pages on [EarlyLearningWA](#) at the end of each month.

- [DCYF ECEAP Reminders and Links – August 2021](#): Read for training/webinar opportunities!
 - [Subscribe to this newsletter!](#)
- [Head Start News via Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center \(ECLKC\)](#)
 - [Subscribe for email updates!](#)

Staff Strategies

EarlyLearningWA Website Links

- [Website Support \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Early Learning Program Manual \(ELPM\)](#)
- [Website Feedback Form](#)
- [Find a Classroom](#) and [Find a Classroom Update Form](#)
- [Staff Professional Learning, ERSEA Committee, HSAC, etc.](#)

ELMS and GOLD Resources (ECEAP Only)

- [ELMS Administrator's Manual](#)
- [ELMS Eligibility and Enrollment Manual](#)
- [ELMS Support](#)
- [Teaching Strategies GOLD® Support](#)