

# Connector



PSESD Early Learning Monthly Newsletter

December 2021 - January 2022

## Take Time to Rest, Relax, and Rejuvenate



We hope that each of you will take some well-deserved time in December to take care of yourselves!

~ Your PSESD Early Learning Team

### PSESD Early Learning Connector

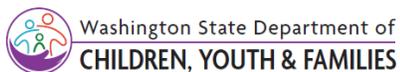
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The Early Learning Connector e-newsletter is produced monthly throughout the school year, providing information for the PSESD Early Learning Program.



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# What's New in General

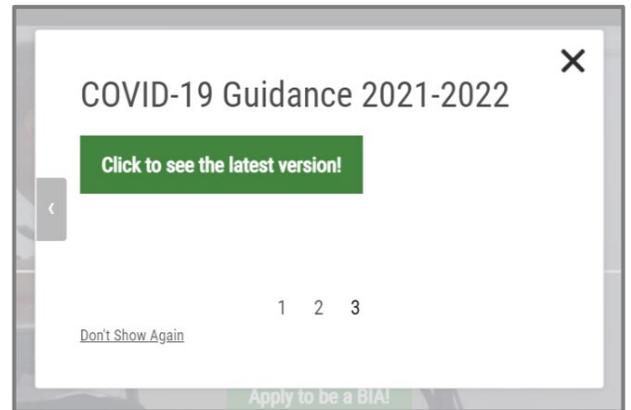


## COVID-19 Guidance

Make sure to refer to the [COVID-19 Guidance](#) periodically for adjustments to regular procedures. You can find it in the following places:

- [EarlyLearningWA home page](#) picture gallery (scroll right)
- [For Staff > COVID-19 Information > 2021-2022 Procedures and Forms](#)
- Linked at the top of every page of the [Connector](#)

When updates to the Guidance are made, it is published on Friday morning. You'll see a "page pop" on the [EarlyLearningWA home page](#) from the publish time all the way through 6 pm the following Monday. You can't miss it!



## Limited Restraint Training Requirement

### Bethany Larsen, Program Manager | Safety

Training in Limited Restraint Practices is required to meet Performance Standards for both preschool ECEAP and Head Start classroom teachers and family support staff. This is a one-time requirement for new staff and those who haven't yet attended a Limited Restraint Training. Trainings were offered at the end of 2021 and other trainings will be scheduled for early 2022. Once the trainings are scheduled, communication will be shared with all site staff.

If you participated in Limited Restraint Training through another entity, please submit your certificate to [Bethany Larsen](#) and [Cheryl Habgood](#) to meet the requirement.

## Recording the COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement in MERIT

### Cheryl Habgood, Systems Manager | Professional Learning

DCYF requires all early learning staff to record their COVID-19 vaccination status in MERIT. This message outlines the resources to help you record the COVID-19 vaccine requirement in the Washington State Workforce Registry, [MERIT](#).

- **Video Tutorial:** [Recording the COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement in MERIT](#)
- **Guide:** [Recording the COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement in MERIT](#)

If you have questions about this process, email [merit@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:merit@dcyf.wa.gov) or call 1-866-482-4325, option 5.

## Early Achievers Systems Changes

### Cheryl Habgood, Systems Manager | Professional Learning

To put it succinctly, the changes being made to the Early Achievers (EA) program are described best by saying it is shifting from a Quality **Rating** and Improvement System to a Quality **Recognition** and Improvement System. Instead of relying on a "snapshot" of quality, using the ERS and CLASS tools, the new system allows Early Achievers participants multiple ways to demonstrate quality in their programs, and to receive strengths-based feedback on their practice.



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In the new system, barriers were removed so systems are easier to navigate, adding more options for recognition related to program interests and expertise, and a focus on stakeholder feedback as part of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process. Early Achievers now includes Program Profile, Video Highlights, Records Review, Accreditation, and on-going Professional Development.

ECEAP sites continue to be mandated participants in the Early Achievers system. It is vital that requests for completion of certain EA tasks be acted upon as this is the way we are remaining in compliance with the Performance Standards.

Head Start participation in Early Achievers continues to be voluntary. There is no current mandate for Head Start sites to participate in our state's QRIS system.

For a complete description of the new system and a comparison to the old system, [please click here](#).

Additional information can be found on the [Early Achievers Continuous Quality Improvement](#) page of the DCYF website.

Contact [Cheryl Habgood](#) with any questions about the new Early Achievers system.

## Save the Date – January 19, 2022! Conversation with Laura van Dernoot Lipsky Laurel Benz, Mental Health Consultant, and Pre-Service Planning Team

We recognize that this year has presented many challenges, both personally and professionally, and the Pre-Service team wanted to add an additional opportunity for collective care for all Early Learning staff. Our keynote presenter is **Laura van Dernoot Lipsky**, a speaker who, "builds on her work in trauma to offer a resource to those who are experiencing a sense of overwhelm that may stem from inherent external or internal forces. Drawing from three decades of experience, her own research, and personal observations, Laura has prepared an inclusive and practical guide to help people recognize, navigate, and ease the burden of overwhelm in their daily lives." Please join us on **January 19, 2022, 1-3 PM** for a conversation about maintaining and thriving in an overwhelmed world.

This event is virtual via Zoom, and the link is on the [Training and Meeting Calendar](#) for January 19. No registration is necessary. It will be recorded to ensure that those who are unable to attend live are still able to enjoy the conversation. If you would like to learn more about what Ms. van Dernoot Lipsky and her team do, please check out her [website](#).

We also found a [short video](#) that describes some of the work that Laura and her team have accomplished over the years.

## Early Learning is Hiring!

Check out our [Jobs page](#) for open positions at PSESD and Early Learning centers.

We are also looking for Bilingual Instructional Assistants. Please share the [flyer](#)!



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# Data

## Drop & Transfer Requests in ChildPlus

**Tiffany Lyons, Data Systems Technician | ERSEA**

A few reminders when requesting drops and transfers in ChildPlus:

When sending a **drop or transfer** request, please ensure attendance is entered and current in ChildPlus from the first day class started in September. This is so the first day the child started and last day attended can be verified.

1. When sending a **drop request**, please include the following:
  - a. Provide the ChildPlus CPID number. Do not give the child's full name.
  - b. Include the last day attended or when the parent requested.
  - c. Include the reason why the child dropped.

You will receive an email when the request is complete.

2. When sending a transfer request, please include the following: (**Note:** When children are transferring from HS to ECEAP or vice versa, please ensure there is a 2021-2022 ECEAP or HS program term created in ChildPlus.)
  - a. Provide the ChildPlus CPID number. Do not give the child's full name.
  - b. Include the **last day in the child's current class** and provide the classroom number showing in ChildPlus.
  - c. Include the **first day in the child's new class** and provide the classroom number showing in ChildPlus.

You will receive an email when the request is complete.

ChildPlus and ELMS must match classrooms and dates. When sending a transfer request in ChildPlus, staff must also ensure the transfer is done in ELMS.

Please send all drop and transfer requests to [Tiffany Lyons](#).

## Enrolling Children in ChildPlus

**Tiffany Lyons, Data Systems Technician | ERSEA**

A few reminders when processing enrollments in ChildPlus:

### Head Start/Early Head Start

1. Ensure there is a 2021-2022 program term created in ChildPlus.
2. In the **Enrollment** tab, scroll down and select **Accepted and enter date and classroom**. Do not select Funding.
3. If the classroom has already been assigned, please double check the classroom to ensure it is correct **before you enroll**.
4. Enroll each child on the **first day they start and not before they start**.
5. When you enroll in ChildPlus, it automatically enters an **entry date**. The entry date is the **first day the child starts in class**. **Do not change the entry date. The enrollment date and Entry date must match in ChildPlus.**
6. If you expect a child to start on a certain day and does not arrive, **you must wait to enroll**.



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# Data

## ECEAP

**Note:** When adding a Family in ChildPlus under the **Services** tab and you see the child has already been entered, **do not add a duplicate entry.**

1. Children entered in ELMS with an Expected Start Date must also be entered in ChildPlus with an Accepted Status. **This step is often missed. You must enter an Accepted date in ChildPlus.**
2. Ensure there is a 2021-2022 program term created in ChildPlus.
3. In the **Enrollment** tab, scroll down and select **Accepted** and enter date and classroom. Do not select Funding.
4. If the classroom has already been assigned, please double check the classroom to ensure it is correct **before you enroll.**
5. Once classes begin, enroll each child on **the day they first attend.**
6. In ELMS, enter the **Actual Start Date.**
7. In ChildPlus, the enrollment date automatically enters an **entry date.** The entry date is the **first day the child starts in class. If the child does not come on the day expected, you must wait to enroll in ChildPlus.**
8. **The Actual Start Date in ELMS and the Enrollment/Entry date in ChildPlus must match.**

For support and questions, please contact your [Family Engagement Coach](#).

# Policy & Legislative Updates

Stay tuned for updates in February!



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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 2021-2022

### Quincy Stone, Parent Leadership Manager

Policy Council is in full swing for the 2020-21 term! Do you have a recently elected representative? Don't forget to submit the online [Policy Council Notice and Verification Form](#) so we can connect with them prior to the December PC meeting.

Please see the [Policy Council Composition Chart](#) to learn how many parent representatives should be elected from your site. Note: **We no longer have "alternates"**, please elect only the number of representatives indicated on the composition chart.

Still Recruiting? Below are some reminders about upcoming dates and useful materials:

- [Policy Council Video](#) for you to show at parent meetings or one-on-one with parents!
- Policy Council recruitment flyer is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)!
- [Meeting date flyers](#) are available in English and Spanish.
- **PC Reps are available** to speak at your in-person and/or virtual parent events, contact [Quincy Stone](#).
- For guidance on parent reimbursement, please see Parent Leadership Reimbursement - COVID-19 Guidelines (English and Spanish) on the Policy Council [webpage](#).

Spanish interpreters will be available. If other languages are needed, contact [Quincy Stone](#).



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# Center Directors

Review the E-Alerts from November/December 2021

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

12/7 [Child Health Information Documentation](#)

11/16 [ECEAP Expansion Slots Request due 12-3-21](#)

## Center Director Meetings

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

## ECEAP Review – January

### Talena Dixon, Director | Program Operations & ECEAP

PSESD and subcontractors will undergo an ECEAP review for two weeks starting on January 10. The following subcontractors have been randomly chosen to be reviewed: Auburn, Tukwila, Tacoma Day, Peninsula, Highline, Bethel, Federal Way, Renton, The Lighthouse, and Encompass.

We will be sending review information soon, which will include confirmed interview schedule, file review checklist and interview preparation document.

We'll also be spending time on this at the December Center Director Meeting.

## New Background Check Requirements Effective 10/1/2021

### Beth Larsen, Program Manager | Safety

### Cheryl Habgood, Systems Manager | Professional Learning

Changes have been made due to a new federal law which affect both ECEAP and Head Start.

#### Head Start/Early Head Start:

Head Start Performance Standards require all Early Learning practices, protocols, and procedures to follow State code regulations, or whichever regulation is more stringent. The Portable Background Check (PBC) clearance through Washington State meets the Background Check requirements for Head Start Performance Standards and all Head Start staff must complete the Portable Background Check through the Washington State MERIT system.

- Any new Head Start or Early Head Start staff member must create an account through MERIT and submit the Portable Background Check application and complete the fingerprinting process. Once applicant receives a **Cleared** PBC they can be officially hired into the position.
- The employment offer can be made “contingent on a cleared PBC.”
- Once the potential employee provides the cleared PBC, they may begin working.
- As you onboard your new staff member be certain to ask the employee to update their Professional Record in MERIT to reflect the new position.



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We understand the challenges this change in procedure creates. We continue to advocate with the Office of Head Start to allow for a PBC to be in process to match the flexibility allowed in ECEAP. We will announce any change in the required Head Start/Early Head Start procedure with any updates.

### ECEAP:

The Portable Background Check must be in process **before** a new ECEAP staff member begins working.

- If they do not already have a cleared PBC, help them to complete the Portable Background Check Application located in the My Applications tab in MERIT.
- To avoid delay in the process, it is imperative that the staff member is supported in completing the fingerprinting appointment and process.
- Once the application is submitted, they are approved to work **with supervision** until the PBC is cleared.
- As you onboard your new staff member be certain to ask the employee to update their Professional Record in MERIT to reflect the new position.

Please reach out to [Beth Larsen](#) or [Cheryl Habgood](#) with any questions.

## Staff Information Forms

**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](#)

## Child Care Stabilization Grants Coming Soon

### Talena Dixon, Director | Program Operation & ECEAP

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is providing direct support through Child Care Stabilization Grants. Grants will be available for licensed child care providers and license-exempt Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers. Child Care Stabilization Grants will support providers in sustaining their child care business and ensuring affordable, high-quality child care services are available to families.

## Insurance Deliverable

### Talena Dixon, Director | Program Operations & ECEAP

School districts, government entities, and community colleges are not required to provide proof of insurance due to the requirements already in place within their organizations.



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# Education

## ASQ-3 Rescreens

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

Rescreen are due soon for children whose first ASQ-3 screenings resulted in **Rescreen/Monitor** for any domain. Per the [Required 45-Day Developmental Screenings Procedure](#), children whose ASQ-3 screening results are **Rescreen/Monitor** will need to have targeted interventions in place and then rescreened **with their current age 6-8 weeks** after the initial screening **in all domains** (all domains is new for the 2021-2022 program year). The Learning Activities Resources can be used to plan interventions.

For children whose first ASQ-3 screenings resulted in **Rescreen/Monitor** in any domain, rescreen 6-8 weeks after the initial screening.

- Rescreen the child in **all** domains with their current age.
- Share the screenings results with family.

If developmental concerns persist or if the family has developmental concerns, **staff are required to inform the family with how to access** early intervention or special education referral for their district.

**EHS/HS Only:** Update decisions on the **Developmental Concerns Checklist**.

When the teacher completes the rescreen in ASQ Online, teachers will add themselves as a caregiver with the role as the teacher. Have questions about rescreens or next steps? Contact your Education Coach or primary Disabilities Consultant for timely support.

## Honoring Celebrations and Holidays Through a Multicultural Lens

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

The end of the year is a time for many celebrations and traditions! While we don't celebrate in the classroom, we must remember to look at the season through a multicultural lens. Allowing students to lead the conversation in the classroom is a great way to build connections as they learn and share about their life outside of school. It also allows children to feel heard and supported as they share aspects of their culture with others. To learn more about honoring family celebrations and holidays in the early childhood classroom, visit [Honoring Family Celebrations and Holidays in Early Childhood Education - Teaching Strategies](#).

## Individualization Internships for Teacher

### Cheryl Habgood, Systems Manager | Professional Learning

**Free** Remote Professional Development on Individualization and Positive Behavior Support!

The UW Haring Center is offering different training options, focused on deepening the provider's knowledge in several areas related to individualizing instruction, supporting social-emotional learning, and addressing challenging behavior for young children with disabilities and those who learn and behave differently.



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The following high-leverage practices will be addressed during the online internship:

- Adapting and modifying materials, environments, and interactions to support engagement and learning
- Using positive behavior support strategies to address challenging behavior
- Inclusion and membership

Materials, facilitated discussion, and learning activities will focus both on building knowledge of these practices and on coaching strategies to support in the use of the practices in their classrooms.

The online internships will be held live. Participants will not be watching a pre-recorded webinar! Because we want to simulate an in-person training experience as closely as possible, we will be holding these trainings for small groups.

For more information and to register for this free opportunity, [click here](#).

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# ERSEA

Martha Waiters, ERSEA Consultant

## ERSEA Staff Refresh

Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 9-11 am

This is an optional opportunity for FSS/FA/FE staff to refresh ERSEA knowledge. If you have particular items you want to discuss, please send them to [ERSEA@psed.org](mailto:ERSEA@psed.org) by Monday, December 13. Register for this event on the [Training and Meeting Calendar 2021-2022](#). Future ERSEA Staff Refresh meetings will be scheduled for February 16, 2022 and April 20, 2022.

## Clarification from DCYF for ECEAP

DCYF ECEAP has come up with guidance for using monthly income due to job loss after having a baby:

- If a parent/guardian was unable to continue or return to work after having a baby because they were not able to access or afford infant childcare, this could be a situation where “job loss” is used to determine monthly income and entered in ELMS.
- If a parent/guardian chooses not to continue to work after having a baby based on personal choice, this would not be a situation where “job loss” would be used to determine monthly income and entered in ELMS.
- Staff will likely need to discuss this with each family in order to best determine how to verify income.

DCYF newly allowable children do not take priority over children who have higher points on your waitlist.



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# Multilingual Services

JoAnna Williams-Diggs, Senior Coordinator | Multilingual Services



## Interpreter Directory

Make sure to click the orange Interpreter Directory button in your monthly Connector email to get the most up-to-date information.

Connector emails are no longer able to include physical attachments.

Interpreter Directory  
(Click me for Updated List!)

## Multilingual Services Updates

Bilingual Instructional Assistants (BIAs), Interpreters and DLL Coaches are excited to work with you, families, and children in your program. If you have a child in your class in need of language support, please complete a [BIA Request](#)

We are experiencing a shortage of available BIAs. Multilingual Services (MLS) is looking for new BIAs to be a part of our program. If you know anyone who may be interested in part time employment, please ask them to [email me](#).

Please review the [September Connector \(page 13\)](#) for Interpreter and BIA updates. The updated monthly Interpreter Directory is linked in your Connector email.

## Effectively Using Interpreters

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

The Multilingual Services (MLS) team would like to invite you to review [how to effectively use interpreters](#). There are several steps to ensure a successful meeting included in this document, such as understanding what an interpreter is, how long to schedule meetings, and a helpful diagram showing how the participants in the meeting should sit for the best relationship building between site staff and families. Interpreters provide equitable services to families, and we want to ensure that everyone gets the best experience while utilizing this service!



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# Family Engagement

## Peer Programs

### Quincy Stone, Parent Leadership Manager

#### Health & Literacy Training begins in January!

Peer Programs is going virtual for 2022 - meetings will be held via Zoom for 8 consecutive Thursday evenings from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. on January 13, 20, 27, February 3, 10, 17, 24, and March 3. There is still time to register your parents! Get those [Health & Literacy Registrations](#) in as soon as you can.

Parents will be reimbursed an hourly rate for their time, as well as a technology reimbursement and a dinner allowance per meeting.

The [Peer Programs promotional video](#) is a great way to share about Peer Programs.

Peer Programs recruitment flyers available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)!

Questions? Contact [Quincy Stone](#) at 425-917-7875.

#### Schedule a Fall Virtual Teachback Today!

A great way to involve your families at the start of the year is to have another parent share about the available opportunities to currently enrolled families in Early Learning. This is easy to do with a Fall [Teachback](#) event! Get your parents connected with each other and excited about being involved in the program! To request a virtual teachback, please complete the [Teachback Request Form](#).

## Parent Ambassador Applications Now Open!

Parent Ambassador 2022 Applications are now being accepted until January 3. To learn more, visit the [Parent Ambassador Application Info](#). You can also share these fliers with your parents, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).



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# Health, Nutrition, & Safety

## COVID Testing Sites

**Cheryl Polasek, Program Manager | Health & Nutrition**

**Xinying He, Nurse Consultant**

Please visit Department of Health [COVID-19 Testing Locations](#) if you are looking to make an appointment for COVID testing. There are no out of pocket costs for tests performed at county or state-supported test sites. Two testing sites were shared in the last EL Staff Meeting. They offer free testing and it's easy to make an appointment. Please see the following websites for further information about them:

- [King County](#)
- [Pierce County](#)

You can also find testing info from the [Pierce County Health Department](#) (list shows rapid /no rapid and what kind of rapid test).

## Accessing Your COVID Records Online

**Xinying He, Nurse Consultant**

If you've misplaced or lost your card, don't worry! You can get official, verified proof of your COVID-19 vaccination online, for free. To get your copy, visit [MyIRMobile](#) to sign up. This is the same portal parents use to access their children's immunization records. For language assistance, or additional help getting your records, please call 833-VAX-HELP (833-829-4357) or contact by email at [waisrecords@doh.wa.gov](mailto:waisrecords@doh.wa.gov).

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# Mental Health

## Welcome Back Alex Clifthorne!

**Laurel Benz, Melissa Russell, and Alex Clifthorne | Mental Health Consultants**

The Mental Health Consultants are three-people strong once again! With Alex's return, team supports will be shifting, and Team Directories on the Early Learning website will be updated to reflect these changes.

[Melissa Russell](#) will continue to support **Team A**, and the following sites on **Team D**: MKK, Pierce College, WCCW and KYFS.

[Laurel Benz](#) will continue to support **Team B**, and the following sites on **Team D**: Tukwila SD, The Lighthouse, Educare/Heritage, and Angle Lake.

[Alex Clifthorne](#) will support **Team C**.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to your Mental Health Consultant with any questions and concerns!



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# Resources

## For Staff and Families

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

- [Head Start News via Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center \(ECLKC\)](#)
  - [Subscribe for email updates!](#)
- [Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State | Early Learning Curriculum](#) – Spanish language lesson resources are now available.
- [Talking with Kids About the Gender Spectrum: Inclusive Picture Books](#).
- Free resources that can support people who are interested in opening an early childhood center-based program and/or family child care home:
  - [Blueprint for Success: manual and materials](#)
  - [Roadmap to Quality: manual and materials](#)

## 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](#)