

Connector



PSESD Early Learning Monthly Newsletter
Summer 2022

Talking with Young Children About Community Tragedies



[PNW Production](#)

When tragic events unfold in the media and in our communities, it is easy to assume that young children don't know what's going on. But they are very sensitive to how the adults that care for them feel and hear, more than many adults intend for them to. Children are wired to notice our expressions and pick up on tone of voice and mood very quickly. No matter what children know about a crisis, it is especially scary for children to realize that their caregivers are scared. Please consider reviewing and sharing [this article and other tools provided by PBS](#). This is a familiar and comforting provider of children's programming and could be helpful for staff and families to review.

- Laurel Benz, Melissa Russell, and Alex Clifthorne
Mental Health Consultants

PSESD Early Learning Connector

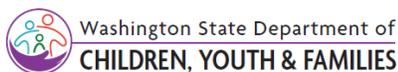
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The Early Learning Connector e-newsletter is produced monthly throughout the school year, providing information for the PSESD Early Learning Program.



Contents

What's New in General	2
Data	3
Policy Council Updates	3
Policy & Legislative Updates	3
Center Directors.....	4
Education	6
Multilingual Services.....	7
ERSEA	8
Family Engagement	8
Health, Nutrition, & Safety	10
Mental Health	12
Resources	12



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

What's New in General



Last Connector Newsletter for 2021-2022

Venissia Buyco | Senior Coordinator, Management Systems and Cammy Ariola-Moku | Program Specialist

This is our last newsletter of the program year! Full year programs and any staff working in the summer: Please stay tuned for communications via email (e.g., E-Alerts, emails from your Site Support Team). The Connector will be available again in September 2022!



(EHS/HS Only) Action Required: 21-22 Program Year Disabilities PIR C.21-C.22

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

As noted in the May Center Director Updates Call and May Center Director Meeting, the PSESD Disabilities Team is recording PIR relevant to children who have navigated the referral and evaluation process for early intervention or special education services. This data is currently captured on the [Developmental Concerns Checklist](#) by centers and programs.

We ask that each Center Director respond to the [PSESD 21-22 Program Year Disabilities PIR C.21-C.22 Google Form Survey](#) by Friday, June 10, 2022, to report their Center's data.

PSESD 21-22 Program Year Disabilities PIR C.21-C.22 Google Form
Recorded by PSESD Disabilities Consultants Team
Due Friday, June 10, 2022 (6/10/2022)
21-22 Program Year Disabilities PIR Google Form Link: https://forms.gle/uDJnzq6x15JAEF8G6
This information is currently captured on the Developmental Concerns Checklist and may be used to inform your reporting. Please contact your Team Manager or reach out to your primary Disabilities Consultant if you have questions completing this required form.

Free Trainings Available in King County

Cheryl Habgood | Systems Manager, Professional Learning

Best Starts for Kids is a King County voter-approved initiative to support every baby born or child raised in King County to reach adulthood happy, healthy, safe, and thriving. More information about Best Starts for Kids can be found [here](#) or the Best Starts Blog [here](#).

The [Best Starts Workshop Website](#) was created with providers in mind - a 'one-stop shop' - to share what topics and type of workshops are being offered by Best Starts strategies and when. This website requires providers to create a one-time profile to gain access to information about all open workshops and learning opportunities at no cost to providers or their agencies. The website is regularly updated with new opportunities as they become available and are on a first-come, first-registered basis.

The training sessions are available to anyone who lives or works in King County. They will satisfy some of the annual professional learning hours requirements for Head Start, Early Head Start and ECEAP Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and Family Support staff. Some provide STARS hours for those staff working in licensed facilities.

If you have questions about any of the offerings, please contact [Soledad Carrillo](#) at the [Best Starts for Kids](#) program.



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

Data

Check back for reminders and updates in the Fall!

Policy Council 2021-2022

Quincy Stone | Parent Leadership Manager

In May, Policy Council learned about Early Learning's annual self-assessment process and completed the Policy Council Self-Assessment survey online. PC members also voted to approve the Head Start Grant 715 Disability Waiver for program year 2022-2023 and reviewed the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Continuation Grant for program year 2022-2023. Through active participation, parents are acquiring leadership skills and knowledge that will strengthen their families and communities for generations to come.



Still recruiting? Visit the [Policy Council page](#) to see upcoming dates and these materials:

- Policy Council Video for you to show at parent meetings or one-on-one with parents.
- Policy Council recruitment flyer available in English and Spanish.
- Meeting date flyers 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 the Parent Leadership Reimbursement - COVID-19 Guidelines (English and Spanish) on the [Policy Council page](#).

Policy & Legislative Updates

Lori Pittman | Early Learning & K to Career Policy, Advocacy and Government Relations

2021 State of Preschool Report Shows Progress in Washington State Amid COVID Pandemic

PSESD Early Learning is the largest ECEAP contractor in the state of Washington. Your work, our work, is represented here! Please take a few minutes to [read this article](#) shared by DCYF and the National Institute for Early Education Research.



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

Center Directors

E-Alerts from May 2022

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

- 5/31 [EHS/HS Only: 21-22 Program Year Disabilities PIR](#)
- 5/26 [Screening Equipment Collection](#)
- 5/12 [ECEAP Breaking News – New Year in ELMS](#)
- 5/04 [COVID Vaccinations/Exemption Requirement](#)

Center Director Meetings

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

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's Technical
Assistance Coordinator
(Monitor)

Assistance with Document Uploads:

[Venissia Buyco](#)

Self-Assessment Center Director Survey

Decca Calloway | Director, Program Services and Bethany Larsen | Program Manager, Safety

Your feedback is critical to PSESD Early Learning in our commitment to continuous quality improvement! If you haven't already completed the [Center Director Survey](#), please do. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey and your continued dedication to children and families.

Focus Area 2 Review: Head Start/Early Head Start Only

Talena Dixon | Director, Program Operations & ECEAP

Our HS/EHS program will be participating in a Focus Area 2 Review starting on June 27. For more details, please review the May Center Director Update Mtg and Center Director Monthly Meeting Zooms located on the [Center Director page](#). In the near future, please keep a close watch for emails that will provide additional information, including sites that will be visited, child/family files to be reviewed, and online courses for HS/EHS staff whose sites may be reviewed. **An important reminder:** if your site is closed during this timeframe, we may still need child/family files from you. We will know more in the next week or so and will reach back out to you.



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

ECEAP/HS/EHS Summer Services

Talena Dixon | Director, Program Operations & ECEAP

We will be pulling you together to talk through summer services. Please watch for an email with upcoming dates and times.

Center Leaders Foundational Series on Race Series

Heather Kawamoto and Michelle Morse | Equity in Education Managers



Join us as we bring together Center Leadership to reflect on how to lead sites and centers with racial equity. Explore how to create nests for staff at the center, the historical constructs of race, how to recognize our own implicit bias and its impact on our work, what it means to be a center leader and hold positional power and interrupt white supremacy cultural characteristics while leading with racial equity. This training is geared toward leadership: Center Directors, Center Coordinators, Site Supervisors.

The series will be held over 7 consecutive Tuesdays, April 26 – June 7, 2022, 1:00 – 3:00 PM.

[Register through Constant Contact](#). Please reach out to [Heather & Michelle](#) with any questions.

Underspent Grant Funds & Staffing Crisis

Talena Dixon | Director, Program Operations & ECEAP

Many subcontractors are currently underspent largely due to understaffing. As well, subcontractors currently have staff who are working long hours and covering for more than one position. Please work with your organization to compensate staff for additional responsibilities and work hours. We recently learned from our funders that it is permissible to use contract funds to give retention bonuses to staff.

If you are underspent at this point in your grant cycle, please work with your organization’s fiscal staff, as well as our EL Fiscal Team, to project where your spending is and should be. If you determine that you won’t spend all your contract funds, please begin a conversation with your Team Manager right away so they can support you as you think about programmatic needs where funds could be spent. As always, Team Managers will reach out to other PSESD staff to support this conversation when needed. Please remember that for anything over \$5,000, we must get approval from funders prior to purchasing.



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

Education

Summer Learning Resources for Multilingual Families

Jesse Costa | Dual Language Learners Coach

Summer is quickly approaching, and many children and families are preparing for transitions and new routines. One common concern that DLL/ELL families may have is how to help their children continue learning and reading throughout the summer. Sometimes finding books in different languages can be very challenging. Finding educational websites that are enhanced to support multilingual learners can also be difficult. Please visit [Summer Learning Resources for Parents](#) for tips and information that you can share with multilingual families.

Kindergarten Transition

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

Kindergarten is an exciting and essential event for children and families. The idea of a "big school" might come with a load of the unknown for many families, especially the parents of Dual Language Learners. Many teachers are getting ready to help parents prepare for a smooth transition process into kindergarten by providing adequate information. To assist in the transition process, explore [Helping Kids Transition to Kindergarten](#) and learn about different skills children are expected to gain when they start Kindergarten. Visit [The Kindergarten checklist](#).

Understanding All the Ways GOLD® Can be Used

Aeryn King | Program Manager, Education

Have you been thinking about how to go beyond the collection of Data? Any high-quality program makes analyzing, interpreting, and acting upon data a routine part of their continuous quality improvement process. Many have wondered how meaningful or useful our [GOLD® data](#) (fall checkpoints) is this year. Staffing shortages and turnover, student absences, school closures and quarantine time, stress and overwhelm are just a few factors that could lead to inaccuracy or misinterpretation of data. We also know that students and families of color are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. It is important to analyze aggregated child assessment data to inform continuous improvement planning, including culturally responsive teaching practices, curriculum decisions, and staff professional development.

[In this webinar](#), MyTeachingStrategies provides examples of how you can conduct analyses. They offer guidance on interpretation and demonstrate some of the various ways you can use data in the classroom and beyond to promote school readiness.



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

Multilingual Services



Interpreter Directory

JoAnna Williams-Diggs | Senior Coordinator, Multilingual Services

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

JoAnna Williams-Diggs | Senior Coordinator, Multilingual Services

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!



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

ERSEA

Martha Waiters | ERSEA Consultant

2022-2023 ERSEA

Read the new 2022-2023 ERSEA Procedure to learn about changes for the upcoming year. All changes are highlighted in either blue or yellow:

- Recruitment Priority Populations
- ECEAP Eligibility
- Head Start/Early Head Start Eligibility
- Selection Points
- Use of Current Month
- Authority to Enroll documentation

Over Income/Exceeds Income Eligibility (ESE) Requirements

For children returning to the same program model (EHS/HS/ECEAP) in 2022-2023: Send a list of returners with classroom assignments to [Sue Gettmann](#) and [ERSEA](#) in August 2022.

Children returning in 2022-2023 who have transferred from a different program model (EHS/HS/ECEAP): They are on your Waitlist A, and you can submit an [Over Income/Exceeds Income Eligibility \(ESE\) Request](#) at any time.

New Staff Eligibility Training and ERSEA Office Hours Continue Through the Summer

Family Engagement

Parent Institute of Engagement (PIE) with DCYF

Dani Hoffman | Disabilities Consultant

In State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) for meetings Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their families, we have the pleasure of hearing from Parent Institute of Engagement (PIE) representatives who share their experiences with Early Intervention in Washington state. Early Intervention can be an intimidating, daunting, or isolating experience for any family to take on. In PIE, parents and caregivers connect in meaningful ways with other families who are navigating ESIT, learn skills to be a lifelong advocate for their child, and gain insight and information from DCYF to stay informed and be empowered to make the right decisions for their family. Each month we hear from parents and caregivers about their experiences with PIE, successes and challenges in our Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) and SpEd systems, and the value that this community provides them as they prepare and continue to access the educational and developmental supports their child needs. Parents voices are what move the needle with law and policy makers on better access and



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

supports for children with suspected and identified disabilities; this is an amazing way to get families the information and support they need to be the advocates and champions they already are. If you know a family who may be interested in joining the upcoming cohort, please share this information with them!

The ESIT program is recruiting for the PIE program. PIE is a 12-month leadership program for parents and caregivers of children who have received early intervention services through ESIT. We will help you build your skills and allow you to become better leaders, advocates, public speakers, and active members in your state.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please submit an application by August 1. We will notify selected individuals the week of August 8. [Download the flyer here](#).

Fill out the PIE interest survey: [English](#) | [Hindi](#) | [Vietnamese](#) | [Chinese](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Arabic](#)

For more information on how to apply, contact Vanessa Allen, ESIT Family Engagement Coordinator, at Vanessa.allen@dcyf.wa.gov.

We Appreciate You

Debret Harrison | Family Engagement Coach

We all have spent the last year adjusting to new ways of providing care to children and families and in communities. PSESD Early Learning has also learned new and creative ways to support site staff in our programs. We know it has been a challenge in many ways and we are truly appreciative of you all showing up each day, wearing many hats to ensure programs can continue serving children and families in the best ways possible.

We have received state and federal dollars to support enhancements that will improve quality for our Early Learning programs and supports to site staff, content services areas, and staff well-being. The ERSEA and Family Engagement Coaches would like to show our appreciation by presenting “appreciation bags” to support you and your well-being.

Peer Programs

Quincy Stone | Parent Leadership Manager

In May, parent educators completed their Peer Programs training and are ready to present teachbacks in math and money at your early learning center. Teachbacks are a great way to engage families and to provide this new group of parent educators with the opportunity to practice their leadership and presentation skills.

A cadre of enthusiastic, passionate and committed Peer Educators completed training in health, literacy, math and money in 2021-2022! This wouldn't have been possible without the support of site staff, thank you!

It's not too late to schedule a spring teachback to share valuable information with your families before they move on to kindergarten. To request a virtual teachback, please complete the [Teachback Request Form](#). Questions? Please contact [Quincy Stone](#).



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

Health, Nutrition, & Safety

Baby Formula Shortage

Mary Eddy | Health, Nutrition & Safety Coach

Washington is one of the many states in the U.S. currently experiencing a shortage of infant formula. These shortages are related to pandemic supply chain issues and a recent formula recall. The FDA is working with manufacturers to try to increase production and output. “Ensuring the availability of safe, sole-source nutrition products like infant formula is of the utmost importance to the FDA.”

What should parents do? Contact their medical providers if they have to switch brands of infant formula, contact their local WIC office with questions, or call 211 to be put in touch with their local WIC office.

Parents should not attempt to make their own baby formula at home. The FDA warns, “parents should not create their own formula because it has not been evaluated by the FDA, may contain contaminants, and “may lack nutrients vital to an infant’s growth.”

See [Eat Right](#) for additional resources.

Child Immunization Rates Decline During the Pandemic, and You Can Help!

Xinying He | Nurse Consultant

A new [report](#) from Washington Department of Health shows routine childhood immunization rates decreased during the pandemic, dropping by 13% in 2021 when compared to pre-pandemic levels. The drop was most noticeable in young children.

- Vaccinations decreased 9.6% in the 19–35-month age group.
- Vaccinations decreased 3.9% in the 4–6-year age group.

The data in our ChildPlus system and ELMS is consistent with this report.

Children must up to date on immunizations to attend preschool and kindergarten. Scheduling well-child visits early ensures children can attend our programs on time and can reduce the stress of finding a last-minute appointment. You can help educate families about immunization requirements and assist in scheduling appointments. Vaccine requirement charts for parents and caregivers are available in a variety of languages [here](#). Washington State provides all recommended childhood vaccines at no cost to children through the age of 18.

Child Hepatitis Outbreak

Xinying He | Nurse Consultant

The CDC issued a nationwide [Health Alert](#) to the state health officials about the ongoing investigation into over 100 cases of unexplained hepatitis. Among the infected children, more than 90% needed to be hospitalized. Officials said 14% of the children needed transplants and five of them died. Please watch [Q13 FOX news](#) for further information about the case in Washington. Symptoms of hepatitis include belly pains, diarrhea, fatigue, vomiting, and sometimes fever (which can look like COVID). Jaundice (yellowish or greenish pigmentation of the skin and whites of the eyes), dark urine, and pale stool are symptoms which are more likely linked to acute hepatitis. Please support children and families to seek medical help if you suspect any case of hepatitis.



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

Immunization Resources for Refugee Students

Cheryl Polasek | Program Manager, Health & Nutrition and Xinying He | Nurse Consultant

Please take a few minutes to read [this bulletin](#) from the Washington State Department of Health regarding immunizations for refugee students.

Summer Health and Safety Resources

Mary Eddy | Health, Nutrition & Safety Coach

Summer is a great time to have fun and enjoy being outdoors. Remind families about the importance of staying safe while enjoying summer.

- **Bicycle Safety:** Bicyclists of all ages should wear properly fitted bike helmets every time they ride.
- **Child Passenger Safety:** Children should always be buckled in age-appropriate car seats, booster seats and seatbelts.
- **Child Pedestrian Safety:** Children should be taught to look both directions before crossing the street and pay attention to sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic signals.
- **Water Safety:** Never leave a child unattended around water. Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death among children between 1 and 4 years old, and it's the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children 19 and under. Children less than a year old are more likely to drown at home in the bathtub or a bucket.
- **Sunscreen:** Every child needs sun protection. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) recommends that all kids, regardless of their skin tone, wear sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher. Although dark skin has more protective melanin and tans more easily than it burns, tanning is a sign of sun damage. Dark-skinned kids also can get painful sunburns.
 - Keep babies younger than 6 months old out of the sun. When going outside, dress babies in lightweight clothes that cover arms and legs — and don't forget a hat with a brim. If you can't avoid the sun, you can use a small amount of sunscreen on baby's exposed skin, like the hands and face.
 - Be a good role model too. Consistently wearing sunscreen with SPF 30 or greater and limiting your sun exposure will reduce your risk of skin damage and teach children good sun sense.

For resources on these and more safety tips, visit [Safekids.org](#).



To-Do Lists

[Center Director](#) | [Teaching Staff](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Health, Nutrition, Safety](#)



[ELPM Directory and Updates](#)

News Archive

[E-Alerts](#) | [Connector](#)

COVID-19 Information

[Information Page](#) | [COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Other Info

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) | [PSESD Press Releases](#)

Mental Health

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

Reflective Groups as a Support to Prevent Burnout and Support Staff Wellness

Reflective groups can be facilitated by your Mental Health Consultant, by request. These groups can provide staff with a confidential space to process their feelings in a safe holding environment. These groups have been known to reduce burnout, support staff wellness, and improve the quality of services that children and families receive.

““Feelings matter” is included as a key principle to support an intentional focus on emotional literacy as central to human development and healthy outcomes.³¹ The ability to recognize, express, and manage feelings (emotional literacy or emotional intelligence) is a foundational competency upon which all “soft skills” are built”.

-The Guide, wa-aimh.org

Please check in with your Center Director regarding requests for reflective groups and you can also see your Mental Health Consultant for more information as well.

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!](#)
- [June ECEAP Reminders and Links](#): Scroll to the end for a list of mental health and equity, child development, and education resources

Staff Strategies

EarlyLearningWA Quick 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](#)