

# Connector

PSESD Early Learning Monthly Newsletter  
February 2024



**Advocacy Day is on February 15!**  
**[Register Today!](#)**

The Connector is a monthly newsletter providing information for the PSESD Early Learning Program.



Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**



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# General News

## Advocacy Day is on February 15!

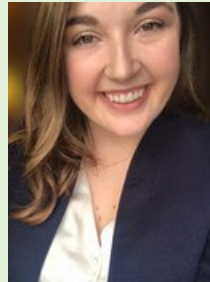
**Lori Pittman | Early Learning & K to 12 Policy, Advocacy and Government Relations**

We're excited for our [2024 Advocacy Day](#) happening on February 15 in Olympia! This day is for ECEAP and Head Start families and staff to educate our Washington State Legislature about the importance of our programs. [Register by February 8.](#)

## New Disabilities Consultants Assignments

### Disabilities Consultants

As our team is navigating a transition, please see new site assignments below as of February 1, 2024.

Dani Hoffman	Malena Swarhout	Tamara Rosario
		
Email: <a href="mailto:DHoffman@psed.org">DHoffman@psed.org</a> Phone: (253) 778-7691 or (425)917-7691	Email: <a href="mailto:MSwarhout@psed.org">MSwarhout@psed.org</a> Phone: (253) 778-7834 or (425) 917-7834	Email: <a href="mailto:TGriffith@psed.org">TGriffith@psed.org</a> Phone: (253) 778-7693 or (425) 917-7693
<b>Team A:</b> Pierce County Human Services; EHS Home-Based; Renton SD; Tacoma Community College; Tacoma Public Schools; Tahoma SD	<b>Team A:</b> Bates; Enumclaw SD; EHS Home-Based; MCFHC; Tacoma Day	<b>Team B:</b> Family Child Care; Federal Way SD; Issaquah SD; Lake Washington SD
<b>Team B:</b> Bellevue College; Encompass; Northshore SD; Shoreline SD; Skykomish; Young Minds	<b>Team C:</b> Auburn SD; Bethel SD; Clover Park SD; Clover Park Tech; Peninsula SD; Vashon SD	<b>Team C:</b> Franklin Pierce SD; Hugs, Tugs, & Luvs
<b>Team D:</b> Kent Youth and Family Services	<b>Team D:</b> Angle Lake; The Lighthouse	<b>Team D:</b> Educare & Heritage; Highline SD; Midlands Kiddie Korral; Pierce College; Tukwila SD; WCCW



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# Policy Council

Quincy Stone | Parent Leadership Manager

Policy Council is in full swing for the 2023-24 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.

Monthly PC trainings provide interested parents and newly elected representatives with an overview of PC and opportunity to ask questions. All trainings are virtual for the 2023-2024 PC term.



Still recruiting?

- Show the [Policy Council Video](#) at parent meetings or one-on-one with parents!
- Policy Council resources handouts and recruitment flyers are available on the [PC webpage](#).
- Current Policy Council Reps are available to speak at your virtual parent meetings. Contact [Quincy Stone](#).

Parent Leadership Office Hours are open to PSESD and center/site staff only. Bring all your Parent Leadership (Policy Council, Peer Programs, Advocacy Day) related questions and we'll ensure you get the support you seek.



# Data and Monitoring

## Update: Drop & Transfer Requests in ChildPlus

Tiffany Lyons | Data Systems Technician

Drop and Transfer requests are now completed through an online format. When a child is transferring, please submit a [Transfer Request](#). Please do not send a Drop Request and Transfer Request for the same child.

Drop and Transfer Requests are available in the Early Learning Program Manual (ELPM) under [ERSEA: Transitions](#) and in the [Forms Library](#).

Please also read the [Guidance for Completing Drops and Transfers](#) under [ERSEA: ChildPlus](#).

## ECEAP: News Tab in ELMS

Sue Gettmann | Application Specialist

### ELMS Changes 1/9/24

ELMS improvements released on January 8 include:



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## Data and Monitoring

- New ESE Count Detail report. This new report lists children using an ESE slot from the Enrollment Count Report.
- To access the report, go to the Reports tab>run the Enrollment Count report.
- Next, click the number link under the 'ECEAP enrolled ESE slots' column. ELMS will direct you to the ESE Count Detail report.
- The Developmental Screening Reports now have the Child Name and Child ID separated into two columns for easier sorting. Many of you have requested this.

### Mobility Mentoring Tab

Some users are unable to access or save data in Child and Family Updates > Mobility Mentoring tab. We are currently working on finding a resolution to this issue. We will update this message when it is fixed.

### ECEAP Child Entry in ChildPlus

**Dawn Patterson | Data Systems Technician**

**Staff:** Once you have added a child to ELMS with an Expected Start Date, please [email your Data Tech](#) to request to have the child added in ChildPlus.

When the child arrives for their first day in class, please update ELMS with the Actual Start Date, and update the child's status to Enrolled in ChildPlus so that electronic attendance can be completed.

**Note:** Please check to ensure you have the correct classroom ID in ChildPlus before enrolling children to avoid placing them in the wrong classroom.

### Reminder: Actual Start Dates

**Sue Gettmann | Application Specialist**

**ECEAP:** Enter Actual Start Date in ELMS for children via the Child Tab, Bulk Update section on their first day of class.

**EHS/HS/ECEAP:** When a child has arrived for class, **Enroll** them in ChildPlus so the Teacher can mark the child Present for class.

- Check to ensure the enrollment date is the same in ChildPlus and ELMS as the two systems must match.
- ChildPlus automatically adds an entry date when children are enrolled that should not be changed. The entry date is the first day attended. Enrolling children on their actual first day of class will ensure the attendance module is available for teachers to enter daily attendance and prevent the need for entering back attendance.



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## Policy & Legislative Updates

Lori Pittman | Early Learning & K to 12 Policy, Advocacy and Government Relations

Check back soon!



## Inclusion Corner

Dani Hoffman, Tamara, Rosario, Malena Swarthout | Disabilities Consultants

Inclusion Corner is quarterly! Visit [Disabilities in the ELPM](#) for past issues.

# Center Directors

### E-Alerts from Winter 2023-2024

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

12/8/23: [Enrollment Plan](#)

1/9/24: [January 2024 ELMS Monthly Report](#)

12/12/23: [PBCs Must Be Cleared for Current Employees by Jan 1, 2024](#)

1/19/24: [CLASS Review Notification](#)

12/12/23: [ECEAP Expansion RFA Due January 5, 2024](#)

1/20/24: [Advocacy Day](#)

1/3/24: [Center Director Updates and Data Recording](#)

2/1/24: [Recruitment and Applications Now Available!](#)

### Center Director Meetings

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



## EHS/HS Only - Action Required: IEP and IFSP Counts & the 10% Mandate via Microsoft Form Due 2/29/24

Dani Hoffman, Malena Swarthout, & Tamara Rosario | Disabilities Consultants

As a Disabilities Team, we collect data throughout the year to verify we are meeting the minimum 10% Mandate set by the Office of Head Start to ensure children with disabilities are being served in our Early Head Start and Head Start programs ([HSPPS 1302.14](#)). These are children who are determined eligible through evaluation for IFSP or IEP services





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and attended at least one day this 23-24 program year (whether or not the child **receives/received** IFSP or IEP services). This minimum 10% is achieved through a coordinated effort between 1.) recruitment and enrollment practices **and** 2.) identifying children with disabilities over the program year through IDEA protected systems such as ESIT and Child Find. We appreciate your hard work and the support you have provided to the families you serve and navigating the complexities of various systems. Keep an eye out for an email to follow with the current counts we have in our system.

## Required Next Steps

### Review Counts & Complete [Microsoft Form](#)

- Review your center's counts sent in an email from your primary Disabilities Consultant.**
  - a. Check with teachers and Family Support staff to ensure **all** children found eligible for IDEA services are documented accurately in ChildPlus (regardless of whether the child received services).
  - b. See [IFSP and IEP Data Entry in ChildPlus](#) for instructions.
- Confirm your counts for children eligible for IFSPs and IEPs by grant using this [Microsoft Form](#) by February 29, 2024**
  - a. On this form you will also have the opportunity to note how many children are currently in the referral process as well as the experiences and barriers you have encountered navigating referral, evaluation, and services as a center.

## Screening, Referral, and Services Follow-Ups

- Follow Up on [Developmental Concerns Checklist](#) (required for HS and EHS) & Due IFSPs/IEPs**
  - a. Complete **ASQ: 3** rescreens for children who scored Rescreen/Monitor.
  - b. Follow up on referral and evaluations.
  - c. Follow up on lapsed IFSPs and IEPs, IFSPs and IEPs that are due for renewal, and attend any upcoming IFSP and IEP meetings.

## ERSEA Materials for 2024-25

### Martha Waiters | ERSEA Consultant

Please see the [ERSEA section](#) for important news about 2024-25.

## Staff Information Forms

### Taryn Kyle | Program Manager, Monitoring & Compliance

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

We know it is a busy time of the year, and as a new program year begins, many new staff are hired. Please refer to the [Hiring and Personnel Management Guide](#) in [ELPM: Program Administration](#) when submitting SIFs for any new hire or changes that have occurred. Please remember to submit [Medical Release Forms](#) (that include proof of MMR, TB and COVID vaccines), [Verification of Parent Participation](#) (VPP), cleared Portable Background Check (PBC), and transcripts for those positions that it is required. As new SIFs are being submitted to PSESD, staff are working hard to get new staff access to the platforms that they need. Monitoring will occur 3 times per year for all staff hiring qualifications and hiring requirements.

Please reach out to the following people with any questions:

Qualifications:

[Angeline Ocampo](#)

Portable Background Checks:

[Bethany Larsen/Taryn Kyle](#)

Health Requirements:

[Cheryl Polasek](#)



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# Education

## ECEAP Early Achievers Participation Reminder

### Aeryn King, Education Program Manager

All sites actively participate in Early Achievers and comply with the Early Achievers Participant Operating Guideline. Contractors have access to their timelines when they go in the Facility/Site tab for each site in MERIT.

### Lead Teacher Trainings available on MyTeaching Strategies Quorum Reminders:

- Introducing MyTeaching Strategies®
- Objectives for Development and Learning
- Creative Curriculum for Preschool Foundation
- Creative Curriculum for Preschool Daily Resource

## Teaching Strategies ECEAP Office Hours

### Ryan Ayers, Education Coach

Register to attend Teaching Strategies ECEAP Office Hours. Register in advance and attend to get answers to your specific questions about any of your Teaching Strategies digital resources.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month
- Register [here](#)

## Code Switching: Why It Matters and How to Respond

### Jesse Acosta, Maha Shamdeen, Michelle Williams-Nelson Lindsay Lowry | Dual Language Learner Coaches

Children who are learning more than one language may sometimes mix vocabulary from both languages as they speak. This is called Code Switching and it's very typical in both children and adult multilingual learners. As educators, what do we need to understand about code switching to best support our students? What are effective ways to respond to children who code switch? Find this out and more by visiting [Code Switching Why It Matters and How to Respond](#).



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# Multilingual Services



## Interpreter Directory

**JoAnna Williams-Diggs | Senior Coordinator, Multilingual Services**

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

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# ERSEA

**Martha Waiters | ERSEA Consultant**

## ERSEA Materials for 2024-25

- Early Learning Applications, Recruitment guidance and Recruitment forms should be available on the ELPM as of February 1. Please see [this E-Alert](#) for details.
- Remember, we may still have changes coming from Head Start and DCYF that could require revisions to the application, so please do not print more than needed now. We will update you with further changes as soon as they are known to us.
- You may now begin sending out and collecting applications for the 2024-25 school year. Do not begin processing them for eligibility yet.
- Eligibility guidance and documents, and forms for returners, will be published March 1. At that time, you may begin processing applications for eligibility and adding them to your waitlist. Do not begin selecting children for enrollment yet.
- Selection guidance and documents will be published April 1. At that time, you may begin selecting children for enrollment in the 2024-25 school year.
- Enrollment and Attendance guidance and documents will be published May 1.
- Transitions guidance and documents will be published June 3.





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# Family Engagement

## Peer Learning Communities (PLCs)

### Carrie Parman | Family Engagement Coach

Thank you to all who attended the Peer Led Peer Learning Community (PLC) on January 10. Peer Led PLCs is a time were FSS/FAs come together (like sitting around a table) to have a conversation and learn from each other all about the topic at hand.

At this PLC, FSS/FAs spent time together discussing all things Family Engagement; it was wonderful to hear all the great Family Engagement that is happening at sites! Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, we weren't able to record this PLC. However, many FSS/FAs shared Family Engagement resources; this will be compiled and placed in the ELPM under resources on the Family Engagement tab.

The next PLC is on April 24 and the topic is Family Resources. This is not one to miss. You are sure to walk away with new resources at hand and an opportunity to connect with your peers. You can register on the [Training and Meeting Calendar](#). Hope to see you there!

If you would like to help plan these PLCs for next program year, please contact [Carrie Parman](#).

## New Family Support Staff Group Onboarding and the First Year Club

### Kathy Binkley | Family Engagement Coach

The second 5-week session of the New Family Support Staff Group Onboarding course began January 19. See all dates listed below. Registration can be found on the [Training and Meeting Calendar](#).

This training is required for all new Family Support staff. If you're new and haven't taken the group onboarding yet, please register for the training. If you attended the last 5-week session and missed a training date, please register only for the week(s) that you missed the first time around.

We previously stated this 5-week session will also be open to FSS who have been hired in the last few years, who feel they could benefit from going over some foundational training information. If you're interested in attending, please reach out to your [FE Coach](#) to discuss it before registering, keeping in mind this training covers very basic information and you are already doing the work.

First Year Club is a big hit! It's an optional opportunity for new Family Support staff to dive a little deeper into the topics of their work. The next session will be in-person on February 21.

### New FS Staff Group Onboarding Session 2

- Week 1: January 19 – In person
- Week 2: February 2 – In Person
- Week 3: February 16 – In Person
- Week 4: March 1 – Virtual
- Week 5: March 15 – Virtual



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## Peer Programs

### Quincy Stone | Parent Leadership Manager

Parents participating in the first session of Peer Programs training (Health and Literacy) are engaged and learning! The second session (Peer Math and Peer Money) is right around the corner. Virtual training begins March 7 and runs for five consecutive Thursday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Parents will be reimbursed \$10 per hour.



Have you scheduled teach-backs for your center? Trained parents are excited for the opportunity to facilitate teachback presentations. A teachback is an opportunity to share information and distribute tools parents can use right away to help their children and families succeed in school and life. Support our trained parent presenters and schedule your teachbacks today! Note: You do not need to have a trained presenter from your site to host a teachback.

To request a virtual teachback, please complete the [Teachback Request Form](#)

Parent Leadership Office Hours – open to PSESD and center/site staff only. Bring all your Parent Leadership (Policy Council, Peer Programs, Advocacy Day) related questions and we'll ensure you get the support you seek.

#### Still recruiting?

- Peer Programs recruitment flyer is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)!
- See the [Peer Programs promotional video](#).
- Current Peer Educators are available to speak at your virtual parent meetings. Contact [Quincy Stone](#).

# Mental Health

Laurel Benz, Melissa Russell, and Mo McDonald | Mental Health Consultants

## Racism in Mental Health

The history of racism in mental health affects mental health systems and people of color today. It is important that we understand the history and underlying issues impacting these communities.

“The idea that segregation was medically justified was based on a long history of racist ideas in psychiatry. Physicians and psychiatrists argued from the early 1800s that African Americans were biologically ‘inferior’. The most infamous of these, Samuel Cartwright, argued that slavery was their natural state because they benefited from the hard work and were incapable of looking after themselves outside the system. In 1851, Cartwright published a [report](#) where he invented two ‘psychiatric’ disorders, *draeptomania* and *dysaesthesia aethiopica*, to explain the tendencies of enslaved people to run away or to resist hard work as mental illness”.

[Discrimination and Racism in the History of Mental Health Care | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)



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In reflecting on this, we understand that there is reluctance by certain groups to engage in counseling or other supports such as Mental Health Consultation. As a Mental Health Service area, we are learning how to best support and work towards Antiracism. We are doing this by continually revising training content, providing services in multiple languages, and striving to find a diverse pool of mental health providers to support our Early Learning infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families.

“People of color and all those whose lives have been marginalized by those in power experience life differently from those whose lives have not been devalued. They experience overt racism and bigotry far too often, which leads to a mental health burden that is deeper than what others may face.

Racism is a mental health issue because racism causes trauma. And trauma paints a direct line to mental illnesses, which need to be taken seriously.”

[Racism and Mental Health | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)

## Contact us 😊

[Laurel Benz](#)

[Mo McDonald](#)

[Jill Reece](#)

[Melissa Russell](#)



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# Health, Nutrition, & Safety

## Partnering and Piloting for Culturally Relevant Foods

**Luis Aceves, Rebecca Finkel, Xinying He, Eduvina Reveles | Health, Nutrition, and Safety Coaches and Consultants**

For the 2023-24 program year the Health Nutrition and Safety team aims to increase delivery of racially equity, culturally responsive nutrition services. This work closely aligns with ECEAP Performance Standards: including family input in menu planning and incorporating cultural dietary preferences in menus (ENV-15), as well as Head Start Performance Standards: designing and implementing nutrition services that are culturally and developmentally appropriate (1302.44).

### Partner With Us

As we begin this work, we are first seeking to highlight the ways that teachers are already incorporating culturally responsive lessons and activities into the classroom and share in the Connector.

With permission, please provide examples of multicultural lessons in your classrooms that focus on food – we think about this broadly and extend it to other cultural markers such as music, dance, and/or clothing. Be sure to include any photos or other supporting materials by **February 12** for inclusion in the March issue of the Connector celebrating National Nutrition Month.



Photo by [charlesdeluvio](#) on [Unsplash](#)

### Pilot With Us

We are also looking for sites that prepare their own meals and snacks to work with on increasing culturally relevant foods served to children. If this work excites you and you are interested and willing to conduct parent/caregiver surveys and make menu changes by the next program year, please let us know! PSED will provide the survey, collect, and analyze the results, offer recipes and resources to support menu changes.

**Email your photo and materials submissions, questions, or interest in participation to [Rebecca Finkel](#), HNS Consultant.**



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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.

[ECEAP MyTeachingStrategies Resource Online Professional Development One-Pager](#) and process for receiving in-service (STARS) credit. Any ECEAP staff who have completed and not received in-service (STARS) credit for these trainings can follow the process and get credit.

[Head Start News via Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center \(ECLKC\): Subscribe for email updates!](#)

[Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP \(WSA\) News](#)

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

# Center/Site & Classroom Activities

**We would love to know about the awesome work at your center/site and in your classrooms!**

If you'd like to be featured in the next Connector issue, email [Venissia Buyco and Marilyn DeGuzman](#). Please ensure the following before submitting:

- **Photographed children must have initialed and signed parent consent** on the [Emergency Treatment and Consent Form](#) ("Photo/video to build partnerships with community agencies"). You do not need to submit proof of consent, but make sure it is on file.
  - If any child in a photograph does not have consent, please conceal their face(s) using shapes or smiley face emojis. Or use a different photo 😊
- **Center/site and classroom celebrations must not be associated with religious and commercial holidays or birthdays**, in accordance with the [Early Learning Equity, Inclusion, and Classroom Celebration Policy](#).

Questions? Contact [Venissia Buyco and Marilyn DeGuzman](#).