



# Seeds to Success

Improving Child Care Quality in Washington State

[www.del.wa.gov/seeds](http://www.del.wa.gov/seeds)

A child's early education is critical to his or her development and future success in school and life. Seeds to Success is the voluntary quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care being developed in Washington. It will set quality standards and offer resources and support for child care providers to promote safe, high-quality learning environments.

Here are some frequently asked questions about Seeds to Success:

## What quality standards are set by Seeds to Success?

Quality ratings are based on four areas:

- Curriculum and Learning Environment – Program has appropriate materials for a variety of ages and provides opportunities for children to learn on a daily basis.
- Professional Development and Training – Early learning professionals have the training and knowledge to interact effectively with children.
- Leadership and Management – A well-run business has policies and plans in effect to optimize child health and safety and an established way to communicate to/engage families in certain situations.
- Family and Community Partnerships – Families and community partners are encouraged to offer ideas and feedback regarding the learning program.



## How does Seeds to Success rate a program?

We are still testing the rating system, so no ratings are currently available. Most programs will begin with a One Seed rating (some could get a higher initial rating) and then move through the system until they become a top-rated Five Seed program. Programs will be rated using the four quality areas, but the requirements increase in each area for each Seed level.

## How does this relate to the state's child care licensing?

A licensed program meets Washington's health and safety requirements, which is the foundation for child care quality. Seeds to Success builds on licensing standards with additional research-based early learning standards to give children a safe and enriching learning environment.

## Will Seeds to Success eventually be in place statewide? Who will oversee it?

The Washington State Department of Early Learning and Thrive by Five Washington, the state's nonprofit public-private partnership for early learning, are partnering to test the Seeds standards with the help of providers in White Center, East Yakima and in Spokane, Kitsap and Clark counties. Whether Seeds is taken statewide depends upon what we learn during the test phase and available funding.

## What do child care providers get out of participating in Seeds to Success?

Providers are important people in the lives of young children. This program recognizes that and aims to give providers the support they need and want to do the best job possible for the children in their care. Seeds to Success will offer participating providers access to education and training opportunities, various resources and a coach to help them look at ways to improve their program.

## What will children and parents get out of being enrolled in a Seeds to Success program?

For children, many things! Individual attention, daily learning activities, a safe, friendly and respectful environment, feeling good about himself or herself, a well-trained staff, parent involvement and more. Parents will know that their child care provider is committed to providing the best possible learning environment for the children in their care, their children are safe and respected, and their children are learning something new every day.



## Coaching and Quality Improvement Grants Make a Difference

Lettie's Day Care in East Yakima is a different place than it was a year ago.

All around the family-home child care, children can marvel at their artwork that now hangs at their eye level. There is a curriculum that guides the healthy growth and development of the babies, toddlers and preschoolers. And one child's disability is no longer the focus of the other children nor does it define who he is and what he can do.

"This brings a lot of joy and happiness to me to see that my day care center is becoming more quality than it used to be," said Lettie's Day Care director Leticia Rubio-Lopez, during her translated testimony last fall to the House Education Committee.

Rubio-Lopez is one of 109 licensed child care providers in the Thrive Demonstration Communities of East Yakima and White Center as well as Spokane, Kitsap and Clark counties participating in the state's field test to develop Seeds to Success.

Over the past year, Rubio-Lopez was one of 38 family child care providers in the rigorous evaluation of the field test to receive access to professional development opportunities and grants as well as money to make physical changes in her center and one-on-one coaching. She said she's happy with having a quality rating and improvement system "because there is a true interest for the children. Through the evaluation that took place, I was able to find out the areas I need to improve and work more diligently."



Leticia Rubio-Lopez (left) testifying before the House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee – Sept. 09



### In testing the Seeds to Success model, we learned ...

#### **One-on-one coaching of providers and quality improvements grants DO improve the quality of licensed care!**

During 2009, Mathematica Policy Research, an independent research company, conducted an evaluation of the Seeds to Success field test in East Yakima and White Center communities. The field test offered professional development opportunities to 66 child care businesses. Half of the providers also received intensive coaching and quality improvement grants.

At the end of the study, Mathematica found **significantly higher** quality of care offered by those who had access to several hours of coaching each month and quality improvement grants compared to those who did not.

### High-Quality Child Care Checklist



Families need to decide the right child-care setting for their children. Here are some general things to look for to help ensure a high-quality setting.

- ✓ Reflects my family values
- ✓ Is a comfortable place for child to explore and learn
- ✓ Offers laughing, reading, talking to help a child build good language skills
- ✓ Hires teachers who continually learn new ways to help a child succeed
- ✓ Is a safe, healthy and exciting place
- ✓ Offers music, art, science and play activities that increase school readiness
- ✓ Provides an environment where a child feels good about him/herself
- ✓ Encourages family involvement
- ✓ Provides teachers who listen to children and parents
- ✓ Offers children the opportunity to have fun together while being respectful of each other