

Five from Thrive

December 2008



News and Events

Happy Holidays to all of you and your families!

Reporters Statewide Gather to Learn More about Early Learning:

Earlier this month, reporters from throughout the state gathered in person or by video conference for Washington state's first Media Workshop on Early Learning to learn more about why early learning is important and what our state is doing to make sure all young children are able to make the most of this important time in their lives. As a result of the workshop, stories on early learning have appeared in newspapers and on radio and more are being planned.

Workshop presentations included an overview on what early learning is, why it's important and what is happening in Washington state to support young children and their families; a look at child care costs, availability and access statewide; an update on Seeds to Success, the state's now-suspended quality rating and improvement system; an overview of the two Thrive Communities; an update on the development of a kindergarten readiness process; and a look at what a coalition of early learning organizations want to accomplish during the 2009 Legislative Session.

The workshop was coordinated by the Early Learning Communications Roundtable. The Roundtable, organized by Thrive by Five Washington, includes primarily communications professionals from some of the [state's leading early learning organizations](#).



[View the workshop's presentations and supporting resources](#)

Thrive Communities to Field Test State's Suspended Quality Rating and Improvement System: Thrive by Five Washington will move

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forward with a modified version of the state's field test of a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) that was put on hold earlier this month. The QRIS will now be field tested in the Thrive Communities of White Center and East Yakima, two of the five communities scheduled to participate in the state's field test. Although Thrive's private funding is not enough to test the entire QRIS model, it hopes to be able to implement key elements of the model and provide as much information as possible to help the state move forward when economic conditions improve and the statewide field test can resume.

Helping to create a QRIS for Washington is an important part of Thrive's work. Experts in economics, education, public health and neuroscience agree that high quality early learning experiences give young children the start they need to enter school ready for success.

All but one state in the country is implementing, developing or discussing QRIS, and many states are seeing progress. In addition to helping children be better prepared to start school, these systems are intended to:

- Improve the quality of licensed center- and home-based child care offered to families by offering support and resources to providers who commit to improving their facilities and the care they provide; and
- Offer "consumer report" information to families about child care providers in their communities, so that they can make the best child care choices for their families.

[Read more about Seeds to Success](#), the state's quality rating and improvement system.

Governor and State Legislature Receive Report and Recommendations for Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Process: The governor and state Legislature recently received a report and recommendations from the Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Thrive about a kindergarten readiness assessment process for Washington state. This report establishes a foundation for further planning for a statewide kindergarten assessment process. It provides a summary of the literature on best practices in kindergarten assessment, a snapshot of current kindergarten assessment practices in schools across Washington, examples of kindergarten assessment processes in other states and countries, and priorities from a variety of stakeholders in Washington for a statewide kindergarten assessment process. [Read the Report](#)

Teens Learn about Early Learning While Filming Family Event:

It was a local holiday festival for families to have fun. But it was also an opportunity for a group of student filmmakers to learn about the importance of early learning.

At this month's Columbia City Holiday Kids Fair in Seattle, local 14- to 19-year-olds worked on their filmmaking skills while documenting the fair for a [live Web cast](#). They also interviewed child development and education

experts, researchers and administrators. Another filming crew filmed the teens' experience.



This innovative approach to youth outreach was done in cooperation with the Pulse Project, the Columbia City Theatre and MUSICA Entertainment. MUSICA CEO and Thrive board member Tony Benton said he is always looking for ways to engage teens in learning about early learning. He hopes the information helps the teens be better big brothers and sisters, better babysitters and neighbors and more aware young members of society. He also knows that teens sometimes become parents, and he wants to make sure that they have the information they will need to give their child the best start possible.

A DVD that includes both the interviews with the early learning experts and the student filmmakers will be publicly available later this winter.

What You Can Do



Help Kindle a Child's Love of Reading - A Gift that will Last a Lifetime:

First Book is a nonprofit organization with a single mission: to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. With access to books from [First Book](#), children's interest in reading nearly triples and they

are more likely to choose reading as an activity. First Book provides brand new books to children in need this holiday season and throughout the year. For \$25, you can fund 10 new books - enough to delight a group of preschoolers. And thanks to Random House Children's Books, every [donation](#) to First Book before Dec. 31 will be matched book-for-book.

Partner Resources

Early Learning in Washington Public Schools Report for 2007-2008:

More than 322,000 children from birth to age 8 currently attend early care and education programs in Washington public schools. This report provides information about how school districts are doing implementing state-funded full-day kindergarten, the K-3 demonstration projects, the Bremerton District Lighthouse project, and OSPI Early Learning public/private partnerships. It also looks at all of the early learning

activities currently offered in Washington public schools. [Read the Report](#)

Events and Activities

Living in the Greater Seattle area and looking for the best preschool program for your child? Attend one of ParentMap's upcoming four Preschool Preview Nights! It's a chance to compare about 30 programs in your area, ask questions, and find that perfect fit for you and your child!

Preschool Preview Nights will be held in January and February 2009 in Seattle, Tacoma, the Eastside and Kent/Auburn. The event is free to the public.

[Preschool Preview Nights dates and times](#)

Let us know about an upcoming event, and we'll let others know. E-mail event information to heidi@thrivebyfivewa.org.

What's New

Early learning is getting a lot of state and national attention. Read "*Early Learning: Critical Investing*" (Seattle PI) - and other articles in the "[Thrive in the News](#)" section of our Web Site!

Thrive Brochure now Available in Spanish: Thrive's brochure, *Every Child is a Work of Art*, is now available in both English and Spanish. To order copies of either version, please contact Heidi Lenze at heidi@thrivebyfivewa.org or 206.621.5563. [Download PDF](#)

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