



## NEWS

### Draft Statewide Early Learning Plan Documents Now Ready for First Round of Public Input

Washington early learning leaders are looking for public input on the recently released draft outcomes and strategies document lays the foundation for a comprehensive birth-to-8 early learning plan.



Specifically, leaders want to know if the outcomes and strategies resonate with individuals and communities and if there is anything missing or off-target.

The plan aims to give all young children in Washington state a fair chance at a great start in life by helping ensure school readiness; coordinating the different systems around children in their earliest years (early care and education, health, parenting support, etc.) into one early learning system; and measuring results over time for children and families to make sure we're investing in what works. More than 40 groups have helped shape the plan's first draft documents.

If you're interested in looking at and providing input on these early draft documents, go [online](#) now, read the documents and fill out a survey or attend one of several upcoming community meetings (info under "What You Can Do").

The window for this round of feedback on the plan is limited to a couple of weeks because Dec. 1 is the deadline for the group, which is being led by the state Department of Early Learning, Thrive by Five Washington and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, to send a draft of the plan and recommendations for the upcoming legislative session to Gov. Gregoire.

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Become a Key Communicator ([communications@del.wa.gov](mailto:communications@del.wa.gov)) and receive regular updates about the work on the plan and opportunities for feedback. More public feedback will be taken during December through early March 2010. The plan is expected to be finalized by the end of March.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

**Stand Up for Kids, Tell it Like it Is**

**You are invited to a special meeting with the Director of the Department of Early Learning, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Thrive by Five Washington.**

It's a chance to have your voice heard by the leaders who have the power to make recommendations on the cost and quality of preschool, childcare and early learning for all children in Washington state, including your children.



**WHO:** Parents, providers and community members should come...and bring your kids! We'll have cookies and activities for your kids. We'll be handing out cards so you can write a comment or ask a question.

**WHY?** Bette Hyde, Director of the Department of Early Learning, and key decision-makers from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington want to hear from YOU!

**Good, bad, funny, or sad-our leaders want to hear about it.** Your feedback will help shape the first draft documents of the early learning plan and **recommendations for the 2010 Legislative Session** to be delivered to Gov. Gregoire on Dec.1. We need you to ensure Washington's Early Learning Plan will help your children succeed in school and life.

### Early Learning Town Hall Meetings

**Wednesday, October 28th from 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

The New School at South Shore  
4800 S. Henderson Street, Seattle 98118 ([MAP](#))  
[Download the Event Flyer](#) (PDF)

**Thursday, October 29th from 6:30 - 8:00 PM**

Tacoma Community College  
6501 S. 19th Street, Tacoma 98466 ([MAP](#))  
[Download the Event Flyer](#) (PDF)

**Wednesday, November 4th from 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

St. Luke's Community Education Center  
3333 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham 98225 ([MAP](#))  
[Download the Event Flyer](#) (PDF)

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Show your support for Thrive and early learning by joining us on Facebook.

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**Early Learning  
Event Calendar**

Brought to you by the Early Learning Community.

**Thursday, November 5th from 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

Kirkland Women's Club

10052 NE 137th St Kirkland 98034 ([MAP](#))

[Download the Event Flyer](#) (PDF)

**RSVP to Frank Ordway at [info@educationvoters.org](mailto:info@educationvoters.org).**

For a complete listing of all community meetings being held around the statewide Early Learning Plan, [click here](#).

## CHAMPIONING EARLY LEARNING - EARLY LEARNING COALITIONS AT WORK

**Early Learning in Action - Spotlight on The Partnership for Children & Families, News from Chelan and Douglas Counties**

Wine, food, arts, crafts AND ways to promote early learning were all available at this year's Taste of the Harvest Festival in Wentachee.



Child care providers from Chelan and Douglas showed families fun learning activities that they can do at home to grow their children's early math and science skills. Activities included a large outdoor area for children to read books with their parents, tactile activity areas where children of all ages could make flubber (a fun slimy glue, soap and water concoction), clean mud (a sticky mixture of Ivory soap and toilet paper), and could experiment making bubbles using kinds of wands and implements.

Children and parents were able to take home activity recipes to try out and enjoy on their own. The local Home Depot also was on hand to assist children in crafting projects throughout the day and sent 300 activity kits home with participating families.

## PARTNER RESOURCES

**Input Sought on Updates to Early Learning Benchmarks**

The Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL) is seeking public input as it prepares to update our state's early learning benchmarks.

An online survey is available in English and Spanish until Nov. 15 at [www.del.wa.gov/development/benchmarks](http://www.del.wa.gov/development/benchmarks).



Developed in 2005 by early learning experts and stakeholders, the *Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks* is a resource document offering a common understanding about what young

children should know and be able to do at different stages in their lives. Statewide, the Benchmarks are used as a resource document for those who care for and teach young children. The document includes a recommendation that it be reviewed and updated every five years.

"Our state needs to be clear on the skills and knowledge we want our youngest learners to have to be school-ready," said DEL Director Bette Hyde. "It's time to review and update our Benchmarks to make sure they include reasonable expectations for children and reflect the rich diversity of our state."

The survey offers an opportunity for parents, caregivers, educators, and others to share information about whether and how they currently use the Benchmarks, and what would make them more useful.

Many other states have developed similar early learning guidelines. For more information on Washington's Benchmarks and links to other states' guidelines, visit [www.del.wa.gov/development/benchmarks/](http://www.del.wa.gov/development/benchmarks/)

## LEARNING FOR LIFE

### Nurturing Children's Creativity

Creativity in children improves problem-solving, social skills, and even helps children work through their emotions in a safe, child-friendly way. Being creative and simply having unstructured play time can strengthen the child's ego, allow for independence, and help the child confront and cope with many things in life.



Last week's segments were as followed. Be sure to click the links to view any of the segments you may have missed!

[🔗 Creativity is Key in a Child's Development:](#) This month's Learning for Life focuses on the importance of creativity in a child's mental and social development. Linda Hartzell from the Seattle Children's Theater discusses why creative opportunities are so important for growing little minds.

[🔗 Special Playgroup Focuses on 'Creative Play':](#) When it comes to young children, all play is not created equal. Child development experts say children need open time to explore.

[🔗 Getting Creative with Nature:](#) Finding the right preschool for your little one is a critical decision for parents. That's why the Discovery Park Nature Daycamp is such a unique option for Seattle parents who believe outdoor appreciation is critical for their children's development.

[🔗 Creativity from Preschool to School:](#) Megan Hosch-Schmitt from the Children's Museum in Seattle discusses ways to bring creativity from the classroom to the living room.

**Get Creative with Your Kids!** Joy Knight of Creation Station in Lynnwood shows how to use household items or easy-to-find materials to spark a child's creativity. (Video not yet available.)

*Learning for Life* is a week-long news series on KING 5 TV created in partnership with Thrive by Five Washington. It airs during the third week of each month on KING Morning News on KONG 6/16 TV. **Starting in November the series will air at 8:20 a.m.**

Links to all [Learning for Life segments](#) can be found on Thrive's Web site.



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