

Media Workshop on Early Learning Agenda

Friday, Dec. 12, 2008

Registration and Complimentary Continental Breakfast

8:30-9 a.m.

Welcome and Program Overview

Molly O'Connor, Director of Communications, Thrive by Five Washington

9-9:05 a.m.

Early Learning in Washington State: An Overview

Joel Ballezza, Communications Manager, Foundation for Early Learning

Mary Seaton, Director of Early Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

9:05-9:35 a.m.

Interest in early learning and our knowledge about the importance of the first few years of a child's life has grown significantly in Washington state during the past few years. This overview looks at what early learning is, why it's important and what is happening in Washington state to support young children and their families.

Early Learning and Child Care in Washington: Cost, Availability and Access

Laura Giddings, Member Services Director, WA State Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Deeann Puffert, Interim CEO, Child Care Resources

9:35-10:15 a.m.

On any given day in Washington state, about 175,000 children are in licensed child care, attended to by an estimated 35,000 or more caregivers. In addition, almost half of children under the age of 5 are in the care of a relative, neighbor or family friend for some part of each day. However, families find their choices constrained by the recent decline in licensed facilities, especially family child care homes which offer the majority of infant/toddler care. Families using child care subsidies find that many facilities can't afford to accept the subsidy because the rate is so low in comparison with market rates. Washington state is ranked the fourth *least affordable* state in the U.S. for center-based child care. The median annual cost of licensed care for an infant ranges from \$7,280 to \$9,620 – nearly twice the cost of one year's tuition at a state university. We will look at some of these challenges and discuss statewide efforts focused on access, cost and availability.

Update on Developing a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Process

Alison Cusick, Partnership Administrator and Tribal Liaison, Dept. of Early Learning

Natalie Vega O'Neil, Director of Special Partnerships, Thrive by Five Washington

Mary Seaton, Director of Early Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

10:15-10:55 a.m.

On Dec. 15, the Department of Early Learning, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive By Five Washington will take to the governor and state Legislature a report with recommendations for implementation of a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment process.

Update on the State's Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System Field Test

Dr. Juliet Torres, Asst. Director of Systems, Partnerships and Collaboration, Dept. of Early Learning

Natalie Vega O'Neil, Director of Special Partnerships, Thrive by Five Washington

10:55-11:15 a.m.

The field test of *Seeds to Success*, the state's voluntary quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), was recently suspended when all state agencies and departments needed to do further budget cuts. A brief look at what this work is about and what might still be able to be accomplished.

The Thrive Communities of White Center and East Yakima

11:15-11:40 a.m.

Brenda Blasingame, Director of Programs, Thrive by Five Washington

The two Thrive Communities in White Center and East Yakima are local partnerships designed to serve as a model for how a community-wide approach to early learning can improve the development of all children birth to age 5 and their readiness to enter school.

The Early Learning Policy Agenda for the 2009 Legislative Session

11:40 a.m.-Noon

A look at the early learning priorities for the upcoming legislative session as agreed upon by the Early Learning Action Alliance, a coalition of more than 40 organizations in Washington state.

Adjourn

Noon

Workshop sponsored by the Early Learning Communications Roundtable

Born Learning Clark County – Educational Service District 112/Support for Early Learning & Families • Child Care Resources • Children’s Alliance • Foundation for Early Learning • Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction • Puget Sound Educational Service District/White Center Early Learning Initiative • Ready by Five • South Sound Born Learning/United Way of Thurston County • Thrive by Five Washington • United Ways of Washington • Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network • Washington State Department of Early Learning