



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three organizations join forces, commit to improve early learning for children statewide

OLYMPIA — Leaders of the Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL), Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Thrive by Five Washington today affirmed their partnership in improving early learning opportunities for all Washington children, and helping them find success in school and in life.

The Early Learning Partnership builds upon the recommendations of Washington Learns, the 18-month study of Washington's education system headed by Gov. Chris Gregoire. The Washington Learns final report called upon DEL, OSPI and Thrive by Five Washington to work together to improve early learning for children in Washington.

The partnership is based upon the mutual belief that — in addition to ensuring children are ready for school — parents, communities and schools need to be ready to support all children, both before and after they enter school.

DEL Director Jone Bosworth, State Superintendent Terry Bergeson and Thrive by Five Washington President and CEO Graciela Italiano-Thomas agreed to work on collective priorities that bring together the strengths of all three entities on behalf of Washington families.

In signing the Early Learning Partnership agreement, the leaders committed to work closely together on key areas such as parent communication, professional development for early learning professionals, and data collection and sharing to better coordinate services offered to Washington's children and families.

The three leaders issued the following joint statement upon signing the agreement: "We commit to supporting the development of high-quality, early care and education programs that respect and reflect the rich diversity of children and families throughout our state. By working together, more progress will be made, more parents will have the ability to help their children, and every child will have the opportunity to reach full potential and experience success in school and life."

The leaders will meet quarterly to assess the progress of the work the three organizations are doing together.

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About DEL

The Washington State Department of Early Learning is a Governor's Cabinet-level state agency created in 2006 to bring heightened visibility and focus to early learning and help all Washington children reach their full potential. DEL oversees the state-funded comprehensive preschool program, child care licensing, and other initiatives and programs to support parents as children's first and most important teachers. For more information, visit the DEL Web site at <http://www.del.wa.gov>.

About OSPI

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing K-12 education in Washington. Led by State School Superintendent Dr. Terry Bergeson, OSPI works with the state's 295 school districts and nine educational service districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than one million public school students. For more information, visit the OSPI Web site at <http://www.k12.wa.us>.

About Thrive by Five Washington

Thrive by Five Washington is a public-private partnership championing positive early learning opportunities for every child, from birth to age five, so that they are ready to succeed in school and thrive in life. Thrive by Five partners with parents, early learning professionals, communities, philanthropic organizations, businesses and government to develop a sustainable system for statewide early learning improvement. For more information, visit the Thrive by Five Web site at <http://www.thrivebyfivewa.org>.

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