

A. PROJECT SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

Project Title: Advancing an Integrated, Equitable and Responsive Early Learning System in WA

Applicant: Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)

Address: P.O. Box 40970 Olympia, WA 98504-0970

Contact Phone: 360-407-3651 (phone) 360-586-0052 (fax)

Email Address: kelli.bohanon@dcyf.wa.gov

Website Address: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/>

Washington State's long-term early learning outcomes are to: 1) achieve a 90% statewide school-readiness rate; and 2) eliminate race and income as predictors of school readiness. With currently just 47% of Washington's children meeting readiness standards when they enter kindergarten, this proposal lays the foundation to build upon our state's unparalleled high-quality, early learning mixed delivery system to achieve these goals. Centered on values of racial equity and inclusion, Washington's Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), will lead a broad coalition of early learning partners and stakeholders to more effectively serve all children birth to five, with a focus on those children furthest from opportunity – children of color, children who are homeless, children with disabilities, children who have experienced trauma, and children from rural communities – and their caregivers. Over the 12-month grant period we will implement the following activities:

- *Activity 1: Needs Assessment.* DCYF will lead the development of a statewide birth-to-5 needs assessment. The process, with broad stakeholder input, will integrate existing data sets and community and program-level needs assessments with new data to update and fill data gaps. The result will be a detailed picture of Washington's early learning system capacity, quality, availability, needs, and gaps, as well as an in-depth look at the unique needs and characteristics of young children and families in our state.
- *Activity 2: Strategic Plan.* DCYF will develop a strategic plan that increases key partner alignment and coordination, enhances quality within our state's robust mixed delivery system, and establishes the roadmap for system development. The plan will improve kindergarten readiness, including laying the groundwork to pilot a state program modeled after Early Head Start, improve classroom inclusion for children with disabilities, and identify strategies for building on federally funded initiatives to maximize choice and impact for children and families.
- *Activity 3: Maximize Parent Knowledge and Choice.* DCYF and partners will complete planning and design work for a statewide coordination and referral system, build capacity to expand evidence-based Mobility Mentoring, and develop specialized pathways to improve early learning services to families involved in child welfare and/or who access TANF.
- *Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices.* DCYF will roll-out Shared Services to promote financial and administrative efficiencies and responsive, comprehensive services for child care and early learning providers; implement listening tours with tribes, school districts, and other community partners across the state to gather information on enhancing transitions into kindergarten; and launch mental health and trauma consultations and create policies and toolkits for inclusion in preschool classrooms to build providers' capacity to serve children who are impacted by trauma.
- *Activity 5: Improving Overall Quality.* DCYF will launch the newly designed Early ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) readiness training in 10 pilot sites, and pilot Shared Services business coaching in six regions and an Inclusion Practices policy and toolkit in two diverse school districts, using lessons learned to inform future scale up.