

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2015-16

Early Learning CONNECTOR – January 2016



WHAT'S NEW IN GENERAL

School Readiness Goals and Early Learning Priorities

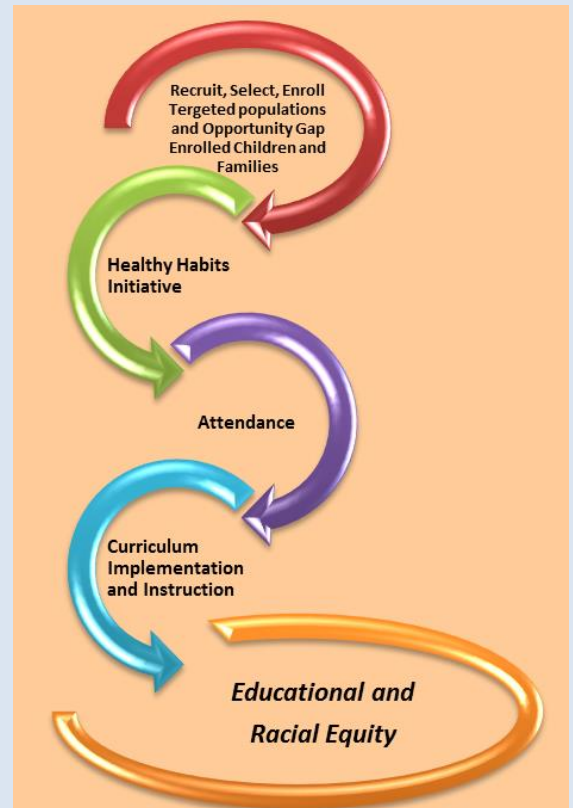
Each year, we refine and retell the story of our learning community. We call it Self-Assessment and, based on the data we collect, we send off our Annual Improvement plans to funders. But each year we find the story's grown richer, deeper and more connected to our true north – getting children and families ready for school with racially equity and sound educational practices.

Information we collect about our work with families isn't shelved but is transformed to action in our continuous improvement plans. This year, we're moving the needle further on racial equity and school readiness after much conversation with Policy Council, families, community leaders, staff, and others. We created four key leverage areas shown in the visual on page one.

Here are the descriptions for each area:

- ① **Recruiting, Selecting and Enrolling Targeted Populations and Opportunity Gap Impacted Children and Families:** If we focus on the opportunity gap and our targeted populations, then they will be more likely to be school ready.
- ① **Healthy Habits Initiative:** If all children are healthy to learn and learn to be healthy, then they will be more likely to be school ready.
- ① **Attendance:** If each child attends at least 90% of the time, then they will be more likely to be school ready.
- ① **High Quality Curriculum and Instruction:** If teaching practices and content are high quality, culturally relevant and responsive, and supportive of diverse learners, then children will be more likely to be school ready.

We think it's important to spend more time exploring each of these key leverage areas, so look for in-depth coverage in upcoming editions of the Connector!



ADVOCACY DAY — *Continued from page 1*

Advocacy Day is a giant learning lab bubbling over with enthusiastic families who find out about issues the Legislature is discussing and learn how to advocate for positive advancements in early education for the sake of their own families and for others too. There's a light in the eye of every courageous heart standing on the Capitol steps as they rally to share how early learning has supported their child, family and community.

We want you to experience this with us! You belong there! Everything you need to know about dates, times, transportation and more is on our Advocacy Day webpage, or you can check with your Family Support staff member!

When: *Wednesday, February 10 in Olympia*

Register: [Advocacy Day webpage](#)

Program Updates

Head Start 104 Re-competition Grant Update

By Kay Lancaster, PSESD Associate Superintendent

After weeks and weeks of hard work, I am thrilled to share that we have successfully submitted the Head Start application for the re-competition of our 104 grant. The application was due on December 28, 2015 and we were able to successfully submit it on the December 26. While it was an arduous process, we believe our application is very strong based on many factors, including:

- Our 50 year history of providing high quality Head Start services in the Puget Sound region
- The capacity and the expertise of our many partners and subcontractors
- The commitment and support expressed by all of our stakeholders, including Policy Council, the PSESD Board of Directors, subcontractors, and community partners
- Our ability to respond to the identified priorities set forth by the Office of Head Start, namely increasing services to infants and toddlers, increasing full day programming, and increasing dosage for part day programs

The strength of our proposal is very much due to the incredible response and willingness of our current early learning partners to critically consider their ability to provide services in ways that are different from their current contracts and that are responsive to the identified priorities. Read more at: [Head Start 104 Re-competition Grant Update](#)

Congratulations on 187 Head Start Review!



Congratulations to Kent Youth and Family Services, Shoreline School District, Highline School District, Tukwila School District and all ESD Early Learning staff. We were found to be in 100% compliance on our Comprehensive Services and School Readiness (CSSR) Head Start review! We were one of the first grantees in the nation to go through this brand new CSSR monitoring protocol. The newness of the protocol put us in uncharted territory, yet we took on this review with an "all hands on deck" approach. At every level, people jumped in ... it didn't matter what needed to happen, everyone helped! Behind the scenes system work set the frame, consistent and frequent communication kept work moving forward, positive attitudes were contagious, high levels of responsiveness were everywhere, solution-based thinking was a cornerstone and shared leadership was the key!

Even as we were enjoying our success, we took time to meet with Center Directors and ESD staff to reflect on the review process. We identified what went well, what needs improvement, and did our best thinking about solutions and ways to improve upon our review processes and service implementation. As you see by the photo, we also took important time to give kudos to those who helped with the review. We are grateful for everyone who made this success possible!

2016 Omnibus Appropriations Bill Includes Funding Increase for Head Start

President Obama signed the Fiscal Year 2016 Omnibus Appropriations bill, which included a funding increase of more than half a billion dollars for Head Start! The bill passed on a bipartisan basis after months of intense negotiations by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Now, with the bill finalized, it's our job to thank Congress and the President - as well as understand exactly what is in the bill that impacts us, our families, and our communities. This significant increase is a huge step forward for our community and represents Congress' and the President's commitment to the success of our nation's most vulnerable children and families. **Will you take one minute to send a letter to Congress and the President thanking them for supporting and strengthening Head Start?** It's quick, easy and necessary for our long term success.

[Send Congress and the President a customized letter](#)

[For more information, see this NHTA news brief](#)



Seminar Series

IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

*Space is still available in many of the Seminar Series.
Register by Friday, January 8 to ensure your choice.
See the Education page of this Connector for details!*



PSESD Early Learning Staff – New Hires and Position Changes

Nubia Lopez, Early Learning Monitoring and Compliance Program Manager



Nubia Lopez will now be leading the work to create coherent systems for monitoring and compliance across the Early Learning Program. This is a new role for Nubia but she has served in many important roles at PSESD Early Learning since March of 2009. She implemented a variety of community engagement strategies with the White Center Early Learning Initiative and with Educare, played a key role as Project Manager in Early Learning, and led the implementation of WaKIDS for the PSESD region. Currently, she has been collaborating with Lori Pittman to integrate the Governance and Policy Council work. In all of these projects, Nubia brings her skills and expertise with systems development, management and organization, and she has excelled at creating efficiencies.

April Bowen, Education Technical Assistance Coordinator



We are very happy to welcome April Bowen to the Education Services area of our PSESD team. April has been working as a HS preschool teacher at Angle Lake and was with Hugs, Tugs and Love prior to joining the Angle Lake team. She is an innovative and vibrant teacher who has provided peer leadership and support to other teachers in their work with children and families. April will primarily be working directly with teaching staff to support their implementation of education services.

Antoinette Bunkasem, Region 1 Family Support Senior Regional Coordinator



Please join the Family Support Team in welcoming Antoinette Bunkasem as the new Family Support Senior Regional Coordinator. Antoinette is a past Head Start Parent. Her professional career includes 2 years as a Teacher Assistant and 4 years as a Family Support Specialist. She comes to us with a wealth of knowledge of ECEAP and Head Start family services. Antoinette is well connected to community resources and she is well versed in ELMS and ChildPlus. She's a great asset to PSESD, sites and centers, children and families.

Seminar Series Clock Hours and STARS Hours Information

Both Clock Hours and STARS hours will be available for Seminar Series. Participants can receive a total of 9 Clock Hours after attending all three sessions associated with their chosen Seminar Series. The fee for Clock Hours is \$18 for the series and must be paid by check to Puget Sound ESD at the third session of the series. Participants must attend all three sessions to receive Clock Hours. There is no charge for STARS hours. If you have questions about receiving Clock Hours, please contact Cheryl Habgood at chabgood@psed.org.

Multilingual Services Hires Interpreters for 2015-2016 School Year

Multilingual Services has finalized hiring of interpreters for the 2015-2016 school year. Those who were able to complete all of their hiring paperwork in time for publishing are now included in the updated version of the Interpreter List attached to the Connector email. Discard any old lists you might have. Those who are still in the process of completing their paperwork will be added to the list that will come out with the February Connector. *Remember to check to see if the interpreter you have called to do work is on our most current list. There is no way for the ESD to pay the interpreter if they are not current employees on our list.* The site/center will be responsible for paying for the interpreter services if an interpreter that is not on the list is used for Early Head Start, Head Start, or ECEAP families. If you have any questions, please contact Argentina Back at 425-917-7829 or aback@psed.org.

Franklin Pierce celebrates new Early Learning Center

For the first time in decades, preschool programs in the Franklin Pierce School District have a home of their own. Now, more than 300 Franklin Pierce preschoolers, ages 3 to 5, are back home in Parkland — the heart of their own school district — in a newly renovated facility designed especially for them. Read more at: [Franklin Pierce celebrates new early learning center](#) (Tacoma News Tribune, January 7, 2016)

WHAT'S NEW FOR CENTER DIRECTORS



Center Directors – Read Other Sections

Read each section of this Connector for important information related to implementing your program.



Monthly To-Do Lists/Deliverables

Use this checklist to ensure that you complete all required deliverables for this month.

[January To-Do/Deliverables](#)

Are You Attending Center Director Meetings?

Monthly Center Director Meetings are the primary way to participate in professional learning. It's where we can partner to provide technical assistance on policies, procedures, and contract deliverables. It's also where we communicate face-to-face about news and updates. Attendance at the meetings is a contract requirement. If you cannot attend a meeting, please send a representative. This month's meeting is Thursday, January 28.

Familiarize yourself with E-Alerts for December and January

These are urgent emails that have been sent out in the last month and are archived on www.EarlyLearningWA.org under the "All Staff HUB" on the [E-Alert Messages](#) page:

JANUARY 2016

- **January 5** — [Time Sensitive Information - Learning Lab this Friday, January 8 in Renton & Seminar Series Information](#)

DECEMBER 2015

- **December 11** — [Re-Competition Start-Up Survey due December 15](#)
- **December 10** — [Re-Competition Grant resources now available on PSESD Early Learning website](#)

WHAT'S NEW IN EDUCATION



Teaching Staff – Read Other Sections

Read the Health, Nutrition & Safety section and the Family Support section of the Connector for important information related to teaching staff.



Monthly To-Do List/Deliverables

Use this checklist to ensure that you complete all required deliverables for this month.

[January To-Do/Deliverables](#)



Seminar Series

IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

*Space is still available in many of the Seminar Series.
Register by Friday, January 8 to ensure your choice.*



Seminar Series: Strategies to Support Dual Language Learners in the Classroom (Open to Teaching Teams)

The number of students in our programs who are learning English as their second or third language is increasing. Learn how to support their acquisition of new language and world knowledge through effective instructional practices and family engagement.

- Fridays at the PSESD in Renton, January 22, February 19, March 18 [Register here](#)
- Fridays at Norpoint (Northeast Tacoma) - January 29, February 26, March 25 [Register here](#)

Seminar Series: Math and the Arts (Open to Teaching Teams)

Math skills in early childhood have high predictive power for a child's future success in school and life. Weaving Math and the Arts together is a proven method of effective instruction. Learn to embed math strategies into the curriculum without being worried about your own math knowledge!

- Fridays at the PSESD in Renton - January 15, February 5, March 11 [Register here](#)
- Fridays at the STAR Center in Tacoma - January 29, February 26, March 25 [Register here](#)

Seminar Series: Healthy Habits and School Readiness

(Open to Teaching Teams, Family Support Specialists and Family Advocates)

Health is an essential element of School Readiness. Develop intentional plans that target healthy habits of nutrition, oral health, physical activity, and healthy routines in the classroom. Discover how improved health can link to improved School Readiness outcomes.

- Fridays at the PSESD in Renton - January 29, February 26, March 25 [Register here](#)
- Fridays at the STAR Center in Tacoma - January 15, February 5, March 11 [Register here](#)

Seminar Series: Using a CLASS Lens to Support Quality Interactions in the Classroom (Open to Teaching Teams)

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) focuses on effective teaching and helps teaching staff recognize and understand the power of their interactions with children. Dig deeper into the CLASS domains of Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support to increase the quality of the interactions in your classroom and enhance outcomes for the children.

- Wednesdays at the PSESD in Renton - January 20, February 24, March 23 [Register here](#)
- Fridays at the STAR Center in Tacoma - January 22, February 19, March 18 [Register here](#)

The following Seminar Series sessions are FULL:

Seminar Series: Understanding Trauma

Seminar Series: Positive Behavioral Supports for Young Children with Challenging Behavior (both locations)

Seminar Series: How Race Impacts Our Work with Children, Families, and Staff

WHAT'S NEW IN FAMILY SUPPORT



Family Support – Read Other Sections

Read the Health, Nutrition & Safety section and the Education section of the Connector for important information related to Family Support staff.



Monthly To-Do List/Deliverables

Use this checklist to ensure that you complete all required deliverables for this month.

[January To-Do/Deliverables](#)

January Family Support/Health and Nutrition Training Dates

- Regions 3 & 4 - ESD Renton on Thursday, January 14
- Regions 1, 2 & 5 - STAR Center in Tacoma on Thursday, January 21

ECEAP Eligibility Verification Monitoring

Eligibility Verification Monitoring is well underway at ECEAP Centers and will continue through January 22, 2016. **Note:** The application date in ELMS should be the date the parent signed the paper application. When staff members complete the child application in ELMS, a date in the past can be entered but a future date cannot be entered. As long as a child has not been enrolled in ELMS, you can edit the application. Once a child is enrolled, the application is locked.

Peer Leadership Training and Bus Driver Training #2

Training for Peer Leadership, Peer Health & Peer Literacy, and Bus Driver #2 begins in January and runs through February. Please check in with parents who have signed up for these trainings to make sure they have the dates and support them around any potential obstacles around participation.

[Parent Professional Learning 2015-2016 Training Calendar](#)

Literacy Opportunity

Page Ahead Children's Literacy Program offers a free workshop for parents and caregivers to help strengthen family involvement in reading. A Page Ahead trainer can come to your preschool to present the "Families Read" workshop. For more information, please see [Page Ahead](#).

WHAT'S NEW IN HEALTH & NUTRITION



Read Other Sections

Read the Education section and the Family Support section of the Connector for important information related to your work.



Monthly To-Do List/Deliverables

Use this checklist to ensure that you complete all required deliverables for this month.

[January To-Do/Deliverables](#)

New Lead Testing Requirements in Washington State

Lead testing for children in Washington state lags behind the rest of the country and soon will be mandatory for children receiving Medicaid. A settlement of a recent law suit against the state Medicaid system reports that in recent years only about 3 percent of children have been screened in Washington compared to about 11 percent nationwide with potentially 14,000 children with undetected lead poisoning. If approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, health care providers in our state would follow a targeted screening process including the completion of a questionnaire that would determine whether children might be exposed to lead based on their living situation, family income, or their parents' jobs.

Informing our Early Learning Program families about new lead testing procedures will be most important. Let them know to ask their children's health care provider about lead testing regardless of whether they receive Medicaid or have private health insurance. Read more about the law suit and the new lead testing protocol: [More children will be tested for lead under lawsuit settlement](#)

Check out the [Online Map](#) showing levels of lead exposure in areas of Washington State.

Disaster Preparedness in the Classroom Disaster Kit

Are you taking the classroom's Disaster Kit with you for all emergency drills? The [Disaster Supply Kit Procedure](#) indicates that the kit should be movable so it can be taken out with staff and children during monthly fire and quarterly All Hazard drills. Items in the kit will be needed in the case of a real disaster so it's important to practice moving it. If it is not movable, make necessary revisions so it can be moved during drills and real disaster situations. Read the following procedures in the ELPM soon so that you are prepared to manage an emergency in the classroom. Contact your Senior Regional Health Coordinator or Health/Nutrition Technical Assistance Coordinator for assistance and more information.

The [All Hazard Preparedness Section](#) of ELPM includes the following procedures:

[All Hazard Preparedness Procedure](#)

[All Hazard Preparedness Incident Command System Guidance](#)

[Disaster Supply Kit Procedure](#)

[Fire Drill Procedure](#)

[Earthquake Procedure](#)

[Lockdown Procedure](#)

Please complete these checklists as directed:

[Daily Classroom Safety Checklist](#) (ongoing)

[Monthly Classroom Health and Safety Checklist](#) (ongoing)

[Classroom Emergency Plan for Accident or Illness Form](#) (as needed)

[Site Readiness and Safety Checklist Form - Center Director](#) (should have already been completed)

[Site Readiness and Safety Checklist Form - Classroom](#) (should have already been completed)

Disaster Planning for Families

Our weather has been unusually finicky this year. Families may benefit from reminders about how to plan for emergency situations. Please remind them that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Red Cross do more than clean up after disasters. Both organizations are valuable resources for accident and disaster prevention and planning with emphasis on what to do in case of flooding, fires and severe weather conditions. The [FEMA website](#) has been translated into 20 languages. The [Red Cross website](#) includes a *Plan and Prepare* section featuring checklists for home fire, earthquake and landslide safety also in many languages. These are important resources to share with your families.

Early Learning Program Manual (ELPM) Changes

Change in Child Health Plan and Provider Orders Form – Dietary Accommodations

Please note that the USDA Child Nutrition Services has added more types of medical health providers who may sign a Disability Classification form. ([Child Health Plan and Provider Orders Form – Dietary Accommodations – Food Allergies/Intolerance](#).) The following provider types may now sign the form: MD – Medical Doctor; DO – Doctor of Osteopathy; PA – Physician's Assistant; ARNP – Nurse Practitioner; NP – Naturopathic Physician.

This change will be updated in the Early Learning Program Manual (ELPM). For more details please link to: [Statements Supporting Accommodations for Children with Disabilities in the Child Nutrition Programs](#)

New Safe Bottle Handling and Preparation Procedure

A new document has been added to ELPM to provide guidance to our Early Head Start site staff. The [Safe Bottle Handling and Preparation Procedure](#) outlines best practices for the safe handling of bottles in infant rooms including storage and preparation of formula, cleaning bottles, and handling of breast milk. Please download and review this document. Contact your Regional Nutrition Coordinator or Health/Nutrition Technical Assistance Coordinator for clarification and questions.