

1.2 Preschool for All Vision

Preschool for All vision: High-quality preschool that is affordable and available to all 3- and 4-year-olds in the City of Seattle and prepares children to reach their full potential in kindergarten and beyond. All 3- and 4-year-olds who participate in Preschool for All (PFA) program benefit substantially in language, math, and self-regulation. By meeting the individual needs of each child, PFA promotes equality of opportunity to succeed in school and life. Children with the greatest needs receive additional support and more intensive services within the program.

PFA is a systems change strategy and the leading edge of education reform. To produce systemic impacts it must truly be “for all.” Enrollment of children with the greatest needs is significantly facilitated when eligibility determination depends only on residence, and not on a complex and imperfect needs assessment, and there is no stigma associated with participation. While children from low-income families learn more in preschool when they attend alongside children from middle-income families, all children benefit from mixed income classrooms.¹⁸ As students progress through kindergarten and the later grades, teachers spend less time on remediation and managing disruptive students and can change their teaching to recognize the greater capabilities of their students. These systemic changes can only happen if PFA actually reaches the vast majority of children.

1.3 Quality Before Quantity

Despite our best efforts, too many of our city’s children are not thriving in school. Nearly a quarter of children in Seattle Public Schools cannot read at grade level in the 3rd grade—an early warning sign that they might not graduate from high school. This statistic is significantly worse for our African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and immigrant youth.

Several long-term evaluations show that children who attend high-quality preschools are better prepared to enter kindergarten and ready to learn. Later in life, they have lower rates of special education enrollment and less grade repetition and better high school and college graduation rates. They have much lower levels of criminal behavior and decreased use of social services and lower health care costs. They are healthier, and as adults are better off financially.

However, high-quality preschool is the key to effectiveness and outcomes, making it imperative that quality standards are not sacrificed in order to expand access.¹⁹ At the same time we know that there are children who would benefit from quality preschool care who are not currently served, making expanding access to affordable, high-quality care an imperative. Economist Dr. Timothy Bartik has argued that “economic development strategies in the United States should include extensive investments in high-quality early childhood programs...” because it improves employment opportunities for local residents.²⁰ While clearly a long-term outcome, it is nonetheless one that would benefit the city as a whole.

The need for rapid and efficient growth will require that Seattle take advantage of existing resources. While some programs will need time to meet Preschool for All (PFA) standards, it is imperative that the Office for Education (OFE) stay as close to the ultimate goal as possible. If Seattle taxpayers vote to implement a program that promises to substantively improve academic outcomes and life success for all children, PFA must deliver. Providing anything less than what the research shows is necessary will not deliver results and could threaten the long-term existence of PFA.

Locations that have increased access with the intention of improving quality later have typically created a constituency that impedes further movement to standards. In Florida, for example, the quality has decreased since its inception. New Mexico and New York continue to extend the period for teachers to be hired without full qualifications, and Texas has no limits on class size with no sign of this changing. A program that starts by adhering closely to the quality standards is the safest and most effective method.

1.4 Plan Development Approach

These recommendations for a Preschool for All (PFA) Action Plan and accompanying Financial Model were developed by a consultant team of BERK Consulting, Columbia City Consulting, Dr. Ellen Frede, and Dr. Steven Barnett. This recommended Plan builds from the parameters described in the “Preschool for All” resolution, previous research and efforts at the city and state levels, evidence-based practices, and rigorous scientific research.

Research

In developing the Plan, the Team reviewed and summarized relevant research related to programmatic features and other components, including Service Delivery, Tuition and Tuition Support, Timeline and Phase-In, Capacity Building, Coordination with Current Programs and Funding Sources, Kindergarten Transitions, and Outcomes and Evaluation.

Research on program elements followed four lines of questioning:

- What does the research suggest?
- What do the national experts say?
- What are promising practices elsewhere?
- What is the local context perspective?

The research reviewed for this report spans many different fields and includes everything from child development and cognitive science theory to economics and sociology to studies of learning and teaching and professional development to evaluations of specific programs or practices. Although it is common to give advice based on the most recent study of a particular topic, we followed best practice by attempting to bring all of the relevant knowledge to bear on each issue. This task inevitably required many judgments, and we acknowledge that there are differences of opinion on several issues. However, we endeavored to provide information and recommended options around what works and will produce the best outcomes for children to aid in the decision-making process around PFA implementation.

Stakeholder Consultations and Outreach

The consultant team scheduled individual consultations with stakeholders and experts here in Washington State and nationally on specific topics ranging from lessons learned from the implementation of universal preschool programs in Boston and New Jersey, to dual language learners and culture, to Washington State’s Quality Rating Improvement System—Early Achievers. Once a draft recommended Plan was developed, ten local and national experts reviewed it and provided comments based on their area of expertise.

To help with the local perspective, the City convened **three rounds** of six workgroups to serve as a resource to Plan development and provide feedback on initial recommendations. The workgroups comprised representatives from the local early learning provider community, various city departments, community-based organizations, county and state agencies, and others.

The six workgroups were convened around the following topics:

- Data Management
- Finance
- Health
- Infrastructure
- Program Quality and Capacity
- Workforce Development

Approximately 110 people from 60 organizations participated in the workgroups. Members of the consultant team attended workgroup meetings to learn more about what stakeholders believe and want with respect to PFA. While much of this information was incorporated into the Plan, we have also developed our own recommendations and explained our rationale. There may be reasons to depart from some of the Plan recommendations that are not specifically research-based to account for the local context, and we expect that PFA will continue to adapt and evolve during the implementation phase.

Community Engagement

Community engagement was done by the City of Seattle's Office for Education (OFE). OFE's Community Outreach Manager met with preschool providers, families, and others across Seattle with an interest in the recommendations of the Action Plan to hear their ideas and input and provide information on the objectives of Preschool for All. Staff from OFE met with representatives from over 80 organizations that included education providers, advocates, unions, cultural groups, and education-focused coalitions.

In March and April, OFE convened four public meetings to provide information about PFA and hear participants' thoughts on topics ranging from cost for families to teacher training to language and culture to assessments. The City provided childcare and dinner for participants. Meetings were held in Southwest Seattle (High Point Community Center), Southeast Seattle (South Shore preK-8 School), North Seattle (Northgate Community Center), and Central Seattle (Garfield Community Center).

The City also hosted PFA webpages under both the Seattle City Council and OFE. All meetings, including workgroups, were noticed there along with local media coverage links and key documents.

1.5 Implementation Considerations

The recommendations in this Action Plan are intended to establish a **framework for Preschool for All** (PFA). The City is the ultimate decision maker and will need to make choices about PFA and continue work on the details of implementation. These would include scale and scope of PFA; programmatic elements; roles and responsibilities; the preschool assignment process; and evaluating the final program against the Racial Equity Toolkit, among other things.

Although we recommend that the City develop clear and specific regulations for all standards of quality, we also suggest delineation of a **waiver process** whereby potential providers, current providers, parents, and other stakeholders can propose different but equally rigorous avenues for meeting standards or provide evidence of other effective methods. The City should include provisions in the waiver process for deviation from a standard where appropriate. In addition, the landscape for publicly funded preschool is developing quickly and the City should be ready to respond to opportunities that may arise based on state or federal initiatives that could conceivably require rapid adjustments to existing PFA regulations.

Our team would like to underline the following key points for consideration, as the City embarks on PFA implementation:

- **The key to success is excellent teaching.** This requires hiring and retaining excellent teachers. A path toward pay parity with the Seattle Public Schools is essential to achieve this goal. Failure to do so could preclude continuous improvement and would lead to high costs for recruiting and training teaching staff. In addition, excellent teaching will not be developed or sustained without expert support for ongoing teacher development.
- **To keep costs low, while achieving excellence, focus resources on learning and teaching.** This means minimizing PFA expenditures on other services for children and families that are available from other agencies, minimizing compliance paperwork (as opposed to continuous improvement and accountability efforts), and minimizing administrative overhead at the program and city levels.
- **Keep program design flexible enough so that the program can evolve as needs and circumstances change.** There should be a way for programs to test innovations or new practices and to evaluate their efficacy in practice.
- **PFA will be more cost effective and may be easier for providers to adopt if it is built upon and enhances existing local and state preschool efforts and resources.** Seattle's existing programs for preschoolers, including those for the lowest income children (Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead) all have "built-in" quality standards that can be enhanced to meet PFA requirements. In addition, the state's quality improvement efforts for child care (Early Achievers system) can be leveraged to provide a quality foundation for potential PFA providers. This would allow Seattle PFA to focus resources toward higher levels of quality that meet PFA standards, achieve the goals of reaching all children, and provide preschool in mixed income settings. Strategic implementation plans to build on existing efforts and forge partnerships with the state's Department of Early Learning and others will be critical to PFA's success.
- **The optimal schedule and manner in which to roll out PFA depends on a variety of factors that are uncertain or subject to change.** The most obvious is the amount of funding available each year. Others include teacher qualifications and the time over which teachers become fully qualified, staff compensation, staffing configuration and class size, and even the services provided. We have provided a planning-level interactive cost model that can be used to spell out the implications of alternative budgets and program configurations and ramp-up rates. We recommend that the City is flexible about sharing this model with interested parties so that the implications of various alternatives can be publicly examined with complete transparency.
- **Scale matters a great deal for cost.** When scaling up, it is important not to grow administration disproportionately at the city level. Scaling up specialized city administration and support gradually as the program grows, while relying on the flexible use of existing administration in the short-term could be more cost-effective.

Similarly, requiring small centers to have the same administration and support personnel as large providers could be much too costly. The solution is shared services and consolidation. Hubs and cooperatives that provide administration and support for cooperating programs are an example. Flexible regulations that do not require full-time administrators at every site are another option.

1.6 About this Action Plan

We encourage Seattle not to over-plan the details and prepare to adapt and evolve. Change is inevitable and could bring funding or other opportunities. The City should plan to use the data collected after program implementation to make the necessary adjustments to ensure the best outcomes for children. These recommendations present several starting points from which there will inevitably be some movement.

Following this Introduction, the recommended Action Plan is organized into the following sections:

- **Section 2.0** outlines the Delivery System. How Preschool for All (PFA) should be delivered, who would oversee it and who would provide the services—since many of the programmatic elements depend on the model.
- **Section 3.0** discusses nine programmatic features of PFA. For each feature, we summarize key findings from the research, discuss the local context, outline the options, make recommendations, and then finish with the rationale for the recommendations.
- **Section 4.0** outlines a timeline and proposal to get to full program implementation. This section presents options for bringing on PFA providers and for budgeting annual costs. It also addresses capacity building from the standpoint of facilities, organizations, and staff professional development.
- **Section 5.0** discusses oversight of the PFA program and the Office for Education responsibilities and staffing for PFA.
- **Section 6.0** discusses accountability and program evaluation options for PFA, including recommendations for evaluations of sites, classrooms, and children, and an external evaluation of the program overall. It also makes recommendations for baseline data collection and a system to facilitate collection of feedback.
- **Section 7.0** outlines the financial implications of PFA and summarizes the potential costs, funding sources, and tuition model.

2.0 DELIVERY SYSTEM AND PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

This section examines how services will be delivered to children in Preschool for All (PFA). After reviewing the research on this issue and providing an overview of how other universal preschool programs have been delivered, this section looks at the local Seattle context, and how the PFA delivery system can draw on the many existing community resources. In addition to private and nonprofit providers, options for including Seattle's publicly funded early learning programs are considered. This section includes options and recommendations for provider eligibility to provide PFA services.

2.1 Research and Delivery Systems in Other Jurisdictions

Overview

"Delivery system" is defined as the method by which program funding and standards are used to provide services for children and families. Direct delivery and mixed delivery are two of the most common delivery systems.

- Seattle Public Schools delivers its K-12 education services using a **direct delivery model**. The district hires teachers and other staff and services are housed and delivered in buildings it owns.
- In a **mixed delivery system**, two or more organizations are involved in delivery, as with the City of Seattle's Step Ahead program. The City manages the funding, sets program standards, determines provider eligibility, and provides a variety of supports. The direct delivery of services is contracted out to an array of child care, Head Start, and preschool programs, which employ the teachers and provide facilities.
- In some cases, an organization can use **both systems**, directly delivering some services, while contracting out others. For example, Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) Head Start operates its Educare Center in White Center with PSESD staff in a building owned by PSESD, but contracts out the majority of its Head Start services to King and Pierce county school districts, child care centers, and other organizations.

The best delivery system builds on existing strengths in a community, considers the capacity of organizations that could be involved in delivery, and chooses the delivery system that will provide the best services. Regardless of which delivery system is selected, it needs to be dynamic, so that it can add professional and organizational capacity as needed to reach child outcomes.

What delivery models have other jurisdictions used?

Most other jurisdictions have used one of the following models:

- A school district either operates a universal preK (UPK) program directly or serves as the hub for an integrated school district/mixed delivery system (Boston, New Jersey, Washington, D.C.). There is research suggesting strong outcomes for this model.
- A city launches the program by operating model centers and then in later years contracts with school districts and private providers (San Antonio).
- All services are provided by private providers and school districts operating in their own facilities with some other entity providing contract management and quality assurance (county-based Early Learning Coalitions in Florida).

Even in cities where the school district operates most preK classes directly, a mixed delivery option has been developed to draw on community resources, often to supplement limited district facilities.

- In Boston, the school district operates most preK programs and currently serves 2,400 children. The recently launched Boston K1DS initiative uses public funds for 14 preK classes located at 10 community-based agencies, currently serving 280 children. These centers can provide the extended-day, full-year services that many families need.
- In Washington, D.C., there is capacity to serve all families wishing to access preK services for their 3- and 4-year-olds. Public funds based on the school funding formula allow 50% of the children to be served by charter public schools, 46% by public schools, and 4% by community-based organizations (CBO). Supply actually exceeds demand, with the CBOs the most underutilized.
- In San Francisco, the school district serves 25% of eligible children, while First 5 San Francisco, funded by a state tobacco tax, is ramping up preK services provided by CBOs.
- There is also at least one city that directly operates its own preK program, with plans to develop a mixed delivery option. San Antonio has opened two preK Education Centers, and will open two more in the next year, to serve a total of 1,700 4-year-olds. This program is funded by a small increase in the sales tax, and currently all staff at these centers are city employees. Beginning in 2016, the City will begin to give competitive grants to school districts and community partners, which will eventually provide preK services to an additional 1,700 children.

Is there research on the effectiveness of delivery systems?

Because each city and state has different circumstances, there is no research comparing outcomes for these delivery systems. Most city-funded programs use a mix of public and private providers. Most research concludes that the best outcomes for children are achieved when school districts either operate preK programs directly, or serve as “the hub of a system that integrates these programs into a high-quality system of preschool education.”²¹

Additional research by Walter Gilliam argues that public schools have the capacity to build a skilled teacher workforce, and to provide the best access to special education services. But he also points out that Head Start classes outperform schools on providing comprehensive services, and that there are many high-quality (as well as low-quality) nonprofit and for-profit child care programs, which have the added benefit of providing extended hours. He concludes that the best option is “a mixed delivery system that keeps the public schools as a stabilizing centerpiece,” accesses other funding and providers such as child care and Head Start, all “coordinated through the local public school system (as) the best option for providing the full array of services of children and families need.”²²

Where is a hub model used and has it been effective?

Puget Sound Educational Service District uses a hub model to provide full-day services to about 360 children in about 20 child care centers. These centers range from small, privately owned centers to centers run by community colleges, school districts, and large private nonprofit organizations. In addition, PSESD serves about 35 Head Start children (birth to five) in family child care settings. Based on federal reviews of these programs operating in a hub model, services meet all Head Start standards, and are as strong as those in PSESD’s more traditional part-day Head Start classes.

What is the role of family child care providers?

Family child care (FCC) is an integral part of child care services. In Seattle, based on our analysis of the Department of Early Learning’s (DEL) data on *licensed* child care centers and family child care providers, approximately 23% of all children in licensed child care are in family child care, while the remaining 77%

are in child care centers. Family child care often offers care for infants, toddlers, and school-age children in addition to preschool services, making it more likely that a family can bring all their children to one provider. Family child care also offers some parents the opportunity to have their children cared for by those who share cultural norms and values.

While family child care providers are common, we found no examples of using a family child care model in preschool programs. While there is some research showing that providing professional development and other support to family child care improves the quality of services, we found no research on the effectiveness of family child care in achieving preK outcomes.

Head Start has recognized family child care as a viable option for delivering its services and has made it one of their service delivery models. Recently, the federal government expressed interest in building partnerships between family child care and Early Head Start programs serving infants and toddlers. Locally, Puget Sound ESD's Head Start program contracts with approximately 10 family child care providers who provide Head Start services to about 35 children, two-thirds of whom are under 3 years old. While these programs have been found to meet Head Start performance standards during federal reviews, as stated above, there is no research on how these children fare in the elementary grades. In Los Angeles and other locations, family child care is used to deliver Early Head Start services serving infants and toddlers.²³

As of March 2014, DEL has made new full-day Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) (state-funded preK) slots open to licensed family child care providers participating in Early Achievers (Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)). Due to minimum slot requirements, family child care providers will need to apply for these slots via consortium with other providers or via an existing ECEAP provider.

2.2 Local Context: Landscape of Early Learning Providers

In order to understand options and recommendations for a mixed delivery system, it is critical to know that the early learning landscape in Seattle is a patchwork of providers, comprising:

- Licensed child care centers and family child care (FCC) homes (licensed by the Washington Department of Early Learning (DEL)).
- Government-operated programs, including Seattle Public Schools, and community and technical colleges.
- Private schools.
- Preschool providers operating programs less than four hours per day (not licensed by DEL).

These organizations can be for profit, nonprofit, and government-run. The discussion below outlines characteristics of these different types of providers.

Preschool-Age Providers Licensed or Certified by DEL

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) in Washington State issues child care licenses to child care centers and family child care homes that operate for more than four hours per day. To obtain a license, providers must pass a criminal background check, attend initial and ongoing training, and work with a licenser to ensure that the center or home environment meets and maintains the state's health and safety standards.

- **Child care centers.** Child care centers offer full- or part-time child care in commercial, privately owned, school, or faith-based spaces. Depending on the license, child care center providers may care for children ages one month through 12 years. Generally, children are cared for in groups with similar-aged children, although smaller centers may have mixed-age groups for parts of the day.
- **Family child care homes.** Family child care providers offer full- or part-time child care in the home of the provider. Depending on the license, family home providers may care for up to 12 children through 12 years of age. Children are generally in mixed-age groups within a home-like setting. With the exception of a limit on children under two years old, the provider can take children of any age up to 12. For example, if a provider is licensed for six children, all six children could be 3 or 4 years old or they could have no children that age.

As shown in Exhibit 2 below, most enrollment capacity is provided by the centers. In Seattle, as in King County, family child care homes outnumber child care centers by at least two to one, but centers are usually larger. Between 68% and 76% of preschool-age children that are enrolled in *licensed* programs are cared for in centers; these figures include some Head Start provider agencies.

Exhibit 2
Estimated Number of Facilities and Enrollment Capacity* for Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Providers in Seattle

| | Child Care Centers | | FCCs | | Total |
|--|--------------------|------------|--------|------------|---------------|
| | Number | % of Total | Number | % of Total | |
| Total Number of Facilities | 187 | 33% | 388 | 67% | 575 |
| Total Capacity (# slots)** | 11,829 | 78% | 3,358 | 22% | 15,187 |
| Capacity for 3- and 4-Year-Olds (# slots) | | | | | |
| Estimated based on DEL data | 3,585 | 76% | 1,129 | 24% | 4,714 |
| Estimated based on CCR data | 3,030 | 68% | 1,430 | 32% | 4,460 |

* Enrollment capacity = supply of child care, measured in number of slots. A slot is a space for one child in a child care center or family child care home.

** Total capacity is for all ages that providers are licensed for (anywhere between birth and 12 years old).

Source: Department of Early Learning, 2013; Seattle Preschool for All Initiative, Analysis of Preschool Enrollment report, 2014.

Preschool-Age Providers Not Licensed by DEL

Government-Operated Programs

If a program is operated by any unit of local, state, or federal government, including school districts and community colleges or an Indian tribe, it is exempt from DEL's licensing requirements. However, any of these public organizations can voluntarily choose to be "certified," meaning that it has been certified as meeting all licensing requirements. In order to receive Working Connections Child Care funding, any child care program must be either licensed or certified. In Seattle, programs operated by the Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Parks Preschool Program, and Head Start programs, among others, are not licensed because they operate for less than four hours per day, or because they do not access state child care subsidies, or both. However, they can choose to become certified at any time they are operating a program for more than four hours per day.

Seattle Public Schools

While the primary focus of Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is to provide K-12 education, SPS is also involved with providing early education experiences to 3- and 4-year-olds. SPS provides direct services through the following programs:

- **Head Start.** SPS operates classrooms at 10 elementary school sites (for a total of 410 slots). All sites are part-day. Most sites have always been part-day; the few full-day classes, operated by subcontractors, were eliminated because of sequestration cuts.
- **PreK at South Shore PreK-8.** The program serves 4-year-olds who then move to kindergarten in the same school. The teachers are certified staff, are an integral part of the school staff, and stay with a cohort of students from preschool into the primary grades. This program is levy-funded and also receives foundation support. The program's enrollment capacity is 20 children.
- **Developmental preschools.** These schools provide mandated special education services (per Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B), and are generally attached to schools. There are currently 17 developmental preschools open half-days four days per week (14 hours/week). The enrollment capacity is 352 children with developmental delays, as well as up to 112 typically developing peers, for a total capacity of 464 children. Some children attend Head Start for three-and-one-half hours and then developmental preschools (transportation between programs is provided by SPS).

Program locations fluctuate depending on demand and space availability; there is no specific dedicated space. Although the goal is to serve children at the school where they will attend kindergarten, there is a tension between capacity for other grades and location of developmental preschools.

In addition, SPS has **alignment agreements with community-based providers** operating preschool programs at approximately 28 elementary school sites, mostly at Title I schools. These providers serve approximately 620 children in a variety of part-time and full-time programs. These programs must be licensed by DEL if they operate for more than four hours per day, because they are operated by non-district organizations. They are included in the figures in Exhibit 1, while others not included in the Exhibit operate less than four hours per day and are unlicensed.

City of Seattle Parks Preschool Program

The City of Seattle Parks Preschool Program serves 2.5- to 5-year-olds through 13 Community Centers. In 2012, 343 children were served through half-day classes. The program is fee-based; however, the City provides facilities and administrative support.

Private Schools

There are approximately 40 private preschools certified by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), as part of the private school system. These preschools are typically part of private elementary schools and create a continuum of care for children from early ages through later years.

Providers Operating Less than Four Hours per Day

Programs (public or private) that operate less than four hours per day are exempt from DEL licensing (RCW 43.215.010(2)). There is very limited information about children in preschools that provide care for four hours or less per day. Some programs may be accredited through their particular program approach, such as Montessori or Waldorf.

Child Care Resources (CCR), the King County affiliate of Child Care Aware, a national network of child care resource and referral organizations, maintains a database of center-based providers, family child care centers, and preschool-only providers in King County. Programs that operate less than four hours per day may have business licenses, but do not consistently submit information to CCR.

There are 82 preschools in the CCR database, meaning that these facilities received CCR referrals or had other contact with CCR. This information is voluntarily reported to CCR and likely underestimates the number of unlicensed preschools.

Publicly Funded Programs

Early Education Programs: Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead

Three **publicly funded programs** fund early education services for children from low-income families: the federally funded Head Start program, the state-funded Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and the City of Seattle-funded Step Ahead program.

These programs provide funding to serve children by contracting with a variety of organizations to provide preschool services. Providers that contract with Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead to provide services to 3- and 4- year-olds are included in one of the provider categories described above.

Collectively, these programs provided funding that served **over 2,000** 3- and 4-year-old children in 2012-13, representing approximately **17% of all 3- and 4-year-old children** (12% of 3-year-olds and 22% of 4-year-olds).

Exhibit 3
Total Number of Funded Slots and Enrollment in Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead Programs, 2012-13

| | 2012-13 Funded Slots | Estimated Enrollment of 3- and 4-Year-Olds | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|--|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | | 3 Year Olds | 4 Year Olds | Other Ages | Total |
| Head Start | 1,128 | 539 | 759 | 0 | 1,298 |
| ECEAP | 330 | 73 | 290 | 0 | 363 |
| Step Ahead* | 350 | 134 | 256 | 8 | 398 |
| Total | 1,808 | 746 | 1,305 | 8 | 2,059 |

* Levy-funded slots only

Source: City of Seattle, 2013; Head Start Region X, 2013; BERK, 2013.

Note: Due to the loss of federal funding, the number of funded Head Start slots in Seattle will decrease from 1,128 to 855 in 2013-14 (loss of 273 slots).

Head Start and ECEAP serve the lowest-income children — those at or below 110% of federal poverty level (ECEAP) or below 130% of federal poverty level (Head Start). According to DEL, in Seattle 68% of 4-year-olds from families at or below 110% of federal poverty level (FPL) are currently enrolled in either Head Start or ECEAP. When Step Ahead, which serves children at up to 300% of FPL, is included and 3-year olds are considered, these three programs serve approximately 43% of the estimated number of 3- and 4-year-olds under 300% of FPL (4,800 children).

Thus, a large number of 3- and 4-year-olds who may be at risk for poor academic achievement are currently being served in Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead programs and ***including these programs in PFA efforts will be critical to closing the achievement gap in Seattle.***

Head Start

The federal Head Start program funds comprehensive child development services to children from low-income families. At least 90% of enrolled families must be at or below 130% of federal poverty level (FPL), and a maximum of 35% can be between 100% and 130% of FPL. Children are eligible, when space is available, if they are foster/kinship care or other areas of the child welfare system, homeless, or on a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash grant. In addition, up to 10% of children can be from families who are above the income limits.

Head Start serves children **ages 3 to 5**. Head Start provides grants to local public agencies and private nonprofit and for-profit entities. In 2012-13, there were five Head Start grantees in Seattle, which together provided funding for 1,128 slots:

- Denise Louie Education Center
- First A.M.E. Child Development Center (FAME CDC)
- Neighborhood House
- Seattle Public Schools (SPS)
- United Indians of All Tribes Foundation

In 2013, FAME CDC and the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation lost federal funding and discontinued their Head Start programs as of June 30, 2013, collectively losing 330 slots. Children's Home Society and Puget Sound Educational Service District gained 57 slots in Seattle. With these changes, the number of funded slots declined to 855 for 2013-14.

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

Funded through DEL and the City of Seattle, ECEAP funds free, culturally and linguistically appropriate preschool services for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds. ECEAP families must be at or below 110% of federal poverty level.

During the 2012-13 school year, ECEAP funded 330 allocated slots at eight provider agencies in Seattle:

- José Martí Child Development Center
- Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA)
- Tiny Tots Development Center
- The Experimental Education Unit (EEU)
- Prospect Enrichment Preschool
- Primm ABC Child Care Center
- The Refugee and Immigrant Family Center (RIFC)
- SeaMar Community Health Center

City of Seattle Step Ahead Program

Funded by the City of Seattle's Families and Education Levy, Step Ahead provides free or low-cost, culturally and linguistically appropriate preschool services to eligible children. Step Ahead is open to 3- and 4-year-olds of families earning up to 300% of federal poverty level.

During the 2012-13 school year, the program provided direct funding for 350 preschool slots within nine preschool providers in Seattle (at multiple sites):

- José Martí Child Development Center
- Community Day School Association
- Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA)
- Sound Child Care Solutions
- Causey's Learning Center
- Denise Louie Education Center

- Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC)
- Neighborhood House
- The New School (South Shore PreK-8)

Step Ahead includes both Levy-funded and match slots. Step Ahead agencies are required to provide a match for every Levy-funded child in order to create “blended” classrooms. Match slots include children whose tuition is paid by other sources, including ECEAP and tuition paid by parents. There were 251 match slots in 2012-13.

Programs Providing Child Care Subsidies

There are two primary child care assistance programs available to low-income families in Seattle: Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and City of Seattle Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). These programs typically help families pay for child care so they can be employed. In some cases, these programs pay for additional child care on top of participation in Head Start, ECEAP, or Step Ahead.

Working Connections Child Care

The WCCC Program helps low-income families pay for child care expenses for children birth to 12, while parents are working, looking for work, or in an approved training program. This program is funded by state and federal dollars, and is administered jointly by the Department of Early Learning and the Department of Social and Health Services. Eligibility is determined by household income and the number of people in the family, and is available to families earning up to 200% of federal poverty level (FPL). All parents in the program make co-payments, which are determined on a sliding scale. Generally, ECEAP and Head Start families are eligible for the WCCC Program if they meet its work requirements.

City of Seattle Child Care Assistance Program

The City of Seattle helps low- and moderate-income working families pay for child care for children ages one month to 13 years. These subsidies are mainly for working families needing full-day child care who have incomes above the WCCC eligibility limit and up to 300% of FPL. Families can choose from more than approximately 135 licensed family child care homes and centers in Seattle.

At the time of enrollment, the family is given a voucher, which authorizes monthly child care payments to the child care home or center that they choose from the list provided. The amount of the payment from the City varies according to the income of the family, age of the child, and hours of care needed. The City typically pays between 25% and 70% of a standardized rate, and the family is responsible for paying the difference between that rate and the provider’s regular monthly rate.

In addition, for families with incomes above the WCCC eligibility limit and whose children attend Step Ahead agencies, the City of Seattle also provides subsidies to help pay for full-day care (Early Learning Network Subsidy).

2.3 Including Publicly Funded Early Education Programs in PFA

Providers funded by public programs such as Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Head Start, and Step Ahead are good candidates for Preschool for All (PFA), provided they agree to meet PFA standards.

Advantages

- These programs already serve a large percentage of Seattle's at-risk children, giving them expertise in this area.
- Staff in these programs, on average, have higher qualifications (e.g., BA and AA degrees) and have received more professional development than the larger universe of providers.
- Many of these programs are already implementing key quality improvement efforts that may align with PFA requirements/standards. These include participation in Early Achievers (Washington's Quality Rating Improvement System), use of common quality assessment tools such as Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and data collection and tracking of individual child assessment data. In fact, the state legislature and Department of Early Learning (DEL) have mandated that all ECEAP programs participate in Early Achievers by the end of 2015. In addition, all three programs have built in professional development components (with trainers, coaches, and other staff) that may be leveraged or integrated into PFA efforts.
- These programs bring significant state and federal resources, which would allow Seattle's PFA program to spend less per child than for children financed entirely by City funds. For example, in Boston, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, universal preschool programs often pay only \$2,000-\$3,000 per child above the available Head Start funding, to have children receive services for a considerably longer period.
- A key component of Head Start and ECEAP is a well-developed family and parent engagement component. As PFA grows to provide services to at-risk children in more mixed-income settings, these programs can share their expertise and experience in this area to help develop new models for family support that serve all children based on need.
- Including these programs would provide PFA with a strategy to include at-risk children in the program from the beginning, reinforcing the "for all" concept, rather than having to integrate programs later.
- The City of Seattle created the Step Ahead program as a preschool program for at-risk 3- and 4-year-old children. The City funds Step Ahead, sets the program standards and eligibility requirements, and contracts the program to private organizations. With PFA, the City will be creating a preschool program with higher standards, increased dosage, and universal access. If Step Ahead programs also become PFA sites, the City will have created a win-win situation. The Step Ahead program will provide protected eligibility for low-income families, and the City will have a unified approach to its preschool services, rather than running separate programs operating in silos.
- The City of Seattle currently contracts with the state to provide 330 ECEAP slots. Although the City subcontracts these slots to community providers, it is responsible for assuring that program standards and outcomes are achieved and funds are spent properly. The City also provides technical assistance and training for these programs. These are, in every way, the City's ECEAP slots. The City has the authority to mandate that its ECEAP programs become part of Seattle's PFA and that decision would align with current efforts to transform ECEAP into a model that could align with future statewide universal preK (UPK) efforts. Currently DEL is providing opportunities to expand ECEAP, providing new funding to implement new full-day ECEAP services and convert current part-

day ECEAP to full-day models. As with Step Ahead, the ECEAP slots would have protected eligibility for low-income families, but would eliminate duplication, confusion among parents, and siloed services if the City mandated that all its ECEAP programs become part of PFA.

Potential Disadvantages/Challenges

- While some of the existing preschool programs for low-income students offer a full-day program, it is usually a model that “wraps” child care around a two-and-one-half to four-hour preschool program. Most existing programs would need to greatly increase hours/dosage to meet PFA requirements.
- Some existing publicly funded providers have been implementing the same model for many years, and may resist change. For most providers, however, additional standards accompanied by an increase in funding to produce better outcomes for children should be an attractive offer.²⁴
- Ideally, over time, PFA would serve low-income children in a more mixed-income setting. Changes related to achieving this may prove challenging, especially developing a mixed-income model for comprehensive services.
- Currently, family support services in Head Start and ECEAP are fairly uniform in nature, (applying common staff-to-family ratios, requiring a standard number of home visits, etc.) and are increasingly being seen as less effective than targeted approaches.²⁵ (DEL is, however, currently in the process of providing more flexibility in the intensity of its family engagement services.) In a mixed-income setting, family engagement may be more effective and efficient using more flexible models.

2.4 Options for Delivering Services

Preschool for All’s (PFA) service delivery model needs to address several important questions. These include:

- *Should services be offered directly by the City or by community-based providers?*
- *If the City chooses providers to deliver direct services, what eligibility requirements should providers be required to meet?*
- *What mechanisms and service units should be used to purchase PFA services from providers?*
- *How can the City assure that providers deliver high-quality, effective services, using evidence-based practices, while documenting and reporting their outcomes data?*

Options for Organizational Model

1. A single entity (e.g., the Seattle School District or the City of Seattle) builds and operates the program. Under this model, initially all of the staff would be employees of the single entity operating the program. However, once the core program is up and running, it could be expanded by contracting some additional classrooms to community-based providers. The public entity running the program would be the organizational center of the entire program.
2. The City builds PFA using a mixed delivery system. All of the teaching staff and other site staff work for a variety of contracting organizations, while the City employs the staff necessary to administer and oversee the program. In addition, some functions might be contracted out to other organizations (e.g., professional development, capacity building, health and family support coordination).

Options for Provider Eligibility

Provider Type

- Center-based providers (e.g., child care centers, private preschools, Head Start agencies).
- Family child care providers.
- Providers who can operate a minimum number of PFA classrooms.
- Hub organizations, which would subcontract slots to small centers.

Eligible organizations could include nonprofit and for-profit (sole proprietors and corporations) organizations, licensed child care centers and family child care homes, Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and Step Ahead programs, school districts and educational service districts, community and technical colleges, and local governments, tribes, and tribal organizations. Faith-based organizations could apply provided they understood that no religious instruction or practice would be permitted.

Minimum Quality Standards

1. Licensed/certified. This would allow the greatest number of existing providers to apply by setting the eligibility threshold at the lowest level.
2. Licensed/certified and an Early Achiever participant with a minimum threshold level (e.g., Level 3 with some more stringent classroom assessment score requirements).
3. Eligible only if provider meets all PFA standards (e.g., teacher qualifications, class size, etc.). This minimum standard would assure that all programs meet PFA standards as soon as services commence.

Options for Contracting/Funding under a Mixed Delivery Model

1. **Issue PFA vouchers to parents.** The City could review applications and then approve providers to be part of PFA, making them eligible to enroll PFA children upon receipt of a voucher. Parents could receive vouchers to use at any PFA-approved provider. The provider would not be guaranteed any specific number of PFA funded children, and might, in fact, serve none.
2. **Contract a certain number of slots to a provider.** The City could use an application and approval process for certifying providers as eligible to provide PFA services, perhaps using a method similar to the one used by the city's Child Care Assistance Program. A provider would need to show how they would meet all PFA program standards, and then be monitored to assure quality. This provider would be guaranteed a set number of PFA slots. This option would appeal to smaller providers.
3. **Contract with providers to operate PFA classrooms.** Contracts could be awarded through an RFP process, similar to the one currently used by the City's Step Ahead program. Provider organizations would articulate how their organization plans to deliver PFA services on a classroom basis to meet program requirements. The City could set a minimum number of classrooms a provider receiving a contract would need to serve.
4. **Fund hubs** using a satellite system subcontracted to smaller child care and preschool providers.
 - a. A community agency could contract with the City to assure the delivery of a large number of PFA slots (e.g., 60 or more). This organization might be a large nonprofit organization, an educational service district, a resource and referral agency, or a community college. The organization, in turn, could subcontract to smaller early learning providers, primarily small child care centers.

- b. The hub organization would be responsible for assuring the delivery of services by its subcontractors. The hub would have the ultimate responsibility for assuring that program standards and contract provisions are met. The hub could also propose a combination of providing some PFA services directly and others by subcontracting.
 - c. Contracts to hub organizations could be awarded for a set period of time (e.g., one to three years), after which another competitive process would occur, or awarded with the presumption that the contractor would continue as a PFA contractor as long as program standards are met.
5. A **combination** of contracting classrooms, contracting slots, and issuing vouchers.
- a. The City could decide what percent of its PFA enrollment to provide through contracts for entire classrooms, what percent by contracting slots, and what percent through vouchers. The Department of Early Learning is moving to implementing this model in its Working Connections Child Care program, in collaboration with its ECEAP program.
 - b. Initially, the City could use all three methods (contracting for classrooms, contracting for slots, and using vouchers), to compare which provided the best outcomes and the highest parent satisfaction. These percentages could be adjusted, based on studying the outcomes achieved in each model, the number of contractors successfully providing PFA in multiple classrooms, and the supply and demand for PFA services in each area of the city.
 - c. Vouchers might be used to provide services only in areas of the city with no contractors operating PFA classrooms.
 - d. Over time, the City might have a larger percent of its services provided through contracts for classrooms, as more organizations develop capacity to successfully provide services through contracts.
 - e. Vouchers could be used if funding for a portion of PFA slots is uncertain for longer than a one- or two-year period, giving the City more flexibility to expand or decrease the number of PFA slots by expanding or decreasing the number of vouchers it issues.

Options for Provider Selection

1. **Providers are selected using a Request for Qualifications model.** This method is currently used for Step Ahead and ECEAP. In this model, any provider can submit a response to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) issued by the city. There is one bidder's conference to provide additional information and answer questions, but no pre-screening of applicants. Contracts are awarded to providers whose proposals meet all program requirements and scored the most points. A follow-up visit usually takes place to verify that the information contained in the application is correct. Typically, when the RFQ process is used, the opportunity to apply occurs only when new funding is available for additional classrooms, but it could also be used periodically to re-compete contracts, or when one or more large PFA providers can no longer provide PFA services.
2. **Interested providers go through a multi-step application process.** This system has been used successfully by First 5 San Francisco's Preschool for All initiative. It is designed to help providers decide if they are interested in applying and uses pre-screening to avoid unnecessary work on the part of providers or the funding agency. There could be multiple opportunities for the provider to meet the necessary requirements to participate. The process could entail:
 - a. Provider obtains a list of PFA baseline criteria, which outline PFA requirements.
 - b. An "intent-to-apply" phone conversation takes place to screen applications to make sure baseline criteria are met and that the provider understands the PFA standards and process.

- c. An informal pre-application site visit occurs to determine eligibility.
- d. Provider submits a written application to provide PFA services.
- e. A formal site visit is scheduled to observe whether PFA criteria are met, and obtain further documentation to support the application.
- f. PFA staff makes a recommendation to their Director and Board.

2.5 Recommendations for Delivery Model

Organizational Model

We recommend that the City build and manage PFA using a mixed delivery system. It is important to note that while a mixed delivery system is likely to produce a large number of applications to provide PFA services, it is likely that there will be relatively few providers who can initially meet PFA standards because they have not had the resources, space, or staff to build capacity. Significant capacity building, including organizational, professional, and facilities capacity, will be needed (See *Section 4.0 Timeline, Phase-in, and Capacity Building.*)

Provider Eligibility

We recommend that the City contracts with providers who meet the following requirements:

- Public, nonprofit, or private organization (sole proprietor or corporation).
- If in a center-based setting, can operate at least two preschool classrooms, with preference given to larger centers to reduce administrative costs.
- Licensed or certified by the Department of Early Learning (DEL). Although programs operated by a public agency are not required to be licensed, they can voluntarily ask to be certified, which entails meeting all licensing requirements. We recommend that any public agency wishing to participate in PFA be required to successfully complete this certification process.
- At an Early Achievers minimum threshold of Level 3.
- Meeting minimum thresholds on Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS):
 - Priority should be given to those centers that have ECERS-R score that exceeds 4.0, CLASS Emotional Support (ES) score that exceeds 5.8, CLASS Classroom Organization (CO) score that exceeds 5.8, and a CLASS Instructional Support (IS) score that exceeds 2.8.

These cut-offs are based on minimal standards that have some likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes and from which to build the level of quality required. The national Head Start averages for CLASS in 2013 were as follows: combined score for ES/CO domains 5.84 and for IS 2.78. Given that Head Start has been found to have only small impacts on child outcomes it seems reasonable to set entry level minimum scores at the Head Start average with supports in place to dramatically improve quality.

- Providers that are at Early Achievers Level 3, but do not meet the above thresholds on ECERS-R and CLASS, could be admitted to the program, but will need to undergo extensive coaching and should be expected to meet these levels **within two years** of becoming a PFA provider. This modification in the early years of PFA roll out recognizes that the Early Achievers program is currently in early implementation and statewide increases in quality will take time.

- **After five years as a PFA provider**, the ratings on these instruments should meet the more stringent score cut-off of 5.0 on ECERS-R, 6.0 on CLASS ES, 6.0 on CLASS CO, and 4.5 on CLASS IS.

Note: Some external reviewers expressed concern that these targets might be too high in the Instructional Support domain. We recommend them because scores lower than this cut-off have not been found to be predictive of child outcome. These cut-offs should be re-evaluated as PFA ramps up and potentially adjusted based on the data.

See *Attachment A* for more information on ECERS-R and CLASS.

- Providers do not have to be located within the City of Seattle limits, as long as the entire PFA classroom serves children that are Seattle residents.

As mentioned above, there will be a significant capacity building period, during which some of these requirements may be modified. See *Section 4.1 Phasing and Plan Alternatives* for details.

Engaging Current High-Quality Providers through a Waiver Process

As mentioned in *Section 1.6 Plan Implementation*, we recommend that while the City should develop clear and specific regulations for all standards of quality, there should also be a **waiver process** whereby potential providers, current providers, parents, and other stakeholders can propose different but equally rigorous avenues for meeting standards or provide evidence of equally effective methods.

According to participants in the workgroups, there are a number of early education providers in Seattle considered by the community to be high quality. If these providers are willing to be held to achieving high standards for practice and child progress, the City could work with them to become PFA providers, but allowing them to continue using their methods that have worked for them to date (e.g., curricula models and approaches, professional development practices, etc.). These providers could even become a hub or center for others who want to follow the same path. For example, some providers developed their own models of professional development and are willing to share them with others; regardless of specific curriculum, they could have something to offer any Early Childhood Education (ECE) program by helping them develop values-based practices and protocols.

However, the question of who determines that a program is “high quality” is difficult: *Who conducts and pays for the assessments of children and classrooms? Would the city train and hire objective observers over and above the ones already needed for ramp-up? How would selection bias in the children served in any given classroom be controlled for in the research design? How would targets be set? Who would conduct the child assessments and analysis to ensure there is no bias? How would that be paid for? We can find no feasible answer to these questions when the City must be accountable to the taxpayers.*

We recommend that the City works out the details of the waiver process during implementation planning, engaging local early education providers in developing this process.

Family Child Care Provider Pilot Project

In addition to recommendations above, we suggest that the City partner or contract with an academic or research institution to conduct a pilot study of family child care (FCC) providers. The object of the pilot would be to determine if FCC settings that meet all relevant PFA standards (e.g., teacher qualifications, curriculum) and are provided resources (funding, coaching, technical assistance, etc.) comparable to center-based PFA sites result in the same program quality and child outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEATTLE'S PRESCHOOL FOR ALL ACTION PLAN

The details of the study should be designed by the researchers, but we initially recommend the following:

- FCC providers could be included in PFA as early as 2015-16 school year, provided they meet the PFA standards. However, we recommend that the pilot starts concurrently with the larger Outcomes Evaluation in 2018, in order to take advantage of the data collected on children and classrooms for that study as a comparison group.
- 20 FCCs serving a minimum of 10 3- and 4-year-olds each should be included in the study and they should be clustered with two to four hub center-based programs. The hub center-based programs should serve at least 200 children to serve as a randomized control group.
- Families who apply for this program must agree to have their child randomly assigned to either a FCC or a center-based classroom. Given the still-limited number of slots assumed in the PFA ramp-up this should not be difficult.
- Instrumentation:
 - Child outcomes should be measured pre and post during the preschool years in the fall and spring using the same assessment battery as the larger Outcomes Evaluation, and children will be followed into school as part of the larger cohort. (See *Section 6.3 External Evaluation at Program Level* for more information.)
 - Program quality should be measured using the CLASS and Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale (FDCERS) as well as the curriculum model fidelity tool.

Estimates for the costs of evaluation can be found in *Section 7.3 Cost Estimate Assumptions*.

Contracting/Funding Mechanism

We recommend that the City should contract classrooms to center-based programs, either directly or by including them in PFA under the oversight of a hub organization.

- **Contract directly with organizations that could operate two or more PFA classrooms.** These organizations could be nonprofit, public agency, sole proprietor, or corporation, and their services would be offered in a center-based setting. Two classrooms would be the minimum threshold for a PFA contract, with preference given to providers who could operate four or more classrooms. These organizations would be responsible for providing facilities, coaching teachers as part of their supervision, and providing all PFA services including family engagement and liaising with agencies providing health and family referrals in accordance with PFA requirements. Contracts should initially be for a one-year period. If the provider carries out PFA satisfactorily in accordance with its contract, the City could renew the contract for a three year period. The advantage of longer-term contracts is not only to reduce the contract-management load on the City, but to provide the kind of stable funding providers need to secure facility improvements and expansion loans.
- **Contract PFA classrooms to hub organizations who would subcontract them to small child care centers and preschools.** This model can allow small center-based preschools and child care centers to participate in PFA. The hub organization could be a larger agency that provides a variety of services, a Head Start or Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) provider, a resource or referral organization, community college, or educational service district. The center would hire and supervise the teachers, while the hub organization would provide the support for professional development, coaching, family engagement, and referral services. The hub organization would bear final responsibility for meeting the terms of its contract with the City, and could take on and terminate providers in its PFA program as needed. The hub organization could receive a

contract for two years, after which its contract could be renewed at the City's discretion for another three years.

- **Reimburse providers based on line-item budgets.** Initially, the City should reimburse providers on a line-item budget, providing only enough funding to bring their classrooms up to PFA standards. Once overall costs in different models become clear, the City should consider moving to a cost-per-child funding model, with several rates, varying primarily according to whether the City is paying the entire cost of the services, or adding funding on top of existing public funding.

Recommendations for Provider Selection Process

- For the initial round of PFA awards, we recommend using the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process.
- For subsequent awards, we recommend a multi-step application process, described in the *Options for Provider Selection* above.
- After both methods have been used for a period of time, the City should assess the success of each model and decide on the best approach.

Recommendations for Including Publicly Funded Programs in PFA

- We recommend that all publicly funded early learning programs be encouraged to participate in PFA. For programs such as Head Start and child care programs receiving Working Connections Child Care, PFA provides an opportunity to bring substantial new public funding to improve the quality and dosage of their services. For most of these programs, getting such stable new funding to enhance their programs should be an appealing proposition.
- We recommend that the City's Step Ahead and ECEAP programs be required to become part of PFA within two years of the program's start, providing that facilities exist for this purpose. We recommend that the City provide PFA resources that allow these programs to meet quality and staff qualification standards, allowing sufficient time to reach PFA standards.

2.6 Rationale for Recommendations on Delivery Model

Organizational Model

The Seattle Public Schools has indicated its desire to be involved and aligned with Preschool for All (PFA), but does not currently have the capacity to operate or house the program. This is primarily due to increasing enrollment expected in the next decade. The City of Seattle also does not have the capacity to directly operate the program staffed by city employees, as is done by the City of San Antonio. In addition, it makes sense for Seattle to leverage the many center-based programs currently operating in the city. Seattle is charting new territory, since most existing city preschool programs have either their school district or the city itself operating at least a significant part of their universal preschool programs, providing models for high-quality services, training activities, and the stabilizing hub for the preschool program.

Provider Eligibility

Why do we recommend providers should be licensed?

Child care licensing is considered the foundation for quality in Early Achievers (Level 1) and requires providers to meet basic health and safety and professional development standards. Washington's licensing standards are considered very good, compared to other states in the U.S. — ranking third in

the nation for child care centers and second for family child care homes.²⁶ PFA programs would likely need to be licensed or certified because they will operate more than four hours per day, and this can provide a base level of quality for potential PFA providers. In addition, if PFA seeks to access any state funding available to defray the cost of PFA, all programs must be licensed or certified to access Working Child Care Connections (WCCC) funding.

Why do we recommend aligning with Early Achievers?

Providers that are participating in Early Achievers voluntarily commit to meet increasing levels of quality, beyond licensing requirements. Early Achievers providers receive support and resources to meet standards that are designed to promote research-based quality practices. The higher-quality levels (Levels 3 to 5) rely heavily on assessment of high-quality environments and adult-child interactions as measured by the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tools (55% of total Early Achievers rating points). In addition, Early Achievers quality includes meeting standards in child outcomes (child screening, assessment, and individualizing), curriculum and staff supports, family engagement, and professional development. Programs participating in Early Achievers have a common understanding about quality and are actively engaged in improvement efforts. Thus, Early Achievers may provide a pool of programs that are good candidates for providing PFA services.

So far, in the first round of Early Achievers as of March 21, 2014, Seattle had 17 centers with Level 3 ratings, four providers at Level 4, and one at Level 5, according to the Department of Early Learning (DEL). As of 2013, 44 facilities in Seattle have requested a rating and 235 were registered in Early Achievers, but were not yet ready to rate.

Reasons to align with Early Achievers include:

- **Early Achievers provides a state-funded “on-ramp” for programs to receive support for quality.** Programs that participate in Early Achievers adopt a statewide quality framework that supports PFA goals. By aligning with Early Achievers, the City of Seattle can access and leverage state resources to receive training, technical assistance, and rating readiness consultation (Level 2), be evaluated (ratings) by an objective, reliable external resource (University of Washington), and receive Early Achievers quality awards and coaching resources for ongoing quality improvement (Levels 3 to 5). Early Achievers can serve as the foundation for quality, enabling the City of Seattle to focus resources on helping programs meet PFA’s specific quality milestones.
- **Washington State is using Early Achievers to align preschool efforts.** Washington’s state-funded preschool program for low income children, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), is in the process of aligning its program model with Early Achievers. The state is also working to standardize licensing and adopt a universally available state preschool model. As part of these efforts, all ECEAP programs are in the process of enrolling in Early Achievers and adopting Environment Rating Scale (ERS) and CLASS. ECEAP is also in the middle of a multi-year expansion plan which will expand services to all low-income children by 2018 and expand full-day options (ECEAP is currently part-day). These state-funded efforts can be leveraged to help City of Seattle ECEAP programs meet PFA standards, at lower potential cost to the City. Accessing and integrating Early Achievers and ECEAP expansion into plans, should ensure that a large number of the city’s low-income children will be included in and benefit from PFA.

Why do we recommend testing the use of family child care through a pilot project?

We do not know of research indicating strong outcomes for a preschool program using the family child care (FCC) model. However, this model is preferred by some families, and often makes it possible for a child to have a provider from their own culture. It may be the best way to reach areas of the city without

a center-based PFA provider. A pilot project could tell us more about the model's effectiveness, and if successful, expand the pool of potential PFA providers.

We also think the pilot is worthwhile because there is some indication that FCC can meet rigorous program standards. Puget Sound Educational Service District provides full-day services to about 35 Head Start children (birth to age five) in a family child care setting using the hub model. As stated earlier, results in its family child care Head Start model are as strong as those in traditional Head Start classes. In Los Angeles and other locations, family child care is used to deliver Early Head Start services serving infants and toddlers.²⁷

Contracting/Funding Mechanism

Why do we recommend contracting on a classroom basis?

Contracting PFA funding on a classroom basis has a number of advantages.

- There is research indicating that strong outcomes are achieved when all the children in a classroom are enrolled in a universal preschool program. We do not know of research for slot- or voucher-based systems in which only a few children enrolled in universal preschool are in a classroom.
- Contracting for entire classrooms is more cost-effective because staff training and coaching, quality control, and program assessment are required in fewer settings. This is especially true if four or more classrooms are contracted to individual providers.
- It is unclear whether operating at PFA standards, if only some of the children are funded through PFA, is even feasible given the higher cost per child that meeting the high-quality standards will require. How would the site meet the quality standards if some children do not generate the same level of funding?

In the existing universal preschool programs we reviewed (Boston, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco) the funding source funded or contracted for classrooms, not slots. The leaders of these programs all felt strongly that this is most likely to lead to strong outcomes. In Seattle, as in these cities, all children in these classrooms would be PFA-enrolled children.

Why do we recommend hubs?

We recommend using hubs because they draw on the strengths of smaller child care centers and preschools, while providing the functions a small center may not have the capacity to supply. The hub is able to supply organizational and fiscal capacity, and staff development and collaboration with community agencies, while the center, if qualified, can provide a high-quality PFA classroom. We think including small centers should allow PFA to ramp up in a timely manner.

Hubs also provide opportunities to draw on the existing capacity and experience of current preschool providers, including Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead. These programs have a lot of family support, parent engagement, and health services that could be broadened to serve more children, using a hub model. Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead also have extensive experience and expertise serving low income and at-risk populations. Skills and resources for working with immigrant populations, and dual language learning supports, for example, could be shared between programs in a hub model.

Why do we recommend reimbursing providers based on line-item budgets?

It is reasonable to expect that in the first several years of PFA's ramp-up, many of the children in the PFA classrooms are likely to be supported by varying amounts of existing public funding. For example, a Head Start or ECEAP program will continue to draw down federal and state funding even after their program becomes part of PFA. However, this funding will vary from provider to provider, as will the cost

of being a PFA provider. Given this, the City will initially want to reimburse these providers on a line-item budget, providing only enough funding to bring their classrooms up to PFA standards. Once PFA has operated for several years, the cost and revenue data and trends are likely to stabilize sufficiently to allow PFA to fund programs based on a per-classroom rate, with adjustments as needed.

For example, a Head Start provider serving 180 children in nine classrooms with 20 children in each will need to be given funding to cover the cost of one entirely new classroom, to get their configuration down to 18 children per class (i.e., 10 classrooms of 18 children). But a Head Start program already meeting the class size of 18 children will not need such funding; however, this program may need to increase salaries to meet the new salary demands for more highly qualified teachers. The same dynamic may exist for other salary levels or non-personnel costs, such as rent. For this reason, the City should initially use its resources most effectively by using a line-item budget for each provider, leading to a unique PFA cost per classroom for each provider, rather than giving each provider the same funding per classroom regardless of each provider's need for additional PFA funding.

Selection of PFA Providers

When PFA is launched, it is likely that several large providers will be ready to offer PFA services. This will also be the first time the City awards PFA contracts, so its process for reviewing applications should be refined as the initiative unfolds. For this reason, it makes sense to launch the program using the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process allowing the City to see what responses it gets using this process. Over time, using the multi-step application process has a number of advantages, including:

- It allows the process to operate continuously rather than once a year, which should allow the program to grow at a steady rate.
- It is a way to provide multiple opportunities for the City to screen out applicants who are not yet close to qualifying for PFA, hopefully referring them to opportunities to become more qualified. This is a benefit to the providers as well, saving them the work of completing an elaborate proposal.
- It is a more supportive way for smaller providers to be considered as PFA providers. They have multiple opportunities (e.g., the initial phone call, the informal site visit) to understand the requirements to be a PFA provider, and what they would need to do to meet them.

Including Publicly Funded Programs in PFA

- For programs like Head Start and child care centers receiving Working Connections Child Care, PFA provides an opportunity to bring substantial new public funding to improve the quality and dosage of their services. For most of these programs, getting stable new funding to enhance their programs should be an appealing proposition. It also will greatly assist the city in building a unified early learning system that eliminates duplication and silo funding, and is easier for parents to understand.
- For the City's Step Ahead and ECEAP programs, gaining additional funding to add hours, raise program standards, and pay higher salaries to attract and retain staff should also be an appealing proposition. Because the City created and funds Step Ahead, and now will do so for PFA, this is the opportunity for the City to have one, unified preschool program under the PFA banner, while still providing protected eligibility for low-income families to services provided by Step Ahead and ECEAP. This is also an opportunity for the City to greatly enhance the quality and dosage of these existing programs, and increase the likelihood for mixed-income classrooms. Finally, a parent looking for preschool should not have to navigate through a maze of autonomous programs, all funded through the City, each with their own rules and standards. Even though programs operating with ECEAP or Step Ahead funding may have some additional options for parents, all should operate as part of Preschool for All.

2.7 Impact on Existing Providers

Three recent studies help shed light on the possible impacts of expanding publicly funded preschool programs, and whether state preschools “crowd-out” existing providers. Two studied the effects on the child care market in Georgia and Oklahoma, following the advent of state-funded universal preschool programs. A study funded by the Institute of Education Sciences found that there was, in fact, an increase in the amount of formal childcare in both states.²⁸ A study presented at Economic Studies at Brookings Institute found that while universal preschool increased the likelihood of preschool enrollment for lower-income children, it shifted higher-income families from private to public care.²⁹ While these findings may seem to conflict, a descriptive study of national trends in child care highlights that they may be congruent.³⁰ That report finds children under age 3 in recent years have been increasingly enrolled in center-based care. Universal preschool in Georgia and Oklahoma accordingly may have shifted more 4-year-olds into public preschool, which then created room for younger children in center-based programs.

These studies provide some hint of possible consequences of the expansion of universal preschool that begins at age 3, although these consequences are likely to vary widely in different cities and states. In Seattle, it appears that few children will move into PFA services operated in schools, and are more likely to be served in child care centers in a mixed delivery system.

If PFA relies exclusively on a mixed delivery system to expand its services, there is a danger that publicly funded services for 3- and 4-year-olds may decrease the availability of services for infants and toddlers. Providing care for children from birth to 3 is significantly more expensive than preschool care, primarily because the teacher-child ratio is so much higher. Many providers state that they provide care for infants and toddlers at a loss, and make up for it with their preschool services. It is possible that such providers will cut back on their birth to 3 services to make more room for publicly funded preschool services. In order to avoid this unintended consequence, the city could require that a provider applying to operate PFA classrooms agree not to decrease the number of classrooms it is currently operating for infants and toddlers.

Measuring the impact of PFA on existing providers is also complex because the overall demand for some forms of child care appears to have decreased in some Washington communities in the past several years, even while shortages in other areas continue to exist. In line with this trend, utilization of the Working Connection Child Care subsidies, and the City of Seattle’s Child Care Assistance Program has decreased somewhat, to the point that neither program currently has a waiting list. A number of theories for this decrease in demand have been put forward, including: the economic downturn of the past six years, the difficulty of qualifying for subsidies, changing parental preferences for care (e.g., more households with a parent at home, increased use of informal care providers) and a mismatch of the type of care needed to the type being offered. To date there is no quality research on which of these factors plays an important role.

For programs currently serving low-income children, PFA provides the opportunity to enhance these programs with more dosage, integrated professional development, and opportunities to expand/migrate to mixed-income programs. These opportunities can strengthen and increase resources for programs, and increase their ability to provide high-quality services to more children. Providing funding to a provider to enhance and expand their services will be a powerful boost to their financial success. However, some programs may find these changes challenging, as integrating the existing programs with a new effort can often be overwhelming.³¹

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEATTLE'S
PRESCHOOL FOR ALL ACTION PLAN**

For the field as a whole, the impact of providing universal preschool services should be positive. Most importantly, children who are not receiving preK services because they are currently at home will be able to attend preschool without enormous family financial sacrifice. Providers who already qualify, or are willing to receive additional training and assistance improving their program, should on average benefit from the program. Providers who choose not to participate in PFA can serve children whose parents feel that other programs have the unique attributes they seek.

3.0 PROGRAMMATIC FEATURES

3.1 Student Eligibility

Overview

Key Findings

- Overwhelming research to support the benefits of high-quality preK.
- Majority of research has been focused on low-income children.
- Some evidence to support that all children benefit from high-quality preK.
- Rationale for Preschool *for All*:
 - Children learn better in mixed-income groups.
 - Means testing is costly and imprecise.
 - Majority of school failure and special education is in the middle class.
 - Quality of care for most children regardless of income is mediocre to poor.

Who benefits from preschool?

Much of the research on the benefits of preschool education has focused on improving learning and development for economically disadvantaged children. Concerns about achievement gaps, which can be measured before children turn one, amply justify this focus.³² Preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds have been found to greatly improve achievement, decrease grade repetition and special education enrollment, increase educational attainment, decrease delinquency and crime, decrease risky behaviors such as teen pregnancy and smoking, and increase adult earnings.³³

Some children that are not economically disadvantaged may benefit more than others from access to good preschool programs. The preschool years are critical for language development; the brain actually prunes away the capacity for native speaker fluency if young children are not exposed to the sounds of the languages we wish them to learn.³⁴ This is an obvious concern for children growing up in homes where English is not the first language, but it is also a concern for native English speakers. The United States has a poor track record in foreign-language proficiency that could be improved by early and sustained exposure. In addition, identification and remediation of special needs, including hearing and visual impairments, as well as a variety of learning disabilities, can be greatly facilitated if 3- and 4-year-old children attend preK.

Should we focus on the most at-risk children?

While some might be tempted to focus on the most at-risk children to limit the cost of a public preK program, there are a number of reasons why this is not the best public policy. First, the problems of low achievement and high failure rates affect all children. Children from middle-income families have about a one in ten chance of failing a grade and a similarly high chance of failing to graduate high school. Unfortunately, middle-income families do not have good access to quality preschool programs that could prevent school failure and other problems. Just 36% of the classrooms and 11% of the family day care homes serving non- low-income children were found to be good or better in a national study in which quality was rated by independent observers.³⁵

Second, affordability is not only a challenge for low income parents. While many low income parents can qualify for subsidies offered through the federal Head Start program, the state Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and the City of Seattle's Step Ahead program, families with incomes that don't qualify may struggle to pay for preK. Even children of the most-advantaged parents (those with graduate-level educations and incomes in the top 20%) are in high-quality early care and education at age four less than half the time. Yet, quality is the key to effectiveness, making it imperative that quality standards are not sacrificed in order to expand access.³⁶

Local Context

What are the standards for existing publicly funded programs?

The three publicly funded early education programs (Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and Step Ahead) operating in the City of Seattle provide services to children from the neediest families in terms of income. All programs provide free services to support eligible children and their families.

Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead all serve children who are 3 and 4 years old by August 31.

- For **Head Start**, eligible children are homeless, in foster/kinship care or other areas of the child welfare system, receiving public assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Social Security), or from a family with incomes at or below 100% of federal poverty level (FPL).

Programs may serve up to 35% of children from families with incomes between 100%-130% of FPL if the other eligible children have been recruited and enrolled. Programs may serve 10% of children from families with incomes above the income limits. 10% or more of the total number of children enrolled must be children with an identified disability.

Each program develops the selection criteria to use in choosing which families will be enrolled in any given program year. Programs must consider the income of the eligible family, the age of the child, homelessness, identified disabilities, and environmental or family risk factors.

- For **ECEAP**, children are eligible if they are from families with incomes at or below 110% of FPL, if they qualify for school district special education services, or have developmental or environmental risk factors that could affect their school success. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) establishes a limit to the percentage of over-income children without an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) enrolled by each contractor annually, so that at least 90% of enrolled families statewide qualify by income or IEP.

ECEAP prioritizes enrollment of children who are 4 years old by August 31 of the school year; are in foster/kinship care or other areas of the child welfare system; are homeless, as defined by the federal McKinney-Vento Act; are from families with the lowest incomes; or have multiple risk factors.

- For **Step Ahead**, eligible children include those from families with incomes ranging from 110% – 300% of FPL living in the attendance area of a Title I and/or low-performing elementary school.

Step Ahead prioritizes children who are from low-income families; have parents who are immigrants or refugees; are English Language Learners; are not currently in preschool, but are in the care of family members, friends, or neighbors and who would benefit from a preK program; are in foster/kinship care or other areas of the child welfare system; are homeless; have special needs; or are children of color.

Options

In pursuing the goal of offering all 3- and 4-year-olds access to a quality preschool education, decisions may need to be made about whom to serve first. It is likely, that at least to start, there may not be sufficient space available for all children whose parents wish to enroll them. The options for determining Preschool for All (PFA) student eligibility include:

1. **Make PFA available to all 3- and 4-year-olds.** If demand exceeds supply, use a preschool assignment process, open to all students with no income restrictions. This has the advantage of transparency and could increase public support since all children regardless of income would have an opportunity to be included. Head Start or other means-tested programs would be exempt from this process. The following further options are possible:
 - a. Preschool assignment process that could be open to all children regardless of location within the City of Seattle or family income.
 - b. Stratified preschool assignment process by income, where one of the preferences is income level, which could ensure that a certain percentage of children from each income bracket are included. For the income bracket that corresponds with Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead eligibility, the pool should start with any children waitlisted for those programs.

By June 1, if the available classrooms are not filled, the City could begin filling from the PFA waitlist regardless of income bracket.
2. **Serve 4-year-olds first and then expand to serve 3-year-olds.** This would ensure that more children have the opportunity for at least one year of the program. However, such an approach limits opportunities for mixed-age classrooms. In addition, many families will still need care for their 3-year-olds, but providers will have a disincentive to serve them. This option could likely facilitate district-wide reforms in kindergarten and the early grades to accommodate entire classes in which fewer children are poorly prepared and the average level of knowledge and skills is higher.
3. **Serve low-income children first and then expand to all incomes.** Such an approach could favor families in the midst of one particularly bad year economically or provide an incentive to families to misrepresent their financial status. Limiting PFA to the low-income children could produce a cohort that is geographically dispersed and parents may be unwilling to transport their children long distances to programs outside their neighborhood, creating logistical challenges. See the *Rationale* section below for more information on why it is more beneficial to serve mixed income families.

With all of the above options, it is important to recognize that many parents prefer programs in their communities with minimal travel time for their children.

Recommendations

At the Full Program Roll-Out

All children residing in the City of Seattle that turn 3 or 4 years old as of August 31 should be eligible to attend Preschool for All programs.

During Program Phase-In Period

The approach to assigning available spaces should be designed to limit disruption to families and communities and facilitate the fastest, most efficient expansion of a high-quality system.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEATTLE'S PRESCHOOL FOR ALL ACTION PLAN

- We recommend that priority for existing spaces should be given to:
 - Children (4 years old and under) who are already enrolled at a qualified center, which became a PFA site.
 - Head Start, ECEAP, Step Ahead, and other programs that serve special populations and meet PFA standards.
- If demand exceeds the supply of spaces in PFA classrooms, we recommend a preschool assignment process open to all children regardless of location within the City of Seattle or family income.
 - Student selection should be random, but certain factors should take priority when determining a child's enrollment:
 - **Sibling preference.** This system should give preference to children with siblings already in one of the preschools.
 - **Geographic preference.** Office for Education (OFE) should divide the city into geographic zones to facilitate parent choice about the area of the city they would like their child to attend preschool in. On the enrollment application, parents should be asked to select first, second, and third area choices.
 - In addition, to balance the number of 3- and 4-year-olds in PFA classrooms, age should be one of the determining factors during the preschool assignment process. Three-year-olds that receive spaces in PFA should be prioritized to receive spaces in preK the following year, when they turn 4 years old.
 - To ensure that low income and immigrant families are aware of available high-quality preK services and are able to access them easily, Community Outreach staff and Human Service Coordinators at OFE should do extensive, concerted outreach to at-risk communities and provide help navigating the enrollment process. Many strategies can be utilized, including widespread public service campaigns, coordination with social services agencies, and peer-to-peer outreach, among others.

Rationale

Rationale for Serving Mixed Incomes

High-quality preschool benefits all children. Studies in the United States and abroad (where universal programs have a longer history) tend to find that preschool education has larger benefits for low-income children, but that high-quality programs still have substantive benefits for other children.³⁷ Rigorous studies of universal preschool in Oklahoma and elsewhere find substantial effects that are not dramatically smaller for higher-income children.³⁸ Given the benefits of high-quality preK for all children and the availability of targeted programs through Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead, the recommendations do not target the most economically disadvantaged children first.

Quality matters and produces positive impacts into elementary school. Studies from outside the United States suggest that quality differences can explain why some programs produce positive effects for children in higher-income families and others do not.³⁹ Children who are not low income are unlikely to benefit from mediocre public programs. In any case, several studies find substantial preschool education effects for children from all economic strata.⁴⁰

One of the studies most relevant to the debate regarding the effects of universal preschool is a randomized trial of preschool education in which all of the children were relatively advantaged.⁴¹ The average IQ of the roughly 200 children at study entry was at the 97th percentile. Like the Perry Preschool

Program, this was a true experiment with follow-up, though the follow-up only went through the first few grades of elementary school. Nevertheless, the study found that positive effects on achievement continued into the school years with very large effects for boys found in the 2nd and 3rd grades.⁴²

Classrooms with children from a mix of incomes have benefits for all children. Research on two types of peer effects provides further evidence that universal preschool can produce larger gains for low-income children than means-tested programs. First, low-income children benefit from attending preschool programs with more advantaged children. Research in the United States, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand has found larger gains for economically disadvantaged children when programs contained more children from middle-income families.⁴³ Second, there are substantial spillover benefits to learning in kindergarten through 3rd grade when children have more classmates who have attended preK, indicating that estimates of individual effects of program participation substantially underestimate the impacts of universal preschool on achievement.⁴⁴ There are likely unmeasured social and cultural benefits for all children regardless of income from participating in an income-diverse classroom, and studies have shown that there are clearly academic benefits for all.

Rationale for Serving 3- and 4-Year-Olds

The City Council resolution states: high-quality preschool for all 4-year-olds in Seattle as the first phase, and a second phase of providing high-quality preschool to all 3-year-olds. However, we are recommending serving 3- and 4-year-olds, because:

- **When it comes to educational outcomes, two years of preschool are more effective than one year.** New Jersey's preschool program closed more than 50% of children's achievement gap after one year, versus 18% for the "no preK group." Two years of participation roughly doubled the gain at 2nd grade on most measures.⁴⁵ By 5th grade the advantage of two years of high-quality preK over one year continued on all measures.⁴⁶
- **There are educational advantages to serving 3- and 4-year-olds in mixed-age classrooms.** Most of the recommended curriculum models are designed for mixed-age classrooms. The reason for this is that children learn from each other and 3- and 4-year-olds benefit socially and cognitively when they "teach" other children.⁴⁷ In addition, inclusion of children who are less skilled developmentally for different reasons (disabilities, second language acquisition, etc.) is facilitated when the developmental range of their peers is wider and closer to their own level. In our experience, there is no danger that the same curriculum will be repeated when children are four because skills and concepts are taught and experienced at a deeper level in the second year. Indeed, learning is enhanced by revisiting concepts at a higher level that could not be fully grasped by the 3-year-olds.
- **Serving only 4-year-olds during the start-up period would likely have unintended negative consequences and reduce access for 3-year-olds to child care.** In the initial years of PFA, adequate space to serve all children may not be available. The funding associated with PFA is likely to be more per child than any other funding source, except perhaps tuition paid by relatively high-income parents. This creates an incentive for programs to convert all classrooms to 4-year-olds only, reducing services dramatically for 3-year-olds. This would not be in the best interest of the City.
- **Programs that are serving 3- and 4-year-olds typically do not have age-segregated classrooms because this would force enrollment to happen at the beginning of the school year and make rolling enrollment difficult.** If enrollment had to happen at the beginning of the school year, each site would have to have exactly the right number of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds to fill each classroom, which is rarely the case. If a 4-year-old were to leave the program and she was served in a 4-year-old only classroom, and the next child on the waiting list is 3-years-old, that child would not be able to fill that vacancy.

Rationale for the Preschool Assignment Process

- The advantage of a preschool assignment process is that it gives every family in the city a chance at enrolling in PFA, so that the community feels like this is a program for the entire city. This should also make it more likely that there would be support by voters for the program. The disadvantage of a preschool assignment process is that it can limit the ability to target vacancies to the most at-risk children. However, it is important to keep in mind that over 1,800 preschool slots in the Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead programs are reserved for children from low-income families, and therefore would not be subject to a preschool assignment process.
- If a preschool assignment process is necessary because demand for remaining spaces in PFA classrooms exceeds the supply, it would likely be important for the City's outreach staff in various departments, and in particular OFE's Human Services Coordinators, to do intensive outreach in communities with higher concentrations of families with low incomes. It should be a high priority to make sure these families have received the knowledge and skills to maximize their child's chances of being eligible for the program and any preschool assignment process that takes place. This outreach and skills building can also be supplemented by the efforts of family support staff from the Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead programs, since helping all families access preschool services is part of their mission.

3.2 Teacher-Student Ratio, Class Size, and Classroom Hours

Overview

Key Findings

- Ratio and Class Size:
 - Individual and small group interactions are critical to produce benefits.
 - Large class sizes produce stress on children.
 - Small class sizes and low ratios are needed to produce benefits.
- Duration:
 - More hours per day and more years of schooling yield better results provided the program is high quality.

Is there a right size for a classroom?

Preschool teachers must differentiate their teaching methods to meet the needs of children who are developing at vastly different rates. Traditional methods of direct assessment are not valid for informing instruction and thus the teacher needs time with each child to understand his or her developmental and learning needs across all domains of learning. In addition, young children are striving to develop self-regulation. If children are taught in large groups (whole class instruction or over 10 children in a group) they either experience "teacher regulation" and are hampered in their development of self-regulation, or because of the large numbers, are given large amounts of unstructured free play with little teacher interaction. This is neither optimal for learning across domains nor conducive to self-regulation and social-emotional development. Small class sizes with low teacher-to-child ratios are needed to produce the desired learning and development outcomes. Further, these effects are enhanced if children and teachers spend more time together during the day and children are in preschool for a longer time.

How long should the preschool day be? Should children attend preschool year-round?

Intensity (number of hours) and dosage/duration (number of school days) are both related to better results for children if the program is high quality.⁴⁸ Alex Holt in the recent Ed Central blog post suggests that “perhaps the most striking pattern of findings ... is the increase in positive outcomes (and in some studies, decrease in negative outcomes) when children attend [a] high-quality early care and education program for more time.”⁴⁹

Another consideration is that the majority of 3- and 4-year-olds are already attending care outside of the home and most families need child care for at least the school day and school year.

Local Context

What are the standards for existing publicly funded programs?

| | Class Size and Child-Adult Ratio | Dosage/Duration |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Head Start | No more than 20 children per class/group; a maximum of 10:1 child-adult ratio. | A minimum of 3.5 hours per day; 4 days per week; 128 days per year. This is a minimum of 448 hours per year. |
| ECEAP | No more than 20 children per class/group; a minimum of 9:1 child-adult ratio. | A minimum of 2.5 hours per class session; 30 weeks per year. This is a minimum of 320 hours per year. |
| Step Ahead | No more than 20 children per class/group; a maximum of 10:1 child-adult ratio. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time students: 6 hours per day; 5 days per week; 180 days per year. This is a minimum of 1,080 hours per year. • Part-time students: 3.5 hour per day; 4 days per week; 140 days per year. This is a minimum of 490 hours per year. |

In addition, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) is launching the expansion of the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) to focus on full-day preschool — Preschool Expansion Phase One. This expansion provides an opportunity for programs in Seattle and statewide to add full-day preK classrooms, and/or convert their current part-day ECEAP slots to full-day. The new standards for full-day preK include a minimum of six hours per day, four to five days per week, and a nine-month school year, with an option for “extended full-day” which is open at least 10 hours per day, year round.

Options

Ratio and Class Size

1. **Allow teacher to child ratios ranging from 1:7 to 1:10.** The ratio of 1:7 is closest to the very low ratios seen in the original longitudinal-effects research (e.g., Perry Preschool Program, Abecedarian, Chicago Child-Parent Centers) and in New Jersey’s Abbott Preschool Program; the larger ratios are seen in other state-funded preK programs (Oklahoma, North Carolina).
2. **Vary ratio by composition of class.** Reduce the ratio as the share of 3-year-olds, English Language Learners, children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), etc. increases.

Dosage/Duration

1. **Pay for a half-day session for each child to allow PFA program standards to be met, but allow the rest of the day to meet only child care standards.** This can be done by hiring teachers who spend the morning in one classroom and the afternoon in another.
2. **Require a full school day of approximately 6 hours and 180 days following the school district calendar.** Teacher contracts should be for a 7.5-hour day to allow for preparation, training, and meetings. Families should be offered wrap-around child care at child care standards for before and after school and for the summer.
3. **Require a full school day of approximately 6 hours for 12 months.** Teacher contracts should be for a 7.5-hour day to allow for preparation, training, and meetings. Families should be offered wrap-around child care at child care standards for before and after school.
4. **Allow hours to vary by center** with a pro-rated reimbursement from OFE and let parents choose the option they prefer.

Recommendation

- Class size maximums should be as follows:
 - **Majority 4-year-olds** (51% or more of the children are 4 by August 31): **18 (1:9 ratio)**.
 - **Majority 3-year-olds** (51% or more of the children are 3 by August 31): **16 (1:8 ratio)**.
- OFE should develop a protocol for funding lower class sizes resulting in lower teacher-student ratios, or providing other supports (e.g., resource teachers, mental health consultants, one-on-one assistants) if the classroom serves a high proportion of children who may need more intensive, individualized attention. For example, children with IEPs, children in foster/kinship care or other areas of the child welfare system, children from low-income families, children experiencing homelessness, or children with limited English proficiency.
- The program should operate on a school day of **6 hours, 5 days per week and on a school year calendar (180 days)**. Prioritize centers that offer wrap-around care before and after school and during the summer.

Rationale

Both small class sizes and low child-to-teacher ratios are needed. A large body of research indicates the need for small group sizes of 15-16 and low teacher-to-child ratios (one adult to 7-8 children).⁵⁰ A meta-analysis of preschool intervention effectiveness studies found that the interventions most likely to produce long-term gains were those that provided more individual and small group interactions. This interaction can only be realized with small class sizes and low ratios.⁵¹

Programs with larger class sizes, even when ratios are kept low, have not been found to be as effective in the research and demand larger space per classroom. In addition, lower-quality settings with large class sizes can cause stress for children that can have long-term, negative consequences for their brain development.⁵²

The recommendation of 18 children per classroom with majority 4-year-olds is consistent with the recommendation made by the Washington State Early Learning Technical Workgroup in the 2011 Washington Preschool Program report.⁵³ Head Start and many state licensing regulations require lower class sizes for classrooms serving majority 3-year-olds, acknowledging the greater needs of the younger children. The only research of state-funded or large-scale programs that included 3-year-olds had even

lower class sizes (e.g., New Jersey's Abbott Preschool Program, Chicago Child-Parent Centers) and all of the smaller-scale preschool experiments had lower class sizes.

Although slightly larger class sizes and teacher to child ratios are seen in Oklahoma and North Carolina (other state-funded preK programs), the initial positive results are modest and results at 3rd grade are less than one fourth of the results found in 4th and 5th grade for New Jersey's Abbott Preschool Program where the class size was 15 (adult to child ratio of less than one to 8). The rigorous programs provided in the original longitudinal research on preK (e.g. Perry and Abecedarian) had larger results by 3rd grade and smaller class sizes.

Duration matters. Although there is great variation across states and publicly funded preschool programs in standards for class size, teacher-to-child ratios, and length of school day and year, those programs that have shown clear positive effects tend to have smaller class sizes and lower ratios and operate for at least the traditional school day and school year.⁵⁴ These include state programs in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, New Jersey, North Carolina, West Virginia, and Rhode Island, and local programs in Washington, D.C., Boston, and Chicago.

On a practical basis, full school-day programs with the availability of wrap-around child care are more consistent with the needs of working parents. The model of a half-day session that meets program standards and allows the rest of the day to meet only child care standards has not been highly practical in existing state preK programs. This is partly because in a large-scale program finding enough qualified teachers who are interested in part-time work is not feasible; nor is it possible to pay them to work full-time at salaries that are attractive when the preschool funds are only available for part of their salary.

3.3 Staff Education Requirements

Definitions

While some terminology has different meanings in different sectors of the education field, in this Action Plan we use the terms below in the following ways:

- **Certified teachers:** teachers with a **teaching certificate** (issued by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and required for all K-12 public school teachers) are typically referred to as "certified teachers." In this context, a certified teacher is approved to be a school district preK-12 teacher. The main pathway to becoming a certified teacher is through a "teacher preparation program" at a program approved by Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). We may also refer to certified teachers as *teachers with a teaching credential*, or *teachers with teacher certification*.

All certified teachers with a credential have at least a baccalaureate degree, while a portion of teachers get their preparation and credential in a master's program. A teaching certificate consists of two parts – the underlying knowledge and skills standards regardless of what is being taught and one or more subject area endorsements.

- **Subject Area Endorsements:** As mentioned above, all teaching certificates are granted with a subject area "endorsement" which recognizes the area of specialization (e.g. early childhood education (ECE), elementary education, biology, math, etc.) for which the teacher is being licensed to teach. Teachers may be dual endorsed at the time their initial teaching certificate is conferred (e.g. early childhood education *and* English Language Learning). Certified teachers may also add endorsements to their license (all combinations are allowed if the candidate meets the criteria). Earning an additional subject area endorsement does not require completing an additional degree (Master of Arts), although some teachers choose that pathway.
 - **ECE endorsement:** early childhood education endorsement in Washington, whereby teachers are certified to teach preschool through Grade 3 (ECE – Grades P-3).
- **Other Certificates:** There are other certificates that can be granted by Washington's higher education system, including stackable certificates in ECE (see more information in the *Local Context* section below), graduate certificates in ECE, and others. These do not, however, count as a "teaching certificate" as recognized by OSPI and PESB.
- **Classified teachers:** these are typically teaching assistants, aides, or other staff working for a school district. It may also include teacher positions that do not require a teacher credential, such as a district's Head Start teacher. Typically, certified teachers are paid at a higher rate than classified teachers or teacher assistants.

Overview

Research Overview

Key Findings

- Director:
 - Limited research indicates that higher education is linked to quality.
 - Complex set of skills/knowledge in leadership, management, early childhood education (ECE) and adult learning.
- Teacher:
 - Research links teacher education and specialized training in ECE (often required for certification) to quality and outcomes.
 - Higher qualifications without pay parity likely lead to turnover, and may explain some contradictory findings about the impact of highly qualified teachers.
 - Teacher ECE training is necessary but not sufficient; other supports for preparation and ongoing professional development are needed.
- Teacher Assistant:
 - Limited research indicates higher education is linked to quality.
 - This likely matters more when the role is more consistent with co-teacher, which most curriculum models require.
- Coaches:
 - Limited research on education level but should be at least equal to teachers.
 - Expertise and "certification" as coach/trainer in curriculum model.

What is the impact of education on program quality?

Part of the effort to ensure implementation of a high-quality preschool program requires establishing minimum education, training, and experience requirements for each level of staff (directors, lead teachers, assistant teachers, support specialists). These decisions have implications on the resources needed to train staff, the timeline to meet qualifications, and the compensation levels needed to attract and retain qualified staff.

A substantial body of research links teacher education and training to the quality of their teaching and the learning of their students.⁵⁵ Although there are disagreements about the strengths of the relationships and thresholds, a team assembled by the National Academy of Sciences to address the issue concluded that a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with specialized training would be necessary for teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills required to teach young children well.⁵⁶

About half of states require a BA of preschool teachers, and the vast majority require a BA and certification if they teach preschool in the public schools.⁵⁷ Regardless of whether a program is in the public schools, an important practical issue is that if qualifications and compensation are lower than in the public schools, preschools will have difficulty attracting and retaining highly effective teachers.

What qualifications should a PFA director have?

Research on the importance of director qualifications is quite limited, but indicates that director education is linked to quality.⁵⁸ As this research is limited, the field has turned to the larger body of research for additional insights on the influence of leadership and organizational climate on educational quality and effectiveness.⁵⁹ However, even this literature does not provide clear, specific guidance regarding the preparation and qualification of early childhood program leaders and the magnitude of their impacts on child outcomes. What is clear is that administrators require a complex set of knowledge and skills that encompass organizational leadership and management as well as learning and teaching.⁶⁰ Detailed descriptions of administrator qualifications have been developed more from theory and experience applied to an understanding of what is required to produce quality education, rather than from empirical studies.⁶¹

Some states have developed highly specific qualification requirements for child care administrators. In schools, early childhood administrator qualifications are generally much like those of principals and supervisors. In some states director qualifications are at the top of an early childhood career ladder.⁶² In New Jersey's Abbott Preschool Program, directors in child care or Head Start centers that contract with the school district are paid on a salary scale that weights size of center, degree attainment, credits in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and credits in business administration/educational leadership such that a director of a two-classroom center without a BA degree and only 15 credits of ECE would make less than a classroom teacher, while a director of a 10-classroom center with a Master's degree in ECE and 15 credits in business or educational administration would make a salary competitive with a school district early childhood specialist. The purpose of this policy is to encourage center directors to attain expertise in both business and early childhood education while providing incentives for economies of scale — small centers cannot generate enough administrative overhead without increasing per-pupil costs.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) developed national standards for director qualifications as part of their accreditation system. They require administrators to have one of the following:

- At least a [baccalaureate degree](#) **AND** at least nine credit-bearing hours of specialized [college-level coursework](#) in administration, leadership, or management **AND** at least 24 credit-bearing hours of specialized [college-level coursework](#) in early childhood education, child development, elementary education, or early childhood special education that addresses child development and learning from birth through kindergarten.
- Documents indicating a plan in place to meet the above qualifications within five years.
- Documents meeting an appropriate combination of formal education, work experience, and relevant training and credentials as outlined in the [alternative pathways table](#).

What qualifications should a teacher have?

The early childhood programs that have provided the strongest evidence of large long-term effects and cost-effectiveness have all employed teachers with at least a BA degree and teacher certification.⁶³ The programs that have failed to produce even short-term gains for children have all had teachers with less education.⁶⁴ This research is not limited to the United States, as the percentage of teachers with a BA has been found to increase quality in programs in the United Kingdom.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, there are studies that fail to find a relationship between teacher education levels and quality or child outcomes when controlling for other program features.⁶⁶ This is to be expected as, for example, when compensation is very low, teacher education credentials are likely to be meaningless. A strict requirement for high levels of education at low pay might actually lead to lower quality teachers being hired and retained.

Taken together it is reasonable to conclude that a BA degree is a necessary element of a quality program, but that it is far from sufficient, and that particular attention should be given to influencing the programs preparing teachers. This view has led to calls for a BA plus other supports for preparation and ongoing professional development.⁶⁷ We discuss other elements such as ongoing training and professional development and compensation below. As quality has the greatest impact on child development, it is important to have a combination of resources and supports that enable programs to consistently provide a very high level of quality relative to what is common in the field.⁶⁸

Perhaps the best test of the recipe of improved educational preparation, compensation, and professional development through coaching is the court-ordered implementation in New Jersey. It demonstrably raised quality for the majority of preschool programs from poor/mediocre to good/excellent.⁶⁹

Assistant teacher education and training has been found to affect quality as well.⁷⁰ It is likely that how much assistant teacher preparation matters depends on the roles that they play in the classroom and whether they are considered part of the teaching team. For example, their qualifications may matter little if they are given custodial rather than educational tasks. Alternatively, their qualifications might matter a great deal if they lead a small group activity with one group while the teacher leads another. Given that young children benefit a lot from small group work with an adult's guidance, this is an additional and major benefit of having a solid para-professional in the room. If an assistant teacher is assigned to give individualized attention to children who are having difficulties, then that person's qualifications are an asset.

What about other staff?

Other staff should have similar educational qualifications to those required of professionals performing the same work in other settings—nurses and social workers, for example.

A relatively new position in the early childhood field is that of a coach or mentor teacher. These staff should have at a minimum the education level required of a teacher. Additional knowledge and skills can be acquired through specialized training, education, and experience. Such knowledge should encompass adult education and coaching in particular, as well as early learning and teaching. In addition, coaches should be experts in whatever curriculum approach is being implemented.⁷¹

Staff Compensation

Overview

About half the states that fund a preK program require a BA of preschool teachers, and the vast majority requires a BA and certification if they teach preschool in the public schools.⁷² In the programs operated through the public schools in mixed delivery settings in Boston, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C., teachers are required to meet the same qualifications as K-12 teachers, and are on the same salary scale.

In the Boston K1DS program providing preK services in community-based organizations, virtually all of the funding given to these programs goes to increase staff salaries. The goal is to reach Boston's Living Wage Standard, which still may not be as high as Boston Public Schools salaries. Ten of the 14 classrooms operated by the ten community organizations receive funding for this purpose. All of the other support these community-based programs receive comes in the form of services (professional development, coaching) or instructional materials.

In New Jersey, programs operated by private providers contracting with school districts have the same educational requirements as school-based programs, and receive sufficient funding to pay their teachers the same salaries that are paid in classrooms operated by school districts. For benefits, community agencies receive the same dollar amount that school districts spend for this purpose, although these amounts may not buy them the same level of benefits (for example: \$5,000 per teacher for retirement benefits may cover a public school preK teacher's participation in a public pension plan, while at a community-based provider agency, the \$5,000 may go toward a 401(k) program that may not end up providing the same pension benefit).

In San Francisco, staff providing preK services as part of First 5 San Francisco are paid at a level that meets the city's Living Wage Standard, but may not equal the pay of public school preK teachers.

Local Context

What training is currently required?

Head Start. Federal regulations require that at least 50% of Head Start teachers nationwide in center-based programs have one of the following:

- A baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education.
- A baccalaureate or advanced degree and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children.

Head Start also requires that assistant teachers meet one of the following criteria:

- At least a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- Enrollment in a program leading to an associate or baccalaureate degree.
- Enrollment in a CDA credential program to be completed within two years.

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). The ECEAP program requires that lead teachers meet one of the following qualifications:

- An associate or higher degree with the equivalent of 30 college quarter credits in early childhood education. These 30 credits may be included in the degree or in addition to the degree. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) indicated that this will likely change to ensure that 30 credits are across the main areas of Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals.
- A valid Washington State teaching certificate with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education for preschool through 3rd grade (ECE – Grades P-3) or Early Childhood Special Education.

ECEAP assistant teachers must meet one of the following qualifications:

- The equivalent of 12 college quarter credits in early childhood education. DEL indicated that this will be changing to the initial state certificate rather than 12 credits. (The initial certificate is the first of three “stackable” certificates that lead to a statewide ECE certificate. Note that this is distinct from the Washington State teaching certificate.)
- A current Child Development Associate credential awarded by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition.

State Training Requirements. The Washington State Training and Registry System (STARS) for licensed child care providers includes initial training requirements.

Child care directors, program supervisors, and lead teachers register for a STARS identification number and complete one of the following within the first six months of employment or of being granted an initial license:

- Twenty clock hours or two college quarter credits of basic training approved by STARS.
- Current Child Development Associate certificate or equivalent credential, or 12 or more college credits in early childhood education or child development.
- Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Arts and Sciences (AAS), or higher college degree in early childhood education or child development.

Early Achievers. Washington State's Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), Early Achievers, includes quality standards for professional development and training. Facilities earn points toward higher ratings when staff reach educational and professional milestones that are aligned with the state's Core Competencies Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals:

Exhibit 4

Early Achievers: Professional Development and Training

Center Director or Program Supervisor

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------|
| AA in ECE or related field | Level 3 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 1 point |
| BA in ECE or related field | Level 4 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 2 points |
| MA in ECE or related field | Level 5 of the Core Competencies for Early Care | 4 points |

Center Designated Lead Teaching Staff

(at least one staff person per classroom must be designated lead)

| | | |
|---|---|----------|
| 25% have CDA or approved certificate or credential (12 credits or higher) | Level 2 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 1 point |
| 25% have AA or higher in ECE or related field | Level 3 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 2 points |
| 25% have BA or higher in ECE or related field | Level 4 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 3 points |

Center - All Other Teaching Staff (assistants and aides)

| | | |
|---|---|----------|
| 25% have CDA or approved certificate or credential (12 credits or higher) | Level 2 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 1 point |
| 50% have CDA or approved certificate or credential (12 credits or higher) | Level 2 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 2 points |
| 25% have AA or higher in ECE or related field | Level 3 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 3 points |

Family Child Care Provider or Primary Worker

| | | |
|--|---|-----------|
| CDA or approved certificate or credential (12 credits or higher) | Level 2 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 3 points |
| AA in ECE or related field | Level 3 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 5 points |
| BA in ECE or related field | Level 4 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 7 points |
| MA in ECE or related field | Level 5 of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals | 10 points |

Source: Early Achievers, A Framework to Support Positive Child Outcomes, Department of Early Learning, April 2013

What local programs exist to provide the necessary college coursework?

Four-year Institutions

There are relatively few programs in the state that offer a BA in ECE. BA and Master of Arts (MA) early learning teacher education programs offered in Washington include:

- BA and MA education programs that provide K-12 teacher preparation with options for an ECE – Grades P-3 endorsement (some also have certification-only programs for students with an existing BA in another field):
 - Central Washington University, Ellensburg and Des Moines
 - City University, nine locations across the state

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- Eastern Washington University
- Heritage University
- Pacific Lutheran University
- St. Martin's University
- Washington State University
- Western Governors University
- Western Washington University
- BA and MA programs specifically in Early Childhood Education (ECE):
 - Goddard College. BA or MA in Dual Language ECE for bilingual English-Spanish teachers.
 - University of Washington (UW). BA in Early Childhood and Family Studies, both on campus and with an online degree completion option for practitioners. This program was developed to provide early learning staff with skills and knowledge aligned with current research on quality practices. The program was developed to align with work the UW is doing as the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning and as the evaluation partner for Early Achievers. The UW has also expressed interest in the possibility of creating a "Preschool for All" Certificate which would build upon their current BA program and/or serve as an additional option for early learning staff with an existing BA degree to attain ECE specialization (see *Recommendations* section below for more information).

Community and Technical Colleges

There are a number of programs offered through community and technical colleges leading to Associate's degrees in Early Childhood Education, certificates, and endorsements. However, these programs sometimes do not transfer to four-year institutions. Some community and technical colleges also offer four-year applied Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees.

Over the past several years, DEL has led several efforts to coordinate and increase professional development, education, and certification opportunities for early learning staff. These include:

- **Stackable Early Childhood Education (ECE) certificates.** More than a dozen community colleges in Washington offer stackable certificates in ECE. These certificates are "stackable" in that they build on one another in a sequential manner and deepen levels of applied learning along the way. Courses at participating colleges have the same titles, numbers, descriptions, and student outcomes. All courses are aligned with the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals. The certificates (12 to 47 credits) can be built upon to earn an AA degree in ECE.
- **Development of Washington State Core Competencies and a Career Lattice for early care and education professionals.** See Local Context in *Section 3.5 Staff Professional Development* for more information.

How accessible are the local programs financially?

Financial support for ECE education is available through Washington Scholarships for Childcare Professionals and Child Care Aware for scholarships for Associate and BA degrees. However, both sources offer a very limited number of scholarships (three to four each annually). There are also opportunity grants for Early Achievers available through DEL.

What is the career pathway for preschool teachers?

Currently in Washington the career ladder and educational pathway for preschool teachers is separate and distinct from the career pathway for K-12 teachers. Because preschool programs are operated in a variety of settings (schools, non-profits, community-based, child care-based, etc.) many current preschool programs (even those operated by school districts) do not require teachers to have a teaching certificate issued by OSPI. Instead, many preschool programs and the Washington State Career Lattice for early care and education professionals currently include a Bachelor's degree level which can be met by a BA in ECE **or** a (K-12) teacher's credential with an ECE – Grades P-3 endorsement.

Because many preschool programs are not operated in school districts, some experts feel the current P-3 endorsement may not adequately prepare students to be effective preschool teachers. Increasing opportunities and integration between early learning and K-12 professional development and certification will be essential if Seattle wants certified teachers (and commensurate compensation) in PFA.

Options

There are a variety of options for staff educational requirements and compensation.

For all positions:

- Require school district-equivalent qualifications for certified teachers, with pay parity with K-12 teachers.
- Use the Seattle Public Schools salary scale as an incentive for qualifications and allow 4-6 years to meet minimum standards.
- Require basic staff licensing qualifications, and establish ongoing provider eligibility based entirely on a set of performance criteria, such as scores on quality measures such as Program Quality Assessment, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and/or child outcomes.

Director:

- Set minimum standards for education and provide incentives for attaining formal education in ECE and leadership/management through a specified salary structure. This would have the advantage of allowing broader participation while slowly increasing director qualifications.
- Require site supervisors or principals of participating schools to have, or obtain within two years, equivalent ECE expertise or ensure that the teachers have dual supervision by an ECE expert.
- Require all eligible centers or schools to meet minimum director qualification standards of a BA with expertise in ECE, leadership, and business.

Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. below shows options for education requirements for center directors/site supervisors, teachers, assistant teachers, and coaches:

Exhibit 5
Options for Full-Time Staff Education Requirements

| Position | Lowest Feasible Standard | Contextually Reasonable Standard | Highest Reasonable Standard |
|---|--------------------------|---|--|
| Center Director/ Site Supervisor | Current licensing | BA with 5 years of early childhood experience or at least 24 credits in ECE (or closely related field) and expertise/coursework in business/ educational leadership | BA in ECE or BA with college-level coursework in ECE, and 9 credit-bearing hours of specialized college-level coursework in administration, leadership, and management (NAEYC Accreditation) |
| Teacher | Current licensing | BA with 3 years of early childhood experience and coursework | BA in ECE or BA with teacher certification/endorsement in ECE |
| Assistant Teacher | Current licensing | | AA in ECE or 2 years equivalent college-level coursework in ECE meeting Core Competencies. |
| Coach | | | BA in ECE or BA with teacher certification/endorsement in ECE, plus “endorsement” in curriculum model. Consider alignment with Early Achiever coach requirements. |

Recommendations

- Existing child care, Head Start, ECEAP, Step Ahead, and school district providers participating in PFA in the first three years of implementation should be required to **meet the following standards for all newly hired staff** and allowed **four years to meet the standards for existing staff**. The waiver process discussed previously should detail extensions to this deadline such that a staff member who has worked diligently and made clear progress toward the qualifications over the four years but who for clearly justifiable reasons (e.g., family medical leave, courses were not offered at the college in a reasonable sequence) has not been able to complete the standard may submit a plan for completion within **two additional years**. Staff at providers who become part of PFA after the initial three years or in newly licensed programs should meet the following standards before participating:
 - **Director:** BA in ECE or BA with college-level coursework in ECE, and expertise/coursework in business/educational leadership.
 - **Teacher:** BA in ECE or BA with teacher certification/endorsement in ECE.
 - **Assistant Teacher:** AA in ECE or two years equivalent college-level coursework in ECE meeting Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals.
 - **Coach:** BA in ECE or BA with teacher certification/endorsement in ECE, plus “endorsement” in curriculum model.

- Where ECE professionals are serving children and families whose home language is not English, language competency required to communicate to children, parents, and families in their home language should be a preferred qualification. In dual language classrooms, language competency should be required.
- Use the SPS salary scale for certified teachers as an incentive for meeting standards over time. Teaching staff should be paid at one of three levels, dependent on their qualifications:
 - Existing teachers who are “grandfathered in” and allowed four years to meet the BA in ECE or BA plus teaching certificate in ECE requirement would be paid at the base rate with increases built in annually as they approach full qualifications (e.g., less than 30 credits to complete, less than 15 credits to complete).
 - Teachers with a BA in ECE who do not have a teaching certificate should be paid the same salary as Head Start teachers working for Seattle Public Schools or Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD), two school agencies operating Head Start. If one of these districts pays a higher rate than the other, then follow the highest rate to avoid loss of teachers to that nearby program. In these two programs, the Head Start teachers are currently classified staff, because they are not required to have a teacher credential, and most do not.
 - Teachers with a BA and teacher certificate in ECE should be paid at the same level as K-12 teachers in the Seattle Public Schools.

Funds for health and retirement benefits given to contracting agencies providing PFA should be equivalent to the average amount spent on benefits per teacher by SPS. These amounts would be equivalent to those for either classified or certified staff, depending on the teacher’s qualifications, paralleling the procedure outlined above for salaries.

- Advocate for an **alternate route** to teacher certification that provides provisional certification for individuals with BAs in another field so that they can teach in PFA as they complete an approved set of ECE courses (similar to New Jersey’s alternate route program). This could provide a pathway for the many early learning staff who have not received their education and training in the traditional K-12 teaching track. An effort to identify and encourage individuals from local communities into this alternate route so as to maximize community human resource capacities could assist in developing ECE expertise with a knowledge base of local conditions, languages, and cultures. Creating such options is critical to begin building commonality between early learning and K-12 career pathways.

To increase the options available for meeting teacher qualifications, the City could consider partnering with the University of Washington (UW) and other colleges and universities to develop a Preschool for All Certificate. If the City partners with UW, the certificate could be both a part of the current BA in ECE program, and a stand-alone certificate that teachers with existing BAs (not in ECE) could obtain to meet the BA in ECE requirement.

In addition, this specialized teaching certificate for preschool teachers could potentially meet “teaching certificate” requirements in the K-12 system (i.e. become similar to teacher certificate issued by OSPI). To achieve this, the City and UW, and if possible, DEL would need to work closely with OSPI to ensure that the PFA certificate is recognized by OSPI and PESB. This would create more options for providers to attain teaching certificates in ECE – Grades P-3 and create a “bridge” between the K-12 and ECE teaching career pathways which are currently parallel but completely separate.

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- Centers offering dual language instruction should receive funds to pay staff more (10% over comparable staff without the additional qualifications) if they are *dual certified* in both bilingual education and ECE and their languages of fluency match the languages of instruction in the classroom. For assistant teachers an oral language fluency test in both languages of instruction should be administered to ensure that they provide high-quality language models (e.g., the Certificate of Use of Language in Spanish, or CELU (Certificado de Español: Lengua y Uso); Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, OR JLPT (日本語能力試験 Nihongo Nōryoku Shiken?); Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language, or TOCFL), or others.

In addition, the City should provide robust assistance to providers to access higher education opportunities. Many current providers are not “traditional” college students and may encounter barriers to success at institutions of higher education. For example, providers may have academic experience from abroad, but encounter difficulties in how to apply their previous experience to the U.S. higher education system. Some providers may have had little experience, or even negative school experiences in the past, that make the idea of enrolling in college a challenging endeavor to pursue. Making extra supports for non-traditional students available will increase the number of providers who are successful in meeting PFA staff education requirements, and will allow PFA to access staff who bring both a wealth of knowledge about their communities as well as the qualifications to be a successful teacher. These extra supports may include:

- Developing a PFA resource center with knowledgeable staff to provide outreach and assistance to providers.
- Helping providers navigate and understand the college options available, and advocate for themselves in the higher education system.
- Providing “liaison services” so that providers have support when they communicate with college systems, including accessing academic advising and other supports available.
- Providing information and expertise to providers in accessing scholarships and tuition supports.
- Providing these extra supports, when possible, by using staff who reflect the cultural and language backgrounds of providers.

The costs of these supports could be borne by the Professional Capacity Building Fund (see *Section 4.2 Capacity Building* for more information).

Note:

Many members of workgroups and others have suggested the City to consider pursuing a BA waiver for experienced teachers who can provide evidence of high-quality teaching practice. They suggest instead some combination of classroom quality scores, evidence of positive student outcomes, and a portfolio assessment.

Many states have struggled with this approach but no rigorous and efficient method for implementing this has been put into policy. The question of who conducts and pays for the assessments of quality teaching practices is difficult to answer: *Would the City train and hire objective observers over and above the ones already needed for ramp-up? Who would conduct the assessments and analysis to ensure there is no bias? How would that be paid for?* We can find no feasible answer to these questions when the City must be accountable to the taxpayers. This is difficult because there are some excellent teachers who are not in a position to pursue a degree.

Rationale

Why BA degrees?

As noted in the overview section, the preschool programs that have provided the strongest evidence of large long-term effects and cost-effectiveness have all employed teachers with at least a BA degree, specialized training in early childhood, and teacher certification.⁷³ While a BA alone will not guarantee high-quality, it appears to be an important factor along with pay parity with the K-12 system. Allowing providers to enter the PFA program as their staff earn credentials takes advantage of existing experience and expertise and also provides a pathway to achieving the necessary level of quality to produce the desired benefits. Four years to complete the degree was enough time in the New Jersey system for the majority of teachers to meet the standard as virtually all staff in licensed programs already had some college credits. In New Jersey, 40% of child care teachers not working in the state preK system already had a BA degree before the educational requirements went into effect. In Head Start, at least 50% of teachers nationwide in center-based programs must have a BA degree and the other 50% must have at least an AA.

Washington's child care licensing regulations only require that teachers be adults (18-years-old) and have completed high school or equivalent. Meeting PFA qualifications may be the most challenging for existing teachers who currently only meet minimum licensing standards.

If after four years, the Office for Education (OFE) determines that some staff have worked diligently on degree attainment but have been unable to obtain it, an extension through a waiver process could be considered. In New Jersey, this was allowed if the staff member was within 30 credits of completion and submitted a plan approved by the college advisor for completion within two years.

Why a tiered approach to pay?

We recommend a tiered approach to salaries to maximize the quality of PFA's teaching staff. We recommend the higher level of pay for teachers with teaching certificates in ECE to attract and retain high-quality teachers for PFA. To do this, teachers should be paid at the same level as K-12 teachers. We recognize that a teacher with a BA in Early Childhood Education may be qualified to be an effective PFA teacher, and that there are at present many more teachers with these qualifications. There are very few teachers with a BA that includes both ECE and a teaching certificate, so incentives may be needed. A teacher with a teaching certificate that includes an ECE endorsement is paid at a higher level, while a teacher with a BA in ECE is paid well, but at a lower level. This should create an incentive for teachers with a BA in ECE to also get a teaching certificate.

Why advocate for an alternate route and Preschool for All Certificate?

Implementation of PFA will require expansion of the number of classrooms and thus the number of staff. One way that states have dealt with a rapid increase in demand for teachers is to institute an alternate route. In New Jersey, expansion would clearly have been delayed without the implementation of an ECE-focused alternate route. Given Washington State's interest in preK expansion, there may be an opportunity to establish such a certification.

Partnering with Washington's universities and colleges to develop a Preschool for All Certificate would provide a pathway for the many early learning staff who have not received their education and training in the traditional K-12 teaching track. To do this, the City should contact potential local partners to determine their interest and capacity. The University of Washington has already expressed willingness to work with the City on this matter.

Partnering with the UW has some specific advantages, including:

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- The UW is located in Seattle and is the state's largest university. A partnership creates a way for PFA teaching staff to access the UW in a way that may decrease traditional barriers to accessing higher education for many preschool and child care staff.
- The UW's BA degree in ECE is built upon the same framework and principles as the other early learning professional development work the UW is doing nationally and in support of the state's QRIS, Early Achievers. This common work provides PFA with an opportunity to align coaching and professional development with the certificate program, creating a way for teachers to continue their development in a contiguous manner.
- As an institution that also prepares K-12 educators, the UW is well positioned to help integrate and align ECE and K-12 educational and career pathways.
- The UW has expressed willingness to share or partner with other higher education institutions so that other colleges and universities could offer a PFA Certificate without investing in the coursework development.

3.4 Curricula

Overview

This section discusses options and recommendations for PFA curricula. Student assessments are covered in *Section 7.0 Outcomes and Evaluation*.

Research Overview

Key Findings

- Many programs claim to use a particular curriculum model but the implementation lacks fidelity.
- There are decades of curriculum comparison studies with contradictory findings—no particular standouts.
- Curriculum models should:
 - Provide balance, be content-rich, align with standards, and be research-based.
 - Provide adequate support to teachers.
 - Include complementary and well-tried professional development (PD) models.
 - Be adaptable to different populations (dual language learners, students with Individualized Education Plans).
 - Be implemented with fidelity.

Is there a proven curriculum?

Developing guidance on what works in early education is challenging and that certainly applies to evaluating and selecting a curriculum. According to the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) Yearbook, of the 50 different state preK programs operating in the 2008-09 school year, 18 specified a set of curriculum models from which funded programs could choose. The most prevalent among these were the following:⁷⁴

- Bank Street
- Creative Curriculum
- Curiosity Corner
- DLM Express
- HighScope
- Montessori
- Opening the World of Learning (OWL)

When early education curricula are evaluated, judgments have to be made on the strengths and weaknesses of the actual evaluation. This includes:

- Duration and quality of training in the curriculum prior to the evaluation.
- How well the outcome assessments used actually measure children's learning and development—are they broad enough and deep enough?
- Whether the effects found are large enough to be meaningful and lasting.
- How well any given curriculum is implemented in the classroom at the time the research was conducted.
- Nature of the comparison and quality of the research design.

When evaluation results are published, these issues are raised in the context of why a curriculum did or did not do well in the review. Recent efforts to summarize the evidence on the effects of various curricula have brought these issues to the forefront. The 2008 federal Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research report found that most curricula in the study provided little or no advantage over existing practice.⁷⁵

Why do some curricula fare poorly?

On an ongoing basis, the Institute for Educational Sciences' [What Works Clearinghouse](#) (WWC) provides reviews that yield lackluster ratings for a number of curricula and no standout results, especially when the criteria established for the reviews is considered. For example, WWC reports that the Tools of the Mind Curriculum had no significant effects. What may not be clear to readers is that the study WWC reviewed was designed to determine whether Tools of the Mind could produce equivalent academic results while improving results for self-regulation and social behavior compared to a more traditional curriculum that was also expected to produce strong academic gains.⁷⁶ Indeed, this is exactly what they found—strong reductions in behavior problems and improvements in self-regulation with academic gains at least as strong as those from the other curriculum. However, WWC does not account for any effects of early childhood curriculum on executive function, self-regulation, or any aspect of social-emotional development. In addition most of these studies look only at short-term outcomes in settings where the curriculum developer is directly overseeing implementation.

Most of these recent reviews do not look at historical evidence and typically examine only short-term (one year) results. For example, the precursor to the HighScope preschool model was the curriculum used in the Perry Preschool Project. When compared to other well-implemented preschool curricula in a randomized trial that took place in the 1960s, the Perry Preschool Project curriculum was found to outperform the other on immediate and *long-term benefits* for social-emotional outcomes, especially reduction in crime and delinquency.

What resources are available?

On a practical level, the question for decision makers is what resources to consult in selecting a curriculum for their programs. A recent meta-analysis of 120 studies takes a broad look at the evidence.⁷⁷ While this study does not point to specific curricula it does identify characteristics of more effective early education from the broadest set of comparative studies collected to date. The study finds that intentional teaching, small group and individual instruction, and comprehensive domains of learning are strong indicators of successful outcomes. This finding is corroborated by international studies of preschool practices.⁷⁸

What criteria should be used to evaluate curricula?

The following criteria can be used to assess the most promising preschool curriculum models and those that are most prevalent in Seattle.⁷⁹

1. The curriculum provides teachers with guidance for shared interactions with children in teacher-initiated activities, routines, and during play, and in particular helps teachers understand and support development of self-regulation.
2. The curriculum is comprehensive, integrates all domains of learning, and leads to achievement of state early learning standards and the Head Start Outcomes Framework. If individual content-specific curricula are chosen, then it is incumbent upon the stakeholders to integrate these into a manageable whole or it is probable that the curriculum will not be implemented as designed and thus not be as effective.
3. The curriculum provides guidance for differentiating teaching for students with special behavior, linguistic, or learning needs. In particular, the curriculum has been successfully implemented in dual language settings. The emphasis is on oral language learning, conceptual development, and cognitive and social problem-solving abilities.
4. A manageable, ongoing assessment system to inform instruction is available that is valid and reliable and consistent with the teaching philosophy and learning content of the curriculum model.
5. Research-based evidence exists that supports the effectiveness of the curriculum.
6. The curriculum is already being implemented locally and/or professional development expertise is readily available and the model will articulate well with kindergarten – 3rd grade practices.

Attachment B: Curriculum Comparison Matrix, provides more information on various comprehensive curricula, while *Attachment C: Domain-Specific Curricula and Methods*, provides more information on domain-specific curricula or methods that have promising research results.

Local Context

What early education curricula are generally used in Seattle?

The Program Quality & Capacity Workgroup, convened by the City of Seattle and encompassing early learning providers, City staff, and representatives of other early education related organizations, discussed which curricula are used by the early learning community in Seattle. The group developed the following list of curricula:

- Creative Curriculum (frequently used by Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program providers)
- HighScope
- Opening the World of Learning (OWL)
- Montessori
- Self Esteem through Culture leads to Academic Excellence (SETCLAE)
- Soy Bilingue
- Second Step
- Reggio Emilia and Reggio-inspired approach
- Other approaches: emergent, dual language, etc.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive; it provides a window into the variety of early learning curricula and approaches used in Seattle.

What are the standards for existing publicly funded programs?

Head Start, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and Step Ahead standards require evidence-based curriculum and provide guidelines for specific elements to be included. None of these programs require contractors to choose from a specific list of approved curricula.

What is the state doing for Early Achievers?

Currently, curriculum and corresponding staff supports are one of the categories in the Early Achievers quality rating system. The facilities are scored on the following components:

- Have a program curriculum philosophy.
- Demonstrate that the curriculum aligns with the state's Early Learning and Development Guidelines (benchmarks).
- Train lead teachers on curriculum philosophy and the Early Learning and Development Guidelines.
- Provide ongoing mentoring to support improvement in curriculum.
- Provide dedicated time for curriculum planning and reflective practice.

In addition, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) is considering augmenting the Early Achievers quality standards by choosing a curriculum, menu of curricula, or additional curriculum criteria to further promote child outcomes.

Options

1. Require programs to select from a limited list of approved evidence-based curricula.
2. Do not require specific curricula, but specify criteria that curriculum should need to be approved.
3. A combination of options above: providers can use a curriculum from an approved list, or apply for their curriculum to be approved if it meets specified criteria.
4. If a provider can demonstrate quality outcomes, no specific curriculum is required.

Recommendation

PFA providers should use a curriculum model from an approved list, or apply for their curriculum to be approved if it meets specified criteria.

- **Avoid multiple domain-specific curricula.** For example, do not select one curriculum model for math and another for reading.
- **The City should choose no more than three models and provide training and coaching specific to the model.** The following curriculum models meet most of the criteria above and are recommended:
 - The **HighScope Preschool Curriculum** meets all of the criteria if the entire curriculum, including the new math and literacy supplements, is implemented. Teachers may need support ensuring that science is infused in the curriculum, but the basic philosophy and approach is consistent with teaching scientific inquiry. Another reason for suggesting this model is that it is already being implemented in Seattle and adequate supports are available. There is a version of the HighScope curriculum for family child care.

- **Opening the World of Learning (OWL)**, like the other models, meets the criteria, although the research base for OWL is a bit less compelling since it is newer. Since it was developed by two distinguished early literacy experts, it is not surprising that early science and math experts find the treatment of these two domains a bit lacking in the initial model and methods for supporting self-regulation are not explicit. However, for the most recent [publication](#), the consulting authors included Dr. Juanita Copley, noted early math expert and Judith Lederman, early science expert. These subjects are integrated throughout the curriculum themes.
- **Creative Curriculum (most recent version)** with all supplements is the most widely used model in Head Start and is prevalent in Seattle. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is considering including it as an option for ECEAP. Research results comparing Creative Curriculum to other curriculum models are not strong; however, in most of these studies the model developer was not involved in training and coaching to fidelity was not part of the design. Creative Curriculum is one of the models used in New Jersey and other states that have found short- and long-term gains using the model. In addition, there is a version of the Creative Curriculum for family child care. *Note:* One of the expert reviewers for this recommended Plan did not support the inclusion of Creative Curriculum.
- **The City should assess fidelity of implementation.** All of the recommended curriculum models have developed observation tools that assess the degree to which the curriculum is being enacted in the classroom. It will take time to reach full curriculum fidelity, as comprehensive curricula with intentional teaching that differentiates interactions with children are not easy to learn. Having methods for measuring implementation will assist in program improvement and quality assurance. (See Section 6.0 Outcomes and Evaluation.)
- **Consider adding other models through a Curriculum Selection Committee with specific criteria only after initial start-up (post 2018).** To ensure that new curriculum models are added as the research base and professional development supports become available, the Office for Education (OFE) should form a Curriculum Selection Committee (made up of representatives from OFE, the provider community, DEL, and higher education) that uses a defined set of criteria similar to the one in the curriculum matrix. The Committee should periodically review the research literature to ensure that promising models are being considered and added if deemed promising. The Committee should also consider potential alignment with DEL, if curriculum models are recommended as part of Early Achievers or other state efforts (e.g., ECEAP).

In addition, contracting providers could apply to the Committee for approval of an alternate curriculum model providing all necessary evidence that the model meets the criteria. After review and approval, the results obtained by this center could be used to determine whether to allow the model to be part of the broader system. In this way, other adopters could see the model in action and the OFE could be assured that it works in the local context and that necessary supports are available from the model developer or publisher.

Rationale

- **Limiting the number of curricula is likely to allow PFA to provide better support across the system.** It is extremely important that within the city only a small number of curriculum models are implemented because expert curriculum-specific professional development is expensive and supporting the implementation of more than two or three models is unlikely to be successful.

- **Avoiding using multiple domain-specific approaches.** Although there is some promising research on a number of domain-specific curriculum models and methods, the added cost and time burden of developing a coherent approach and ensuring that coaches are trained in all models is impractical. Often the theories of learning and development that undergird the domain-specific models are not consistent with each other, which makes decision-making on the part of teachers difficult since having an underlying theory of learning is important to individualization and on-the-spot problem solving. These specific models often do not have strong professional development structures or the approaches to coaching and professional development are not clearly consistent with each other. In addition, many of the methods and activities in the domain-specific models have been incorporated in the latest additions of the comprehensive models recommended.
- **Training to support HighScope already exists with the Early Learning Academy.** The Early Learning Academy (ELA) is operated in partnership with Child Care Resources of King County. It provides professional development for preschool teachers and family caregivers on the HighScope Preschool Curriculum. The ELA also includes capacity building to support the HighScope Curriculum through its Training of Trainers program.
- **Preschool teachers and their supervisors should spend their time planning for differentiation and adapting the curriculum model to meet the needs of the children they serve, not designing the curriculum.** With only minor exceptions, teachers are generally not qualified to be designing curriculum nor do they have the time to do this. Coaches can work with teachers to integrate emergent approaches and adaptations that are consistent with the base model but still draw on the expertise of the teacher and the interests of the children.

3.5 Staff Professional Development Requirements

Overview

Research Overview

Key Findings

- Based on fundamental adult learning principles.
- Ongoing, connected, and comprehensive professional development (PD) differentiated based on data on learner's needs:
 - Refine knowledge, increase comfort with concepts and developmental trajectories.
 - Improve understanding of domain-specific teaching.
- Explicit link with teacher evaluation (self-assessment) and in-class coaching.
- Center director must be educational leader.

What do we know about effective professional development?

An adherence to fundamental adult learning principles is critical to delivering effective professional development (PD). All learners come with specific background knowledge and different approaches to learning. If they are not initially motivated to learn they will either fail to grasp the content entirely or only adapt practices superficially. The National Academy of Sciences finds that learners must have strong background knowledge and a conceptual framework to understand the facts and organize the knowledge in a way that is easy to access for application.⁸⁰

What this means for professional development is that to produce meaningful change the training content must ensure that teachers will refine their knowledge and increase their comfort with concepts and developmental trajectories in each domain of learning. It must also improve their understanding and application of effective teaching practices within each domain. The ultimate goal is to produce decision makers capable of implementing effective instruction after the PD is over.

What about culturally responsive practices?

Given that meaningful education occurs when students are engaged and see a connection to their lives, it is important to recognize that young children need support to navigate the differences between the home and school experience. Education should occur through the lens of culture (i.e., home-life realities and understandings of how the world works). Culturally appropriate practice is one of the three guiding principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (along with individually and age-appropriate practice) as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.⁸¹ In their [Pathways to Cultural Competence Project](#) this is explained further:

“For optimal development and learning of all children, educators must accept the legitimacy of children’s home language, respect (hold in high regard) the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families, including extended and nontraditional family units” (NAEYC 1995, 2). Since all children are rooted in their families we see a child’s family structure and all that it entails as the core of their family’s culture. This structure can include family socioeconomic status, family composition, parent’s level of educational attainment, abilities of children and family members, family’s immigration status, family’s religion, family’s home and preferred languages, parent’s sexual orientation, and the way that a family classifies its race and ethnicity.

Thus, culturally competent teachers take time to know the families of the children in their classrooms and to understand their values and child rearing practices as well as their goals for their child. The teachers then are careful to recognize these values and practices and to provide continuity for children. Culturally competent teachers realize what research shows that a “color blind” approach is not productive and that instead they should recognize, promote, respect, and support differences between their students. Through interactions with families through home visits or time in the classroom, teachers can begin to experience, understand, and value a family’s practices and begin to incorporate them to support a child’s learning.

School and center leaders are also important in setting the tone for culturally competent practices. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Pathways to Cultural Competence Project has developed two connected checklists to assist teachers and their educational leads in developing and maintaining appropriate practices. The checklists and a further description of the project can be found at: http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/state/QBCC_Tool.pdf

What does effective professional development look like?

Teaching staff and educational leaders are provided with the guidance and support they need to deliver the highest-quality services to children and families. The goal is to support children and help all teachers and supervisors reach their full potential as educators and professionals.

There are multiple domains for professional development and these should be addressed for all levels of staff with teaching staff, teacher supervisors (center directors, site supervisors, principals), coaches, and coaches of coaches.

For teaching staff these domains include:

- Mastery of the chosen curriculum model.
- General effective Early Childhood Education (ECE) practice as measured by tools such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) or the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
- Reliable administration of the assessment system (screenings as well as the performance-based ongoing system).
- Effective family engagement (including home visits, parent teacher conferences, home-learning activities, and other parent communication).
- Meeting the needs of all children through differentiated instruction (addressing challenging behaviors, working to set Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals in the natural environment, supporting dual language learners in home language and English acquisition, etc.).

For center directors or teacher supervisors the domains of learning include all of the above, plus principles of adult learning, personnel management, the reflective coaching cycle (see below), reliability on the classroom observation tools (e.g., ECERS-R, CLASS), data-driven decision-making, and fiscal management.

For coaches of coaches, skill in helping others coach should be added as well as delivering effective workshops and expertise in the curriculum model and related professional development.

Reflective Coaching

Regular and intensive coaching of teachers and their supervisors is increasingly recognized as a necessary component of professional development to improve classroom practices.⁸² The most widely used and researched method is the reflective or cognitive coaching model designed to develop teachers while also improving program quality.⁸³

Coaching models tend to have activities designed to enhance the relationship between the teacher and the coach combined with direct observation, reflection/discussion, and modeling of practices.⁸⁴

What does Reflective Coaching look like? Case Study of Acelero Learning Head Start

Acelero Learning improves educational opportunities for young children by working with local affiliates to improve the delivery of Head Start programs in their communities. Acelero Learning classrooms have demonstrated children's pre and post gains that are twice the national average for other Head Start agencies and equivalent to those in state preK programs. This model is similar to practices implemented in New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Boston.

In this professional development model, all teaching teams participate in a coaching cycle, typically with a coach or supervisor, at least once a month.

- Cycle begins with agreement on a focus based on the specific needs of that teacher or teaching team primarily drawn from CLASS data or a locally developed teacher evaluation rubric.
- During the observation, the coach videotapes the activities and makes detailed notes. This is followed by independent reflection on the activity by the teacher and the coach in preparation for the coaching conference where reflections are compared and specific next steps for improvement are developed.
- New teachers and struggling teachers are coached on a weekly basis.
- An education coordinator or professional development specialist visits the center at least bi-monthly and completes at least monthly a "coaching of coach" session in which they observe each center director/on-site coach complete a coaching cycle and then they conduct the same type of reflective conference with the on-site coach to support improvement.

Two tools are essential for this process: structured classroom observation tools such as ECERS–R or CLASS and a teacher evaluation rubric designed for professional development, coaching, and evaluation. The rubric should clearly articulate the research-based expectations for being a successful teacher, and provide teachers with a developmental path for specific components of their work. Scores on these tools can be used to group teachers for targeted and tiered professional development. Professional development workshops and other group training can focus on specific areas of skill development where the teacher has a specific need, allowing for differentiated professional development for small groups of teachers.

Local Context

The Washington State Training and Registry System (STARS). This system for licensed child care providers includes the following ongoing/annual continuing professional development training requirements:

- Child care directors, program supervisors, and lead teachers must complete 10 clock hours or one college credit of continuing education annually.
- The director and program supervisor must have 5 of those 10 hours in program management and administration for the first two years in their respective positions. Each additional year, three of the ten hours required must be in program management and administration.
- Continuing education must be delivered by a state-approved trainer, or consist of training that has been department-approved through Managed Education and Registry Tool (MERIT).

Professional Registry: MERIT. Managed Education and Registry Tool (MERIT) is a centralized staff database and registry that tracks individual staff educational and professional achievements. Once registered, individuals have a professional record in MERIT that creates an employment history over

time and verifies educational credits/credentials. The professional record is “portable” and can be shared with potential employers. Staff must establish a record and have their education verified in MERIT to participate in Early Achievers. As more early learning staff throughout Washington participate in MERIT, the state will gain workforce data that will be invaluable to understanding how best to support the advancement of early learning professionals.

Core Competencies and Career Lattice. The Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals were developed in 2009 and serve as a resource and framework to outline the knowledge and skills professionals need to provide quality care to young children. The Core Competencies are organized in eight content areas that align with common content areas used in early learning settings:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Child Growth and Development | 6. Program Planning and Development |
| 2. Health, Safety and Nutrition | 7. Families and Community Partnerships |
| 3. Curriculum and Learning Environment | 8. Professional Development and Leadership |
| 4. Interactions | |
| 5. Ongoing Measurement of Child Progress | |

The Core Competencies were developed by the statewide Professional Development Consortium, a diverse group of early learning stakeholders and experts.

The Washington State Career Lattice for Early Care and Education Professionals is a series of 15 steps which represent increasing levels of training and educational advancement in the early learning field. The levels on the lattice align with the Core Competencies. When early learning staff establish a professional record in MERIT and have their education and training verified, they are eligible for increasing monetary awards aligned with increasing levels of the lattice. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant provides the funding for awards available to individuals who attain placement on the Career Lattice.

Professional development benefits and services available through Early Achievers. Programs/facilities that participate in the state’s quality rating and improvement system, Early Achievers, receive a variety of professional development supports, including:

- Technical assistance and consultation in preparation for ratings at Level 2.
- Coaching to support the site’s Early Achievers quality improvement plan at Levels 3 to 5.
- Annual quality improvement awards.
- Tiered reimbursement and child care subsidy contracts.

Early Achievers professional development services are provided by regional Child Care Aware offices. Coaches are hired by Child Care Aware, but trained and supported by the University of Washington (UW), which convenes regular trainings, seminars and reflective practice opportunities for coaches across the state. The UW developed a “Practice Based Coaching Framework” that is defined as “a cyclical process for supporting providers’ use of effective practices that lead to positive outcomes for children.”⁸⁵ The foundation for the coaching framework is adapted from materials developed to support coaching in Head Start. Although there is no minimum requirement for the number of coaching hours per program, coaches are funded in Early Achievers at approximately eight hours per month, per facility.

Early Achievers also provides financial support for professional development and career advancement. Various types of scholarships are available to support tuition, books, and release time (paid time off from work to attend trainings).

Professional development available through the Early Learning Academy. The Early Learning Academy (ELA) is operated by the City of Seattle in partnership with Child Care Resources of King County. It provides professional development for preschool teachers and family caregivers so they can increase the number of children who enter kindergarten prepared to learn.

The ELA is providing 40 Step Ahead teachers with extensive training and coaching to be fully certified in the HighScope Curriculum for early learning. This training began in January 2014.

Options

Offering comprehensive professional development with complementary coaching is clearly supported by the research literature and best practice. The following options could be implemented directly by Office for Education (OFE) staff or through a contractor(s). The advantage of housing the professional development/coaching element at OFE is the direct control over quality; while the advantage of using a contractor is that they are less likely to be influenced by political concerns and are typically more nimble in changing direction and hiring experts. Options for how to implement the PD system are as follows:

1. **Align with and augment existing PD systems (e.g., Early Learning Academy, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Head Start, and Early Achievers).**
2. **Design and implement new PD systems that could be optional (with high expectations for provider quality if a provider opts out) or mandatory.** An incentive to participate could be added by providing training in approved curriculum models on an optional basis combined with a rigorous expectation for reaching teacher qualification standards combined with high scores on quality measures (e.g., ECERS-R and CLASS) as well as better than average child gain scores.
3. **Provide coaching (could be combined with 1 or 2) using one or more of the following delivery options:**
 - OFE staff
 - Outside contractor(s)
 - Center director as coach
 - Coaching of coaches

Recommendations

- **OFE should directly provide professional development (PD) for each approved curriculum model.** Each approved curriculum model (see *Section 3.4 Curricula*) should have a cadre of expert trainers; coaches and coach of coaches who have been “certified” or “endorsed” by the curriculum model developer. These expert trainers—Preschool for All (PFA) coaches—would be employees of the City.
 - In the start-up years, the City could contract the training out to the model developer, but the contract should state a goal of being self-sustaining within three years (i.e., the model developers should train the local trainers to be able to continue supporting fidelity of implementation).
- **PFA Coaches should develop coursework and pursue credit for extensive, ongoing formal PD coupled with on-site support (reflective coaching) to teachers and center directors/program supervisors,** with the goal of having directors/supervisors develop these skills. Curriculum-specific cohorts of teaching staff and center directors/teacher supervisors should attend comprehensive professional development trainings. Arrangements should be made with local or online institutions of higher education for these *to be credit-bearing and counted toward a degree.*

This professional development should include training to mastery in the following:

- Implementation of the chosen curriculum model.
- General effective ECE practice as measured by tools such as ECERS-R and CLASS and including the learning environment and teacher/child interaction; best practices for domain learning in the early learning standards which should include understanding of child development by domain; and culturally competent practices as defined by the NAEYC Pathways to Cultural Competence Project.
- Reliable administration of the assessment system that include screenings as well as the performance-based ongoing system standards which will include understanding of child development by domain.
- Effective family engagement including conducting home visits, communicating child progress in parent teacher conferences, developing and documenting home learning activities, and other parent communication.
- Meeting the needs of young English Language Learners by supporting home language and English acquisition for dual language learners.
- Meeting the needs of all children through differentiated instruction, including children with challenging behaviors, and addressing IEP goals in the natural environment.
- **Within the cadre of PFA coaches, specific positions should be identified and filled with qualified professionals to provide expertise as inclusion specialists, bilingual education specialists, and experts in cultural competence and challenging behaviors.** These identified specialists would provide focused professional development trainings and consultation to other PFA Coaches in their area of expertise. (Note: This is the model used in New Jersey to ensure all children's needs are addressed.)
- **Intensive training should be offered for center directors/program supervisors to enable them to support teaching staff at their sites.** This professional development should include training to mastery in the following:
 - Principles of adult learning.
 - The reflective coaching cycle.
 - Reliability on the classroom observation tools (e.g., ECERS-R, CLASS) and curriculum fidelity measures.
 - Data-driven decision-making.
 - Personnel management.
 - Fiscal and other administrative management systems.
- **OFE should work with DEL to leverage existing state systems.** OFE should work with DEL to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for accessing or coordinating with the Early Achievers funding to provide professional development and coaching support for providers, building on the Early Achievers framework developed by the University of Washington. PFA Coaches should be trained in the Early Achievers coach framework and should be able to support the providers in achieving higher levels of the quality improvement system. Leveraging and integrating Early Achievers coaching resources with PFA coaching will be especially important in the early years of implementation when the coaching needs may be more intense.

In addition, consider how to integrate MERIT's functionality to support professional development, eliminating the need to build and maintain separate staff databases and registries. Since MERIT is relatively new, Seattle may also consider collaborating with DEL as it continues to build out and develop MERIT to increase the likelihood that it will be valuable to the program.

Rationale

- **Simply augmenting the existing PD system would not ensure quality.** While this approach would be the least cumbersome and least costly option, it would leave to chance full participation and likely not ensure quality.
- **Situating all professional development in the OFE builds coherence and efficiency.** If an external agency is responsible for expertise in the curriculum model and professional development and coaching, duplication of expertise would be necessary at the OFE for general oversight and ongoing monitoring. Having one entity planning new initiatives and implementing them is more efficient.
- **The need for coaching may be more intense in the early years.** Many if not most teaching staff and site educational leaders will be learning a new curriculum and striving to meet high-quality standards. Thus, using outside coaches may make sense to augment the supervisor until a certain level of quality and fidelity of curriculum implementation is achieved. In New Jersey, this level was reached after three years of intensive training and coaching. However, the majority of the teachers had an ECE certification and were paid on par with the district teachers. A conservative approach would be to budget for outside coaches for four years while center directors receive coaching of coaches training.
- **Supervisors make good coaches.** Some believe that supervisors cannot be effective coaches but there is no research base for this and both types of coaching (by the supervisor or by another) are found in the literature. If outsiders serve as coaches there is the danger that teachers would get mixed messages from the coach and their center director/supervisor. All employees need to please their supervisors and that can actually motivate change.

In addition to the teacher-centered tools of reflective coaching and the teacher evaluation rubrics, effective professional development includes an intense focus on improving the skills of all educational leaders, and especially concentrating on the center director as the primary education leader in each center. An ongoing, intensive seminar or institute for center directors as educational leaders is needed to ensure that the quality in the classrooms is established and maintained. It is clear that many center directors do not have the expertise in early childhood education, adult learning and performance management, and business administration needed to be effective leaders. A seminar and methods to determine center directors' skills in practice should be a part of the professional development of the initiative. This comprehensive, ongoing professional seminar with content on understanding the child development and teaching necessary to meet Washington State Early Learning and Development Goals and on adult learning theories and practice should be combined with professional learning communities for center directors in which they share struggles and lessons learned about supporting teachers especially drawn from their own data and experience. A developmental rubric with benchmarks on coaching and business administration should be developed and used in ways that mirror the approach with teachers to ensure that center directors receive the differentiated professional development they need to successfully support the teachers.

- **Training to support the HighScope Curriculum already exists with the Early Learning Academy.** The Early Learning Academy (ELA) is operated in partnership with Child Care Resources of King County. It provides professional development for preschool teachers and family caregivers on the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, one of the recommended curricula (see *Section 0 Curricula*).
- **The State is using Early Achievers to align preschool efforts.** DEL is in the process of coordinating training and professional development efforts, including coaching models, across Early Achievers and ECEAP.
- **MERIT.** Since Early Achievers requires that early education facilities ensure all staff establish professional records in MERIT, the system would provide PFA with reliable data that the program can use to track and monitor professional development. MERIT verifies educational attainment (degrees) so the City or employers/PFA contractors will not have to re-verify information if staff have complete records in MERIT.
- **STARS.** Since STARS professional development requirements apply to staff in licensed child care settings (a recommendation in this Action Plan), these requirements should serve as a floor for early learning educators.

3.6 Appropriate Language Support

Overview

Key Findings

- Learning two languages is as “natural as learning one.”
- Bilingualism has multiple strong benefits and English home language children will also benefit from learning a second language.
- Children who start kindergarten without English rarely catch up.
- Good preK is highly beneficial for dual language learners.
- Dual language learners are less likely to be in preK and if they are in preK it is often in lower-quality settings.
- There is commonly a mismatch between teachers and language/culture.

Research Overview

The majority of young English Language Learners are born in this country and their parents are clearly committed to staying here.⁸⁶ Only 5% of young children from immigrant families live in homes where no parent speaks English; however, 40% of immigrant parents report that they do not speak English well.⁸⁷ Lack of exposure to fluent English may be compounded by other limitations, given that parents who speak limited or no English are less likely to read to their children in any language.⁸⁸ Also, low income parents have been found to provide less language stimulation of any kind to their children,⁸⁹ and young English Language Learners are more likely to be from low income homes.⁹⁰

Can children learn two languages at once?

Children under the age of 5 are capable of learning two languages simultaneously and the process is as “natural as learning one language.”⁹¹ Studies of older children and a few studies of very young children indicate that supporting dual language learning in contrast to English immersion may improve children’s learning in English and certainly does not impede it.⁹²

Neurological and cognitive science research is beginning to show that there are clear cognitive benefits to bilingual proficiency that may be evident in more efficient brain functioning.⁹³ In addition to improved meta-linguistic awareness, bilinguals have faster reaction times when there are competing demands for attention and these are manifested across multiple skill areas including language, phonological awareness, writing, reading, quantity, spatial concepts, creativity, and problem solving.

In addition, research on academic trajectories shows that children who begin kindergarten bilingual proficient perform as well or better than those who begin with only English. With some variation by home language and family income level, children who begin with only a language other than English do not catch up with their peers by the end of elementary school.⁹⁴

What effect does preschool have on English Language Learners?

The number of children who are English Language Learners (ELL) and attend state-funded preschool is growing but they are still less likely than English speakers and other minority groups to attend any child care setting outside of the home.⁹⁵ Survey research reveals that these lower attendance rates are related to lack of knowledge of the programs or lack of access and not, as is commonly assumed, that the parents do not want their children to attend preschool.⁹⁶ Growing evidence indicates that English Language Learners benefit more than others from effective preschool education.⁹⁷

Young dual language learners who attend out-of-home programs are more likely to be served in lower quality settings;⁹⁸ and evidence indicates that their teachers are not likely to speak their home language⁹⁹ nor are they trained in strategies to support dual language acquisition.¹⁰⁰ Research findings also indicate that English immersion programs for children this age can lead to a loss of the home language, especially if the home language base is not strong.¹⁰¹

Clearly, having a teacher who is bilingual facilitates dual language instruction¹⁰² and may improve learning in English as well as in the home language.¹⁰³ However, looking across the available data sources, it is evident that most children who speak a language other than English at home do not have a teacher who speaks their language or who has specialized knowledge in how to support English language learning for young children.¹⁰⁴ This lack of expertise makes it especially surprising that teacher preparation programs rarely offer substantive coursework in linguistic and cultural diversity.¹⁰⁵

What types of assessments are available?

Current assessment measures and procedures for young English Language Learners are inadequate. Assessments are often unavailable in languages other than English and then typically only in Spanish. Test construction rarely takes into account the child's knowledge base across both languages and is often simply a direct translation of English tests, which does not account for major structural differences in languages, dialectical variations within languages, or the fact that the order of acquisition of specific vocabulary and grammar may differ across languages. Add to this the difficulty of matching language of assessment to language of instruction and the complexities of this issue become clear.

Local Context

The proportion of children under the age of 5 who live in homes where a non-English language is spoken is rapidly increasing. The overall child population speaking a non-English native language in the U.S. rose from 6% in 1979 to 14% in 1999 and the number of language minority students in K-12 schools has been recently estimated to be over 14 million.¹⁰⁶ The representation of English Language Learners in U.S. schools has its highest concentration in early education.¹⁰⁷

In the City of Seattle, the largest school-age minority language group is Asian and Pacific Islander languages at 12%; 6% speak Spanish; 4% speak Indo-European languages; and 7% of school-age children speak other languages, including East African languages.¹⁰⁸ In addition, approximately 18% of Seattle

Public Schools kindergarten students are English Language Learners.¹⁰⁹ To reflect this linguistic diversity, there are a number of programs at preschool and K-12 levels that serve dual language learners:

- There are several dual language and immersion preschools in Seattle in French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Farsi. Hoa Mai Vietnamese Bilingual Preschool will be the city's first Vietnamese-English preschool and is scheduled to open in fall 2014.
- Seattle Public Schools has four International Elementary Schools that offer dual language immersion programs (Concord – Spanish; Beacon Hill – Spanish and Mandarin; and McDonald and John Stanford – Spanish and Japanese).

In addition, as a strategy to share their expertise with child care programs participating in Early Achievers, some local preschool providers receive contracts from the Department of Early Learning (DEL) to be Early Achievers Training Resource Centers and share their dual language resources, trainings, and other supports with surrounding Early Achievers child care sites. These services are just beginning in 2014 and so their impact/effectiveness is yet to be determined.

Options

- Allow bilingual programs to emerge and provide incentives and professional development (PD) supporting English language learning.
- Increase provision of high-quality dual language preschool. Dual language programming is rarely available for young children even though research indicates the benefits of bilingualism for all home languages including English. Program and learning standards should be established that enhance dual language acquisition. There is a scarcity of high-quality, affordable programs in many English Language Learner (ELL) communities. ELLs have language and cognitive development needs in the preschool years that can be effectively harnessed through appropriate programming.¹¹⁰ Language plays a prominent role in the mediation of cognitive and social development, and in addition, the literature indicates that bilingualism can be developed most effectively during the early years and children who enter kindergarten proficient in two languages have a much better chance of academic success. Yet dual language programming is rarely available at this or later ages, and opportunities for developing English and enhancing the home language are lost.
- Incorporate dual language programming using successful methods which include systematically introducing and supporting within the classroom both languages for children who speak English at home or whose home language is not English in one of the following ways:
 - Employing at least one teacher or assistant teacher who is bilingual, preferably both.
 - Implementing two-way immersion procedures in which classrooms rotate from English-only instruction to home language only; some programs vary different parts of the day such as morning in one language and afternoon in another and others rotate daily or even weekly. This method is particularly practical where there are not enough qualified bilingual teachers.
 - Bringing in home-language teachers on a regular basis, typically daily, to teach in the home language.
 - Employing bilingual resource teachers for sets of 4 classrooms who can provide one hour of “instruction” in the home language in each classroom at least daily while providing teachers with breaks. In this way, each teaching staff member is in the room with the bilingual resource teacher for 30 minutes and the costs of the bilingual resource teacher is partly offset by the cost of the relief teacher being replaced.

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- Educate and hire qualified bilingual staff. Give priority to providers who employ highly qualified bilingual, bicultural staff who can help students bridge the transition from home to school and who can serve as liaisons with the community.
- Where adequate numbers of qualified bilingual teachers and staff are not available, scholarships should be provided for underqualified early childhood teachers and members of the language minority communities to obtain a teaching credential in early childhood education, especially if it specializes in bilingual education. These scholarships should be implemented with support for non-traditional students to successfully negotiate the higher education system.
- Scholarship and in-service programs should be developed that cater to the current teaching work force to increase their facility in the languages spoken by the children in their classrooms.
- Provide pre-service and in-service education on dual language acquisition and effective teaching practices. Even when teaching staff are available who speak the language of the children in the classroom, they have rarely been trained in how to support dual language acquisition. Office for Education (OFE) should have on staff at least one Preschool for All (PFA) Coach who is a specialist in bilingual or ELL education to provide professional development to teachers in effective services for ELLs and their families. In addition, the professional development provided to teachers should include training in linguistic development as well as specific teaching strategies for dual language learners.
- Support home language family engagement. Programs should ensure that parents are provided support to understand the importance of maintaining the home language and of their involvement in their children's education from an early age. Programs should have at least one staff member who speaks the language of the parents, and where this is not feasible due to the low incidence of the specific language, find a resource to provide translation to the parents. In addition, parent programs should be responsive to the cultural differences of their families and tailor parent involvement and parent education accordingly.
- Implement appropriate assessment measures for dual language of instruction classrooms. If the purpose of the assessment is to determine the effectiveness of instruction then it is necessary to use an assessment measure that matches the language or languages of instruction. Children in dual language classrooms should be assessed in both languages and children in English-only classrooms should be assessed in English. However, if the child's content knowledge, in addition to language ability, is of interest then an assessment of knowledge in both languages should be used. Information from standardized assessments, which have norms established on the appropriate population, should only be used in combination with ongoing curriculum-embedded assessments which include parental input on the child's skills.
- Develop and implement bilingual education and cultural competence program improvement plans. Provide support for preschool programs to develop bilingual education and cultural competence program improvement plans.

Recommendations

- **Fund dual language classrooms using any of the models described above and provide additional funding to support these models.** Languages supported should be representative of the Seattle population. In addition, dual language programs that support written languages should have priority given their salience for literacy development. The population of the dual language classrooms should include English home-language children so that all children are afforded the opportunity to learn two languages. We recommend that parents have options for classrooms in which to enroll their child; parents who do not want a dual language option, or who do not want their child to learn the home language that is offered in one program, should have other options available to them.
- **Fund education for and hire bilingual staff—pay premiums at all levels if staff are certified in bilingual education.** Teachers who can provide high-quality preschool teaching in both the home language of a large proportion of the population and English will likely be scarce. Higher salaries (increase base by 10%) would provide incentives for qualified staff to apply or remain and for those who do not meet the qualifications to attain them.
- **Assess students in the languages of instruction where tools exist.** Since child assessments will be part of the ongoing continuous improvement system as well as the overall program evaluation, it is necessary to assess whether children are making progress in all languages of instructions.
- **Assess quality of supports for bilingual acquisition.** Classroom assessment tools are emerging that assist programs in assessing and improving the provision of supports for home language acquisition as well as English. Strategies for supporting English language learning children differ to some degree from other teaching strategies and should be observed as part of the continuous improvement cycle.
- **Develop or adapt tools to assess cultural competence of staff to inform professional development.** This could be developed by the PFA Coach in cultural competence and administered as part of ongoing coaching by the site supervisor/center director or the PFA Coach. The checklists developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Pathways to Cultural Competence Project could be adapted for this purpose (see *Section 3.5 Staff Professional Development Requirements* for more information).
- **Consider building upon the current Early Achievers Training Resources Centers** to help programs share tools, strategies, and expertise regarding support for language acquisition for dual language learners.

Rationale

Bilingualism can be developed most effectively during the early years. Language plays a prominent role in the mediation of cognitive and social development, and in addition, the literature indicates that bilingualism can be developed most effectively during the early years and children who enter kindergarten proficient in two languages have a much better chance of academic success. Yet dual language programming is rarely available at this or later ages, and opportunities for developing English and enhancing the home language are lost. English home-language speakers should have the opportunity to become bilingual as well given the numerous advantages it bestows.

Children that are learning other languages besides English and their home language experience benefits as well. Multilingualism produces a special advantage in utilizing a person's brain capacity as creatively as possible.¹¹¹ However, if parents do not want a dual language option or want their child to focus on English and their home language, they should have options for classrooms in which to enroll their child.

3.7 Meeting the Needs of All Children through Differentiated Support

Overview

Research Overview

Key Findings

- All children, including those with special needs (e.g., with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), children in foster/kinship care or other areas of the child welfare system, etc.) benefit from attending preschool in typical settings with supports (e.g., smaller ratios, curricular adaptations, case conferencing, and family engagement).
- All teachers, regardless of specialized certification, have the capacity to improve how they work with children.
- Consultation models can be effective for children with special needs served in inclusive environments.
- Some children benefit from self-contained settings that are striving to prepare them for transition to the typical environment.
- With sufficient culturally relevant and inclusive supports, all children can achieve success.

Who might need additional supports?

For the vast majority of children, high-quality preschool in small classes taught by well-prepared teachers who implement a well-designed developmentally appropriate curriculum model is effective without extra services. However, there are children who exhibit challenging behaviors or developmental delays or are at risk for developing them due to a wide variety of circumstances. These circumstances might include homelessness, untreated maternal depression, neglect, physical abuse, or others.

Children with special health care needs may also need additional support. This includes children with diabetes, mobility challenges, feeding tubes, asthma, or allergies.

For all children, decisions regarding which setting and what supports are needed must be carefully and systematically planned with the first choice always being the typical setting for other children of the same age with appropriate supports so that the child can be successful. For children with identified disabilities as set out in the Individualized Education Plan, the aim is to provide these supports such that

the child can be served in the “least restrictive environment” (LRE). The LRE is defined in federal law as follows:

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (IDEA, Title IB 612a5).

What are challenging behaviors?

Behavior is a form of communication that we all use to express our needs. Early childhood educators are concerned about the social-emotional development and challenging behaviors of young children and the ways in which these children are often treated as the problem. Expulsion rates in preschool of children that exhibit challenging behaviors have been estimated at three times that of the K-12 system and some evidence shows expulsion rates are even higher for children of color in the K-12 system¹¹² implying extremely high rates of expulsion for children of color in preschool. Prevalence rates of preschoolers exhibiting moderate to severe challenging behaviors range from 10% to 21%.¹¹³ Behaviors can be external (e.g., real or perceived aggression, defiance, destruction of property) or internal (e.g., social withdrawal).¹¹⁴

What works?

For over three decades, researchers have studied an array of practices intended to promote social and behavioral competence. Children who are socially competent interact well with others, even during difficult situations, and are less likely to exhibit challenging behaviors.¹¹⁵ The research suggests the need for a continuum. The continuum of practices includes environmental supports to promote peer engagement and interaction, instruction focused on teaching new social skills, and teacher practices that support social behaviors.¹¹⁶ The model should be instituted classroom-wide, recognizing that children will be at different levels.

An example of a classroom-wide model is the Teaching Pyramid.¹¹⁷ This pyramid provides universal strategies to support social-emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors. In this tiered model the intensity of intervention increases based on the severity of a child’s need while also allowing all children to remain together in the same learning environment.

For children that demonstrate persistent challenging behaviors, research has shown the benefit of individualized Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS).¹¹⁸ Understanding the underlying cause of the behavior is critical to providing support. Implementation of PBS involves a team consisting of at least classroom teaching staff, a behavior support specialist, and the family, and involves the development of a behavior support plan. Family members participate in the assessment and problem-solving process to create individualized positive behavior support plans for their children. Support plans generally have three components:

- Strategies to prevent occurrence of the challenging behavior.
- Teaching children new skills to use in place of the behavior.
- Responding to children in a way that supports the use of these new skills and does not maintain the challenging behavior.

The process is designed to be positive and not punitive. The goal is to reduce the likelihood of the challenging behaviors occurring and to strengthen appropriate behaviors and skills, which in turn should increase positive peer interactions and meaningful learning opportunities.

What about children with special health care needs?

Children with special health care needs should not be denied services. Staff will need training around these needs and a classroom accommodation plan, created in coordination with the Public Health Child Care Team, may need to be in place to ensure adequate support. (Specific recommendations are in *Section 3.9 Health Support*.)

Local Context

There is very limited local data on the number of children in challenging circumstances. During school year 2009-10, there were approximately 310 students experiencing homelessness in kindergarten through 3rd grade, representing under 2% of total students.¹¹⁹ Approximately 8% of Seattle Public Schools (SPS) kindergarten students receive Special Education Services.¹²⁰

The Program Quality & Capacity Workgroup, convened by the City of Seattle and encompassing early learning providers, City staff, and representatives of other early-education related organizations, discussed promising practices related to hard-to-reach families. The group noted a number of existing resources such as Seattle Public Schools' developmental preschools, home visiting programs, Play and Learn Groups, family support workers and advocates, Child Care Resources' outreach to families experiencing homelessness, Childhaven's services for children that have been abused, neglected or are at-risk, and Wellspring's services for children experiencing homelessness.

The workgroups raised two concerns related to adequately supporting inclusive classrooms. The first is related to the Child Find process. Child Find is the process used by Seattle Public Schools to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities and developmental delays to ensure that they receive the services to which they are entitled. However, the workgroups reported that getting children through the process in a timely manner has been a challenge with long wait times and difficulty scheduling appointments.

The second challenge is around how to support children that do not qualify for services through the Child Find process, but still have behavior, developmental, mental health, or other challenges that would benefit from support, even if they are not deemed acute enough to qualify. Children who qualify for part-day services, but participate in full-day programs will also benefit from supports throughout the day. The workgroup stressed that providing adequate support is key to the ability to have inclusive classrooms.

Options

1. Provide tiered services that range from self-contained to integrated classrooms. Tiered services for children in need of further support would range from self-contained settings with intensive interventions for children that have been abused or neglected to Seattle Public Schools developmental preschools to specialized consultation models provided by therapists or other experts directly to teachers and parents such that they can directly provide interventions to ensure ongoing support.
2. Reduce class size and/or provide extra support (e.g., co-teaching model, specialized consultants) for classrooms that serve 25% to 33% special populations (e.g., students experiencing homeless, refugees, in the care of protective services, having Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), etc.).
3. Develop expertise in inclusion practices: pre-referral and intervention teams who help with prevention, development, and implementation of action plans.
4. Fund programs to provide self-contained, direct services as well as consultation to teachers in integrated settings.
5. Negotiate with Seattle Public Schools to ensure therapies are provided in the natural environment so that children can remain in their original program as much as possible.

Recommendations

- **Make a “zero expulsion” policy the standard** for all Preschool for All (PFA) classrooms at all contracting PFA providers. Supports should be available to providers to effectively meet the needs of children with challenging behaviors through expert consultations and coaching. For example, the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning has developed modules on Teaching Social Emotional Skills and Tools for Developing Behavior Support Plans.
- **Provide additional resources for children who may need more intensive supports** (e.g. children experiencing homelessness, children with an IEP, children in foster/kinship care or other areas of child welfare system, and others), including reduced class sizes and other interventions.
- **Fund programs that serve specialized populations** such as children in the child welfare system to expand provision of direct services if the program meets all standards including using the curriculum models chosen. If Office for Education (OFE) cannot employ PFA Coaches with expertise in specific needs, then consider contracting with the experts in these programs to provide on-site consultation to teachers in integrated PFA settings. This should be done in concert with the PFA Coaches.
- **Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with SPS and other local entities** outlining the roles that the district, OFE, PFA providers and other specialized providers would assume to ensure quality in a continuum of services for children with disabilities. Negotiate to ensure that therapies are provided in the natural environment so children can remain in their original program as much as possible.

Rationale

Inclusion has important educational and social benefits for all children. The provision of full access to preschool will provide far greater opportunities for children with disabilities or other special needs to be educated in an inclusive setting with their peers and to have access to all the resources necessary to address their individualized needs. PFA providers should lead the way in implementing a visionary approach to preschool special education that is inclusive and benefits all children with appropriate supports to address individual needs, according to the individualized education program.

3.8 Family Engagement

Overview

Research Overview

Key Findings

- Children’s parents are strong predictors of their school success.
- Most family support interventions have shown only modest or no effect.
- Awareness of children’s needs motivates parents.
- Specific and intentional activities done in the home have shown promising results for children’s outcomes.
- Family-to-family networks have shown promising results for child outcomes.
- Ameliorating critical family stressors, such as homelessness, unemployment, or depression, is also effective, but this is not something preK staff can do.

What are the links between family characteristics and children's development?

Despite years of federal and state efforts to level the playing field for all children, the preponderance of evidence indicates that family characteristics and the neighborhood that they grow up in remain the strongest predictors of health and developmental outcomes. While zip code is not destiny, given a child's zip code, researchers can predict trends in children's development and learning outcomes with some accuracy.¹²¹ In addition, scholars have shown clear links between family characteristics and children's development. When families are better off economically, mothers are more likely to have higher levels of education, and children are more likely to grow up in stable, two-partner families, and have better developmental outcomes.¹²² Children whose families live near or below the poverty line are subject to the well-documented effects of economic hardship, including health problems and developmental delays, particularly when this hardship is persistent and enduring. Studies that control for other family characteristics have found that the effect of family income on intelligence and verbal test scores at ages 2, 3, and 5 remain quite large.¹²³

At the same time, research confirms that all parents, regardless of socioeconomic status or background, can engage in and successfully support their children's learning. Families that believe that their engagement matters and understand why engagement is important appear to have a more significant impact on their children's outcomes.¹²⁴ Engagement strategies that help families understand their children's developmental pathways and their role in their children's learning further enhance this feeling of family efficacy and provide families with a clear rationale for their engagement. Emerging family engagement models that share data on the achievement gap and provide families with specific strategies to close it seek to create urgency around the partnership between families and early childhood programs to collaboratively support children's development and school readiness.

What types of parent/family involvement activities make a difference?

A recent meta-analysis of research conducted over the past 10 years also suggests that some types of family involvement activities have more impact than others.¹²⁵ For example, studies suggest that family involvement in learning activities at home may have more impact on children than family involvement at school.¹²⁶ In addition, specific and concrete family involvement in learning activities may have more impact on targeted child outcomes (for example, literacy activities) than more general involvement. Interventions such as the Chicago preK "Backpack Project," which provide specific hands-on activities, books, and games that parents practice in groups and are invited to take home each month, have demonstrated significant impact on children's school-readiness outcomes.¹²⁷

A body of research also suggests that family environments and family processes impact children's development. Children growing up in chaotic home environments have been shown to have poorer developmental outcomes, as have children who reside in homes with harsh, authoritarian disciplinary practices.¹²⁸ While parenting education classes have typically been included in Head Start and other comprehensive early childhood environments to strengthen parent/child interactions, a recently completed meta-analysis of early childhood parenting education interventions found that parent education programs that did not include time for practice, modeling, and feedback (i.e., provided information only) made no difference in improving child outcomes. Conversely, targeted, high-quality opportunities for parent practice showed significant impact on children's cognitive skills.¹²⁹

How can we support children experiencing trauma or other stress?

We also know that a smaller subset of children living in family environments impacted by high-risk behaviors and circumstances, such as residing with a parent experiencing depression or addiction, or having a domestic violence experience, have significantly higher rates of poor health and developmental outcomes.¹³⁰ The growing literature on the impact of toxic stress on young children's development

suggest that cross-sector service coordination strategies that identify these families early, and provide more intensive support, may be needed for these more vulnerable children to achieve healthy developmental outcomes. The use of assessment tools in early childhood or primary care environments to identify children and families exposed to high levels of trauma is showing promise in earlier identification and support to ameliorate the potential negative impacts on young children.¹³¹

How can we better support parents?

Rodríguez-Brown reviews the research on barriers to home-school communication and engagement with linguistic minority parents.¹³² In addition to the obvious language impediments that may exist, some parents have concerns about their lack of formal education that may interfere with engagement with schools. Often immigrant families have great respect for teachers and are interested in their children's schools. At the same time, they may view their role in their children's upbringing as different than that of the school, and possibly not valued by teachers. For example, Rodríguez-Brown found that many parents who are not English proficient are less likely to engage their children in activities that are associated with gains in learning, such as book reading and playing number games. Some research indicates that families appreciate explicit directions in how to assist their children and participate in the school.

Family engagement strategies that promote family-to-family networks have shown promise in positively impacting child outcomes. A recent study of parents engaged in family-to-family network associated with early childhood programs in New York City showed unanticipated gains in child developmental outcomes without additional family engagement interventions or activities. Similarly positive child outcomes are being demonstrated by a cohort approach to career training programs for Head Start parents in Tulsa.¹³³ The highly regarded Connecticut Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) demonstrated positive benefits through its mixed-income approach to engaging community members to become early childhood program and policy advocates for their children and communities. (See [PLTI website](#) for description and results.)

Local Context

Preschool programs in Washington State have a long history of including family engagement services as an integral part of a "comprehensive" preschool experience. This is especially true for Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) which have family support staff and program governance structures dedicated to engaging families.

Head Start family support workers provide home visits, as well as referrals to community resources, housing, food, and parent education. Support workers frequently speak parents' home languages and provide a cultural connection. However, these are examples of the broad, unfocused approaches that research shows have generally not been found to be successful in raising child outcomes.

In 2013, the City launched Read and Rise, a two-year pilot program offering training workshops for parents to help them better support their children as they learn to read. The program provides reading materials and training curricula for parents to take home. Focused on literacy, the program emphasizes the importance of reading and speaking to children in the home language as well as English.

In addition, several local early childhood centers, libraries, and community centers sponsor Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, a program for parents and caregivers. This facilitated program is designed to support development of children's school readiness skills and provide education and support for parents and caregivers.

In addition, Early Achievers quality rating system awards points for the following activities related to family engagement:

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- Completing a modified Strengthening Families Self-Assessment (director/owner).
- Providing a Plan of Action based on the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment.
- Providing evidence of continuous feedback and improvement (Plan of Action).
- Having a parenting support and education program in place (e.g., Incredible Years, Triple P Parenting, Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) parenting modules, Parents as Teachers, etc.).
- Providing information about community-based programs available for referrals for parents in languages represented in the facility (e.g., mental health support programs, Child Find, medical and dental resources, etc.).
- Providing evidence of transition plans/policies in place for changes in settings and providers.
- Partnering with parents to determine perception of child strengths and needs.

Options

- Provide comprehensive family support services as options for families, with family engagement specialists funded at each center or centrally (at Office for Education (OFE) or Human Services Department). Extensive training would be necessary to ensure that interventions for families would be differentiated to support those families most in need of support.
- Provide school readiness workshops for parents, hold parent teacher conferences and other parent events, and communicate to all families. This provides the most basic parent engagement.
- Focus on home learning activities that are directly tied to curriculum (“Backpack Project” model or “Read and Rise”).
- Pilot “social capital” models that facilitate parents’ development of partnerships and supportive relationships with other parents, such as carpools to enhance attendance, or swapping child care to enable parents to attend school.
- Develop cross-sector service coordination for referrals for the families in crisis coordinated by the OFE or the Human Services Department.

The Backpack Project is a Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Head Start initiative designed to increase parents’ at-home educational engagement with their children in preschool. Once per month during the school year, backpacks containing books, games, and activity guides directly connected to the classroom curriculum are sent home with 575 preschoolers enrolled in 29 participating classrooms. Depending on a family’s home language, the backpack items are in English or Spanish. The items are selected to enhance children’s early learning and at-home interaction with parents and revolve around one of ten preschool-relevant themes: Family, Feelings, Independence/ Self-Confidence, Early Literacy (I & II), Home Safety, Dental Health, Body Awareness, Nutrition, and Outdoor/Car Safety. The themes also build on the CPS Virtual Preschool Program.

Parents of these preschoolers are invited to free, monthly workshops held in the schools and led by paid consultant trainers. The purpose of the workshops is to introduce the backpack themes and also provide parents with concrete advice about how to use them with their children. All classroom staff involved in implementing this program element receive support in the form of an initial orientation/planning meeting and ongoing quarterly meetings. The Backpack Project has produced modest gains in language and literacy beyond those of the preK program.¹³⁴

Recommendations

- **Prioritize a universal family engagement approach** that integrates intentional parent/child activities that promote school readiness as a foundational strategy.
 - **Adapt a version of the Backpack Project or the “Read and Rise” pilot** with home learning activities tied to the chosen curriculum models and supported by monthly parent workshops provided by teachers and site supervisors with support from PFA Coaches. Most of the recommended curriculum models include home learning activities that can be easily modified for this initiative.
 - **Create opportunities for modeling and parent practice** through workshops around school readiness, social-emotional development, nutrition, and other topics that allow families to support one another and build a school culture that sets expectations for family engagement in their children’s development. These would be provided by the site supervisors but developed by PFA coaches.
- **Develop cross-sector social service coordination for referrals for families in crisis.**
- Build on Early Achiever’s Strengthening Families framework to **increase all providers’ understanding and foundational knowledge about the importance of parents and families in children’s lives and impact on child outcomes.** Provide parents with access to parenting curricula such as Incredible Years, Triple P Parenting, Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning parenting modules, etc.
- Create a **family engagement grant fund** that could be used by providers to design, develop, and provide family engagement activities. Providers could submit proposals to OFE and receive resource support, as well as consultation by OFE coaches and staff in the Communications and Outreach unit. This could also include opportunities for PFA programs to partner with existing Head Start and ECEAP programs to share family engagement services (e.g., parenting classes, family-to-family networks, etc.).

Rationale

Given that the majority of efforts to improve child outcomes through parent involvement programs have not been proven effective in increasing child outcomes, it makes sense to focus on the specific activities that have proven successful and to test those that seem promising. (Note: If carefully constructed within the design of the Outcomes Evaluation (see *Section 6.0 Outcomes and Evaluation*), a quasi-experimental study could be implemented at relatively low cost. These costs are not included in the financial model.) It is especially important and prudent in a preschool initiative aimed at all children to be cautious about implementing interventions for low-income families that have not even proven effective for that population. The potential benefit for all children of providing guidance on very specific activities tied directly to school readiness and the curricular activities being implemented in the child’s classroom is compelling.

3.9 Health Support

Overview

Research Overview

Key Findings

- Healthy children are more likely to be ready for school; they are less likely to be absent and more likely to pay attention and learn while in school.
- Early education programs can also have long-term health impacts through a focus on children's cognitive, social-emotional, and self-regulation development.
- Early childhood programs can play a role in ensuring parents access health screenings and health care for their children.
- There are increasingly fewer uninsured children in the United States; however, this percentage is higher for children of color.
- Lack of parental awareness of the importance of dental care is a major impediment of children receiving care.
- Toxic stress is highly predictive of future problems.
- Healthy food habits are formed in early years and early obesity is predictive of future obesity.

What is the impact of children's health on learning and outcomes?

Health in the earliest years lays the groundwork for a lifetime of vitality. When children grow up in an environment that fosters positive early experiences, they are more likely to thrive and grow up to be healthy adults. Healthy children are more likely to be ready for school; they are less likely to be absent and more likely to pay attention and learn while in school. Sound health also provides a foundation for the construction of sturdy brain architecture and the achievement of a broad range of skills and learning capacities, including foundational capacities such as executive function and self-regulation. The absence of these skills has been associated with many negative consequences for children as they grow older, including higher rates of smoking, substance abuse, dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, and criminal activity.¹³⁵

What do we know about toxic stress?

Early childhood programs have a significant and important opportunity to lay the foundations for life-long health by integrating classroom and family engagement strategies to reduce the impact of toxic stress and exposure to trauma on young children's development.¹³⁶ The growing evidence that significant adversity can produce physiological disruptions or biological "memories" that undermine the development of the body's stress response systems and affect the developing brain, cardiovascular system, immune system, and metabolic regulatory controls call for innovative cross-system collaborations that decrease the number and severity of adverse experiences that threaten the well-being of children and strengthen protective relationships that help mitigate the harmful effects of toxic stress.¹³⁷

How can early childhood programs produce better health outcomes?

Early childhood programs can reduce the impact of negative stressors on young children's health and development through early screening, identification, and intervention of social-emotional and developmental concerns or disabilities. Programs such as Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) and Second

Step, are designed to strengthen the social and emotional climate of classrooms, and to create nurturing and safe environments where children learn to trust and care for one another. Curricular models such as Tools of the Mind, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), and Head Start REDI (REsearch-based, Developmentally Informed), and professional development and consultation models such as the Chicago School Readiness Project have also been found to strengthen children's self-regulation.¹³⁸ In Washington State, a network of early childhood practitioners working in collaboration with national researchers through the Frontiers of Innovation network of the Harvard Center for the Developing Child are currently testing a variety of scalable early childhood program-nested strategies to strengthen child executive function and reduce the impact of toxic stress on young children.¹³⁹

What role does screening play?

These new emerging health priorities do not in any way negate the benefit that has been found in early childhood interventions focused on assuring Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) adherence for all participating children. Many early childhood programs have historically played a critical role in helping children access health and developmental screenings and health care. The Head Start program, for example, includes preventive dental care, a comprehensive health screening of children, tracking of well-child visits and required immunizations, and assistance if needed with accessing a regular medical home (a child having a primary care provider and care team, through which continuous, comprehensive and integrated care is provided). The program has been shown to increase child immunization rates.

What are the challenges for low-income families and communities of color?

Despite better access, health disparities persist among low-income families and communities of color, including higher rates of chronic health conditions such as asthma and obesity among black and Latino children. For example, a recent study of preventive dental care among low income minority children in California revealed that while access to dental providers remained a barrier to care, lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the importance of preventive dental screenings for preschool children also contributed to evaluation and treatment disparities.¹⁴⁰ Lack of access to healthy, affordable food and physical spaces for outdoor play in many low income communities continues to create barriers to establishing life-long patterns of healthy living when children are young—a time that has found to be critical for establishing routines that impact adult health.

How can we encourage healthy behaviors?

In addition to increased access to health care, early education programs can help to improve health behaviors, such as healthy eating and exercise. Treating childhood obesity costs almost \$1,400 per child but prevention programs can cost as little as \$1.21 per child.¹⁴¹ Programs aimed at promoting healthy eating and exercise are more recent, but showing some positive impacts. For example, random assignment to participate in a Hip Hop to Health Jr. program was associated with smaller increases in Body Mass Index (BMI) after both one and two years of participation in the program.¹⁴² Research released in early 2014 showed both the promise and challenge of establishing healthy-living routines. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) research studies found a 43% decline in obesity rates in the last decade among 3- to 5-year-olds. However, these declines were significantly lower for blacks and Latinos.¹⁴³ In addition, recent studies have found that children who are overweight or obese as preschoolers are significantly more likely to be overweight or obese as adults¹⁴⁴—findings that highlight the potential impact of targeted classroom and parent/child activities to positively alter this trajectory for our youngest citizens.

Are Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) improving access?

The expansion of health insurance coverage through Medicaid and CHIP has reduced the share of low-income children who are uninsured from 25% in 1997 to 13% in 2012. There are 4 million more children insured in Medicaid or CHIP since CHIP was reauthorized; this corresponds to a decline of three percentage points in the share of children without health insurance.¹⁴⁵

The gains in coverage have been experienced among low-income children in all racial and ethnic groups, but are especially striking for low income Latino children: the share of low income Latino children who are uninsured fell from 34% in 1997 to 17% in 2012.

The availability of CHIP has improved children's access to health care services: 80% of children received a preventive visit and 86% had a doctor or other health professional visit in 2012.

CHIP coverage has provided parents with financial security regarding the health care needs of their children and has reduced parents' worries about their children's health: 92% of parents of CHIP enrollees never or rarely had problems paying their child's medical bills for care.

Local Context

Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead standards and services

Screenings. Head Start, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and Step Ahead all require developmental screenings, health screenings (hearing/vision, height and weight), immunizations, and medical home/dental home well-child checks. Head Start also requires dental screenings.

Various screening tools exist and administration of tools varies by program. For social-emotional screening, Step Ahead uses Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE); others programs may use Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). Screening tools commonly used for other developmental delays include Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL), Early Screening Inventory (ESI), and Red Flags.

Washington Department of Early Learning (DEL), in partnership with the State Department of Health, has also developed a framework for Universal Developmental Screening to promote common screening practices statewide.

Nutrition. Head Start and ECEAP standards require programs to provide meals and snacks to children (rather than having parents send food from home) that meet Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutrition requirements for menus and assure that children with special dietary needs are accommodated by the program.

A Public Health Nutrition Educator visits each Step Ahead classroom twice, for 45 minutes, each year as part of Public Health Seattle & King County's (PHSKC) Seattle Nutrition Action Consortium (SNAC). The program provides a full curriculum for children, center staff, and families around nutrition, cooking, and physical activity. SNAC is currently only active in Step Ahead classrooms.

Licensed child care programs and family child care homes

Licensed sites review the medical home/well-child/immunization information once, typically at enrollment.

Other programs and services for the Seattle early education community

Public Health Seattle & King County (PHSKC) Child Care Health Program serves ECEAP, Step Ahead, and Comprehensive Child Care programs, providing inclusive assessment and review/consultation of whole classrooms, centers, or individual children. The City of Seattle funds this contract. The assessment looks

at safety of environment, food safety, healthy eating/active living, early intervention, mental health, communicable disease, and policy development to support healthy children. The following services are part of the contract:

- Providing on-site mental health consultation and assessment by a social worker or licensed clinical psychologist for children, child care teachers, and families. This includes classroom and individual observation of children, developmental screening and referral coordination, modeling appropriate teacher-child interactions, and program consultation and didactic training for teachers and families.
- Providing on-site health and safety consultation and assessment to child care providers, individual children, and classroom environments. This includes developmental screening, communicable disease prevention, early identification of children with special needs, medication management, and teacher support for implementation and policies supporting healthy children.
- Nutrition consultation includes healthy menu planning, implementing appropriate meal-time environments, food safety, and working with child care providers and families to support children with special dietary needs. Additional education is provided to teachers, children, and families about healthy eating, active living, and reducing screen time.

Health and safety services to private sites and family homes are limited; this program is also not provided at Head Start sites. The level of service differs between ECEAP, Comprehensive Child Care program providers, and Step Ahead. Additionally, resources for staff and parent education/training are limited.

The Child and Adult Care Food program is available for licensed homes and centers. This program provides federal funds to non-residential child care facilities to serve nutritious meals and snacks.

Options

Health Services Delivery

1. Providers are responsible for ensuring the compliance with all standards, including provision or health screenings and referral system, either by using their staff or contracting with specialists.
2. Expand the Public Health Seattle & King County Child Care Health Program to serve Preschool for All (PFA) providers.
3. Contract with other health services providers.

Recommendations

As part of ensuring quality health support, we recommend that the City, Public Health Seattle & King County Child Care Health Program, and Seattle Public Schools work together to delineate health, developmental, and social-emotional screening and referral procedures. They should also delineate the particular roles and responsibilities of the three entities in supporting teachers and families, and ensure that among three agencies the following services are provided:

Child level

POTENTIAL ROLES

Physical health

- At program entry, PFA providers require documentation of up to date preventive physicals (including health screenings), dental visits, and immunizations. *PFA providers*

- At program entry, PFA providers require documentation of medical home and insurance *PFA providers*

- When a child does not have a preventive physical, refer to Community Health Navigators (established by the Affordable Care Act) to assist with securing insurance and establishing a medical home. *PFA providers*

- Coordinate/link families without dental providers to Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD). *PFA providers*

- Develop a classroom accommodation plan and staff training when there is a child with special health care needs *PHSKC*

Social-emotional support

- Provide regular social-emotional support as part of a chosen curriculum model *Teachers*

- Conduct social-emotional screenings (see *Section 6.0 Outcomes and Evaluation* for more details). *Teachers,*
- Refer children identified in screenings for further diagnostic testing. *supported by PFA*
- Create child-specific plans in conjunction with SPS or PHSKC, for children with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or other identified social-emotional needs. *Coaches*

- For children with severe challenging behaviors, conduct Functional Behavioral Assessments and develop classroom strategies and environmental changes addressing children's individualized needs in partnership with family. Develop and monitor progress on children's individual and classroom plans, including behavior strategies. *Teachers, center directors/site supervisors with consultation from PFA Coaches and PHSKC*

Developmental delays and concerns

- Conduct developmental screenings (see *Section 6.0 Outcomes and Evaluation* for more details). *Teachers,*
- Initiate the referral process for children who have been identified through screenings to SPS child study teams for further diagnostic testing. *supported by PFA*
- Create child-specific plans in conjunction with SPS for children with IEPs. *Coaches and SPS child study teams*

Classroom level

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide teacher training on administration of developmental and social-emotional screening, specific health-related issues, including children with special needs, trauma-informed care, coping/stress management strategies, and other health issues. | <p><i>PHSKC, coordinated with PFA Coaches</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a tiered or differentiated system of support in which teachers receive support from PFA Coaches or other appropriate coaches, or consultation from PHSKC. | <p><i>Coordinated across Office for Education and PHSKC</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and support for providers in developing healthy menus and safe physical environments that promote physical activity throughout the day. | <p><i>PFA Coaches, supported by PHSKC</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model healthy food options/choices in school meal service, including greater options for fresh fruit and vegetables. Also include healthy foods at parent meetings and program events to model healthy choices for parents. | <p><i>PFA providers</i></p> |

Rationale

A child's health and well-being are connected to their ability to learn and succeed. Overall, advances in the fields of neuroscience, molecular biology, and genomics have greatly expanded our understanding of the relationship between “nature” and “nurture”. There is now no question that early experiences are actually built into our bodies, affecting the physical development of the brain and other body systems. These emerging frontiers of health research, held alongside of significantly increased rates of access to preventive health care, improving rates of immunizations, as well as the positive impact of Medicaid and CHIP expansion on low-income children's insurance rates, suggest a critical new path for early childhood educators interested in assuring children's overall health and well-being.

Best practice suggests and Head Start requires that all children be screened at enrollment. According to findings of the National Research Council,¹⁴⁶ locally driven, universal screening of young children is associated with better outcomes for all children and will help identify those most at risk for achievement and behavior problems. All children should be administered an initial screening. This information is never used to determine or deny placement but rather is only used to determine if a child needs further diagnostic testing to identify a disability or health concern.

There is also evidence that Head Start in its early years of implementation reduced child mortality, and in particular mortality from causes that could be attributed plausibly to aspects of Head Start's health services, particularly immunizations and health screenings (e.g., measles, diabetes, whooping cough, respiratory problems).¹⁴⁷ This impact has been particularly pronounced in expanding preventive dental screenings and exams among young children. Data from the National Household Education Survey showed that 77% of 3-year-olds and 78% of 4-year-olds participating in Head Start received dental care, compared to 33% among 3- and 4-year-olds not enrolled in the program.¹⁴⁸

The most efficient method of ensuring that children and providers receive health support is to work with PHSKC, building on the existing contract that provides comprehensive services for children, teachers, and families. More specific roles of PHSKC, city staff, and SPS should be developed during implementation planning.

3.10 Kindergarten Transitions

Overview

What does kindergarten transition mean?

Successful transitions were once defined as “kindergarten readiness,” meaning children’s ability to meet expectations in the kindergarten classroom. However, the definition has been expanded to include a focus on the family and community with parents engaged in the process and the community providing supports and resources. In the Rimm-Kaufmann and Pianta model developed in 2000, multiple learning environments and stakeholders are involved in ongoing and evolving interactions that include children, families, communities, school, and classrooms.¹⁴⁹ Put simply, transitions do not happen at one point in time and there is no one model that works for all children.

What are the benefits of a successful transition?

A successful educational continuum effectively connects preK to the K-3 grades by creating partnerships between early learning providers and the elementary schools their “graduates” will enter. We need these two worlds to work together toward aligned and powerful practices in curricula, instructional approaches, expectations for students, assessments, and the use of student data to inform instruction, planning, and continuous improvement. The challenge of creating this continuum is great but the payoffs are enormous.

Research on successful transitions to kindergarten includes a number of frequently cited outcomes, including:

- Better behavioral and social-emotional adjustment.
- Higher academic achievement.
- Increased family involvement.

Yet, we know that here in Washington many children struggle in kindergarten. More than half of our state’s 5-year-olds enter kindergarten without the skills needed to succeed in school and kindergarten readiness varies widely by race and ethnicity.¹⁵⁰

Are there best practices for kindergarten transition?

The Denver Compact’s [Transition Best Practices](#) is a recently released resource and the basis for much of the information here.¹⁵¹ The report summarizes the research on this topic, including *Successful Kindergarten Transitions* by Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre that outlines the following guiding principles for effective transition practice:¹⁵²

1. Build relationships among stakeholders. Transitions will be most effective when they are aimed at enhancing linkages and cooperation between people and settings.
2. Promote continuity across preschools and elementary schools. This includes consistency in settings, experiences, and expectations.
3. Focus on family strengths. Families hold valuable information about their children; treating them as valued information holders can facilitate a two-way exchange between families and teachers.
4. Tailor practices to the individual needs and strengths of the child, family, school, and community.
5. Establish collaborative connections with stakeholders that are willing to establish common goals and share responsibility for outcomes.

The Denver Compact report notes that to truly connect preschool programs and elementary schools, teachers and leaders must be willing and supported to learn about each other's work.

Evidence-based transition practices include preschool children and their families visiting kindergarten classrooms, having kindergarten teachers visit preschool classrooms to talk about kindergarten, preschool staff coming to kindergarten early in the school year to help with transition, support groups for parents as their children transition to kindergarten, and early kindergarten enrollment to allow families to prepare children for their new school and to allow teachers to reach out to their prospective students before the first day of school.¹⁵³

Local Context

What partnerships are in place?

The City and Seattle Public Schools (SPS), together with several local partners, have been working on preK–3rd grade alignment for many years. In 2010, this partnership completed a Five-Year Action Plan which defined a Vision for the new system, a framework of Goals and Action Strategies, and expected outcomes. This partnership continues to coordinate on Plan implementation and meets regularly to discuss progress on data sharing, professional development, and other topics.

In addition, the Seattle Early Education Collaborative (SEEC) is made up of early learning providers and teachers from the publicly funded preschool programs. SEEC partners leverage funds and work to improve outcomes through joint professional development for preK and elementary teachers, data collection and assessment, and kindergarten transition services. SEEC has partnered with the school district on professional development and other alignment efforts.

Is there joint professional development?

Seattle Public Schools offers seven professional development modules throughout the school year that are open to preK and elementary teachers, coaches, and support staff. Implementation of the Common Core State Standards and cultural competency are key components of the modules which provide tailored instruction and coaching to bridge across preK and the elementary grades. This model of shared professional development has built reciprocal understanding for preK and elementary school teachers of the expectations and instructional strategies used in both settings.

What data is available?

The exchange of information and data is critical to alignment but processes are still under development to share information across the system. The Washington Department of Early Learning (DEL) and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) oversee the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), a kindergarten readiness assessment that is providing better information. However, the communication of the information does not always reach those that could use it. Data sharing between preK providers and kindergartens is not yet fully up and running. With time, better communication between preK and kindergarten teachers should help increase the chances of students having a successful kindergarten transition.

How can families be involved in the transition?

SPS offers a kindergarten transition program for children and their families called Jump Start. Jump Start is a week-long experience in August for new kindergarteners and their families to learn about their new school and for teachers to get to know their incoming students.

Recommendations

As the City is already involved in a partnership with SPS and others focused on preK alignment and successful transitions, we offer the following recommendations to strengthen work already underway.

- **Create memoranda of understanding between the City and DEL, and the City and SPS.** These formal agreements could outline practices, responsibilities, and timelines and could address some or all of the following:
 - **Data sharing:** Preschool for All (PFA) programs share applicable screening and/or assessment data with the school district to inform instructional practices or help identify children who may need intervention or support services; elementary school teachers share WaKIDS data back with PFA providers.
 - **Academic expectations:** schools share kindergarten content, standards and expectations.
 - **Curriculum alignment:** the state, schools, and preschool staff work together to ensure educational continuity by aligning curriculum and instructional strategies.
 - **Professional development:** school and preschool staffs participate in joint professional development (PD) events; alignment with PD and other transition support already funded through Early Achievers and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP).
 - **Family Engagement:** schools and preschools engage families using evidence-based practices.
 - **Space:** continuing to identify opportunities to set aside space for preschool classrooms within Seattle Public Schools.
- **Share data and information.** Ensure that preK–3 educators have the data management tools, support, and expertise to maintain, analyze, and effectively use data to continuously improve teaching and instruction.
- **Ensure that preschool providers are aware of the Jump Start program and help connect families.**

Rationale

Work on kindergarten transitions has been underway in the City of Seattle for many years. The systems are in place and the willingness is there. In some cases, additional resources are needed to expand the reach of offerings like professional development or to develop integrated data systems and provide adequate time for educators to assess and make changes based on the data. Events like enrollment nights at SPS will provide opportunities to educate families about the preschool options available and to get them prepared for the transition to kindergarten.

When preschool programs and schools actively engage families in children's transition to kindergarten, and when they are responsive to families' efforts to participate in these transitions, families show increased involvement during the kindergarten year.¹⁵⁴ This is important because research shows that family involvement in preK and kindergarten relates to better social skills, higher academic performance in math and literacy in kindergarten, and higher achievement through high school.¹⁵⁵

4.0 TIMELINE, PHASE-IN, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

4.1 Phasing and Plan Alternatives

Defining Full Implementation

Cities that have implemented universal preschool programs have used a number of approaches to define “full implementation,” and how they determine when they reach this goal:

- The preK program managed by the Office of State Superintendent of Education in **Washington, D.C.**, was launched by the preK Enhancement and Expansion Action of 2008, and greatly expanded the preschool program that already existed in the district.¹⁵⁶ Prior to 2008, every D.C. elementary school had at least one preK classroom, and some had a Head Start classroom. After 2008, the number of classes and the quality of the services increased greatly, so that by 2013, “the District exceeded the threshold for universal access to preK for all 3- and 4-year-olds.”
Danielle Ewen, Director of the Office of Early Education for District of Columbia Public Schools, reaffirmed that the District has achieved universal access for all 3- and 4-year-olds, although not necessarily at parents’ first choice of schools. A total of 90% of 4-year-olds and 70% of 3-year-olds are in a preK program, and there is capacity for any parent seeking these services.
- **Boston Public Schools’** universal preK (UPK) program started in 2005 serving approximately 700 4-year-olds. Dr. Jason Sachs reports that the UPK program currently serves 2,400 4-year-olds (approximately half of the typical kindergarten cohort), and that parents of 2,000 more 4-year-olds want to enter the program. If the funds are available, he estimates that there might be 3,500 children in Boston preK classes and another 800 in community-based settings. Therefore, at full ramp-up, approximately 90% of 4-year-olds who will later attend public schools will be served by the UPK program. Currently Boston Public School’s services for 3-year-olds are limited to mandated special education services.
- In **San Antonio**, the City estimated that “there are approximately 5,700 4-year-old children living in San Antonio who are eligible for state-funded preK, but currently not enrolled in a full-day program. Of that total, an estimated 2,300 eligible 4-year-old children are not enrolled in any preK program while 3,400 are enrolled in half-day programs in the City of San Antonio.” The City plans to serve 700 children in 2013-14, and has set a goal of serving 3,700 by 2020.¹⁵⁷
- In **San Francisco**, the school district is focusing on 4-year-olds, but is only able to serve 25% of eligible children. Carla Bryant, Chief of San Francisco School District’s Child Development Program, predicts that 3-year-olds will be served in community-based settings, while the district and the state are considering mandating preK for 4-year-olds as a recognized grade of public school. First 5 San Francisco, which is funding additional preK services in the city, has defined full implementation in terms of assuring that all children are ready for kindergarten. One of the outcomes they have set is that “high-quality preschool is affordable and accessible to all 4-year-olds in San Francisco.” Because there are multiple programs in existence and being developed in San Francisco, including the School District’s program, the city-funded Proposition H initiative, and the First 5 San Francisco expansion, it is difficult to identify a single start date and ramp-up for preK services in San Francisco.
- In **New Jersey**, the Supreme Court ordered that preschool be offered to all 3- and 4-year-old children residing in 31 school districts as part of a larger school funding equity reform. In 1999, the first year of the program, 19,000 (almost 40% of total) children were served in a combination of private provider and school district classrooms. By 2003, enrollment had increased to over 39,000 or almost 80% of all 3- and 4-year-olds. The vast majority (almost 70%) of these children were served in private provider classrooms.

Options

1. Set a numerical goal for the number of children to be served by 2025 based on estimates of how many families will access these services.
2. State that Preschool for All (PFA) will serve all eligible children by 2025, with estimates to be made and adjusted as the program grows and parents' desire to enroll their children increases over time.

Recommendations

We recommend that Seattle set a goal of having preschool available as an option for all families. To make this a quantifiable goal based on an estimate of how many children that will entail, we suggest a **goal of serving 80% of all 4-year-olds and 70% of all 3-year-olds**. These figures are based on rates achieved in other localities (see *Defining Full Implementation* above), and take into account a high rate of private school attendance in Seattle (25% for 5- to 9-year-olds).

As a means to that end, we recommend that any provider who can meet PFA standards have the opportunity to be considered as a PFA provider as long as there are unserved children waiting to receive PFA services.

Rationale

As mentioned in the Introduction to this recommended Action Plan, PFA should be a systems change strategy and the leading edge of education reform. To produce systemic impacts it must truly be "for all." Enrollment of children with the greatest needs is significantly facilitated when eligibility determination depends only on residence, and not on a complex and imperfect needs assessment, and there is no stigma associated with participation. Economically disadvantaged children learn more in preschool when they attend alongside children from middle-income families. As students progress through kindergarten and the later grades teachers spend less time on remediation and managing disruptive students and can change their teaching to recognize the greater capabilities of their students. These systemic changes can only happen if PFA actually reaches the vast majority of children. This is the primary reason we emphasize achieving this goal as rapidly as feasible.

Estimates for the number of families who would access PFA cover a wide range for a number of reasons:

- The City's Analysis of Preschool Enrollment report estimates that between 7,800 and 9,000 of 3- and 4-year-olds in Seattle (between 63% and 73% of total) are attending child care and preschool programs. This estimate, however, is based in part on the American Community Survey estimate, and includes children who are in part-time and full-time programs, informal care, and many types of other programs with varying degrees of quality. In particular, it is difficult to estimate the number of children currently in Seattle preK programs because Washington State does not license or register programs operating less than four hours per day, so there is no complete list of these programs, the number of children or ages they serve, or any information about the nature of the programs.
- We do not know how many Seattle families will choose to access preK programs, especially for 3-year-olds. But based on the experience in other cities, the number of parents likely to access high-quality affordable preK is likely to increase as parents see these programs in action and hear from other parents and friends that the programs are supportive and successful.
- We do not know what state and federal preK programs will look like in 10 years, nor whether either government entity will provide services at the quality level anticipated for PFA.

Phase-In Alternatives

Options

1. Implement by age, prioritizing 4-year-olds and then adding 3-year-olds as resources become available.
2. Phase-in by geographic region, prioritizing PFA providers in high-need neighborhoods. Those neighborhoods can include those that are underserved (by comparing number of available preK spaces to population density), low income (as defined by either U.S. Census data or having a high concentration of Title I elementary schools), contain more English Language Learners, or have high rates of underachieving students (low kindergarten readiness as determined by Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)).
3. Open enrollment to all 3- and 4-year-olds across the City, do not restrict implementation based on age or geographic region. All providers are eligible that meet the requirements.
4. Focus capacity building funding, including professional development for existing providers and facilities funding, to the geographic regions outlined in Option 2, above.

Recommendations

We recommend that implementation should not be restricted based on age or geographic region. Enrollment should be open to all 3- and 4-year-olds across the City and all providers that are eligible that meet the requirements. At the same time, we recommend that capacity building for both existing providers and for facilities funding be prioritized to areas of the city with the greatest number of children who are from low-income families, English Language Learners, and likely to enroll in schools with the greatest number of underachieving K-3 students.

Rationale

- Please see “Rationale for Serving 3- and 4-Year-Olds” in *Section 3.1 Student Eligibility*.
- Restricting implementation based on geographic region would be difficult in Seattle, if the goal is to create mixed-income classrooms.
- The City can best prioritize having sufficient PFA services in high-need neighborhoods by concentrating its capacity building resources in those areas. These are the neighborhoods that often have the lowest capacity in terms of organizations, staff, and facilities.

Provider Eligibility during Capacity Building Period

In *Section 2.5 Recommendations for Delivery Model: Provider Eligibility* section, we recommend using Early Achievers ratings, as well as minimum thresholds on Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) as part of determining provider eligibility. We understand that only a limited number of Seattle providers have gone through the Early Achievers rating process. In addition, according to Department of Early Learning (DEL), based on scores to date, the CLASS Instructional Support (IS) score may be hard to meet. To acknowledge this and to allow for providers that are eager to join PFA and raise their quality levels, we recommend the following:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEATTLE'S PRESCHOOL FOR ALL ACTION PLAN

- Sites that have applied for Early Achievers but not yet received an assessment should apply to be assessed by Office for Education (OFE) for eligibility.
 - OFE could negotiate with DEL to share costs of conducting the assessments, which could reduce the backlog in Early Achievers. The programs should be required to be rated on Early Achievers at the standards detailed in *Section 2.5 Recommendations for Delivery Model: Provider Eligibility*.
 - OFE could partner with DEL to prioritize Seattle sites to be rated for Early Achievers, to increase the eligible pool of providers.
- For sites that are at Level 3 in Early Achievers but do not meet the PFA minimum thresholds on ECERS-R and CLASS (for threshold details see *Section 2.5 Recommendations for Delivery Model: Provider Eligibility*):
 - Providers could be admitted to the program, but will need to undergo extensive coaching and should be expected to meet these levels **within two years** of becoming a PFA provider.
 - **After five years as a PFA provider**, the ratings on these instruments should meet the more stringent score cut-off of 5.0 on ECERS-R, 6.0 on CLASS Emotional Support (ES), 6.0 on CLASS Classroom Organization (CO), and 4.5 on CLASS IS.

Other options to consider. To allow for a larger pool of providers, OFE could consider allowing existing half-day programs (no less than 14 hours/week) during the first three years of PFA implementation (2015-16 through 2017-18 school years). If the City elects to do this, we would suggest the following restrictions:

- PFA classrooms should be required to convert to full time by 2018-19 school year.
- Programs that for some reason cannot convert to full-day in the first three years should run double sessions during the day to make the best use of the facility.
- Programs should be licensed by Department of Early Learning (DEL) unless run by public entities. There could be a one-year grace period to get licensed.

Starting with allowing half-day could increase the number of children in PFA, and get more providers into the system to ramp-up quality quickly while recognizing that the city has a space crunch. It would also result in a slower overall cost growth for PFA, although that is not the primary reason it is recommended.

Phase-in Plan to transition Head Start, ECEAP and Step Ahead

Since an estimated 43% of 3- and 4-year-olds under 300% of federal poverty level (FPL) are already being served by Head Start, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Step Ahead (or approximately 17% of all 3- and 4-year-olds), we recommend that the City works to create a unified preschool program for PFA instead of several disparate ones. Building upon the experience and expertise of these providers should help PFA build out a strategy that is truly for all children and supported by more providers. To achieve that, we recommend the following:

- The City should require all Step Ahead providers, and the ECEAP providers who are part of the City's contract with DEL, to become PFA providers within **four years** of the start-up of PFA, provided that facilities exist to do so.
- The City should work closely with Head Start providers to develop a phased-in plan to transition these providers into PFA providers.

These inclusion efforts should include incentives, additional resources, and coordination efforts so that existing Head Start, ECEAP and Step Ahead providers can access PFA resources to enhance their current programs and children enrolled can benefit from PFA standards (such as higher dosage, increased qualifications, professional development, and salaries for teaching staff). Head Start, ECEAP and Step Ahead providers should meet the same Early Achievers and other standards as other PFA providers.

We have suggested a number of advantages for including these programs in PFA—see *Section 2.3 Including Publicly Funded Early Education Programs in PFA* for more details.

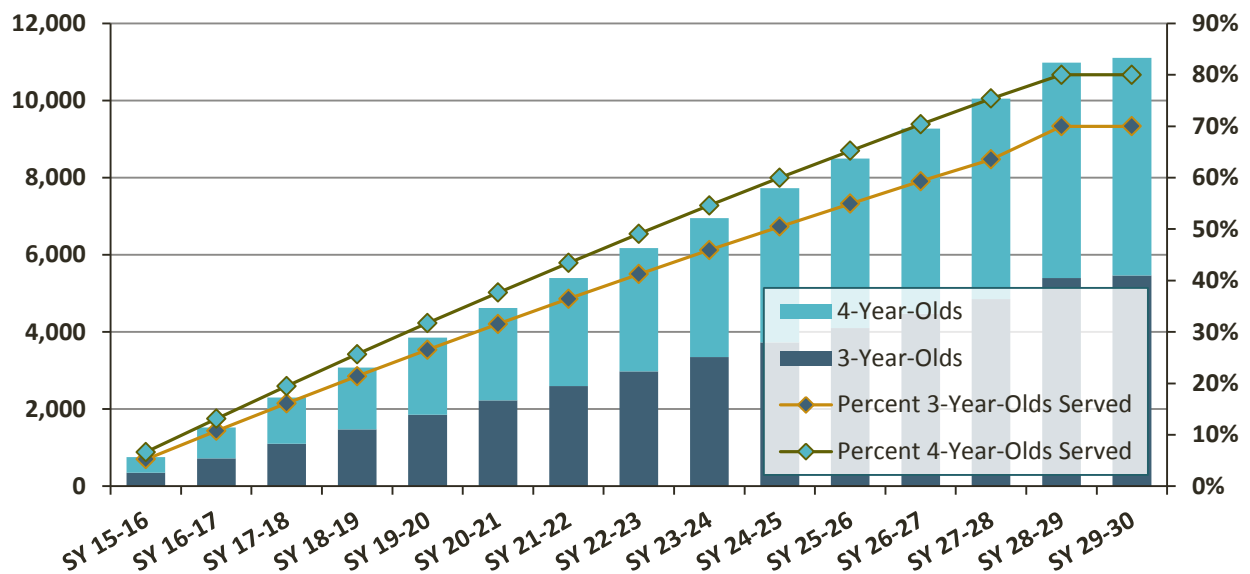
Assumptions for Program Size During the First Year

We suggest a goal of approximately 750 children enrolled in 45 classrooms in the 2015-16 school year. We further recommend that PFA aims to add this number of classrooms each year. At this pace, the goal of serving 80% of all 4-year-olds and 70% of all 3-year-olds would be achieved **in Year 14 of PFA roll-out** (school year 2028-29). As stated above, we recommend for OFE to focus on recruiting Head Start providers, and require that ECEAP and Step Ahead contractors become PFA programs within four years.

While it is difficult to predict how many providers would be interested and would qualify during the first year of the PFA program, we believe that some changes in provider eligibility during the capacity building period (described above) should allow a number of providers to enter the program in the 2015-16 school year. At the same time, if there are more programs that apply than the city can fund, then those that meet the standards should be given priority. Looking at other preK programs across the nation, the expansion rates are fairly high and many of these programs are in complex statewide settings, as opposed to a single city. New Jersey went from serving 19,000 children in 1999 to over 39,000 or almost 80% of all 3- and 4-year-olds in 2003. The vast majority (almost 70%) of these children were served in private provider classrooms.

Exhibits below show the proposed ramp-up timeline:

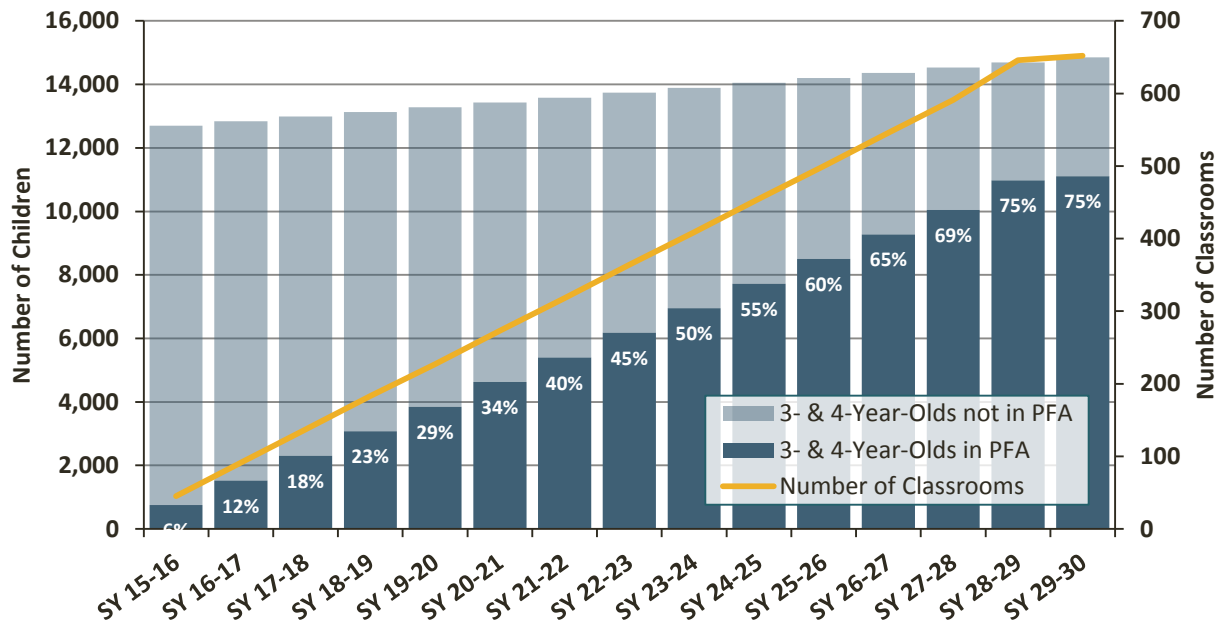
Exhibit 6
Phase-In for Proposed Implementation Timeline



Source: BERK, 2014.

Exhibit 7

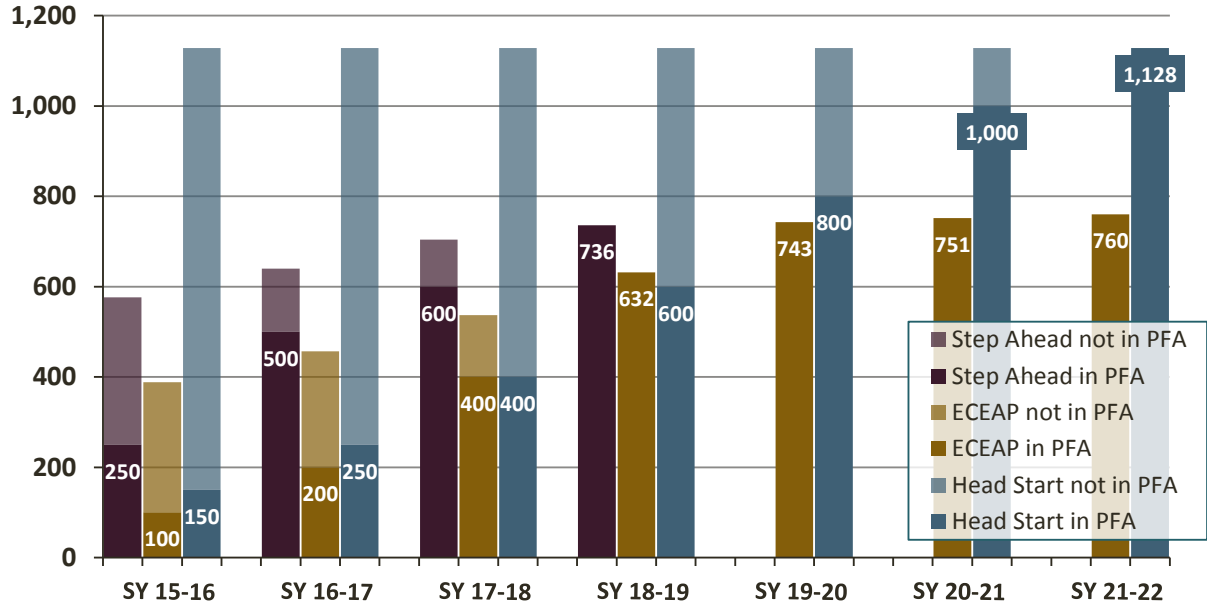
Number of Children Served and Classrooms by Year for Proposed Implementation Timeline



Source: BERK, 2014.

Exhibit 8

Estimated Head Start, ECEAP, and Step Ahead Uptake Rates For Proposed Implementation Timeline



Source: BERK, 2014.

4.2 Capacity Building

Overview

Capacity building entails developing community assets to increase Seattle's ability to provide Preschool for All (PFA) services in a mixed delivery system. While there are many strong existing resources to build on, PFA will be providing new services to children not currently enrolled in any preschool, as well as expanding and enhancing the quality of services to children in current preK services. This will require capacity building to give community agencies the support needed to provide services.

Options for Overall Approach to Capacity Building

1. **Capacity building for providers who have qualified to provide PFA services.** Some providers will qualify for PFA on the basis of eligibility requirements, but will need support to build organizational capacity to meet all of the PFA standards (including utilization of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAPs), suitable facilities, minimum number of classrooms, class size, teacher-child ratios, teacher qualifications, director qualifications). They may also need to renovate existing facilities, or obtain new facilities. PFA providers will need to increase their capacity on several levels to serve additional children.
2. **Capacity building for potential providers not yet qualified for PFA.** Many providers will not immediately qualify for PFA for a number of reasons: being an unlicensed facility, not being at Early Achievers Level 3 or above, or simply not having enough space. Yet many of these providers have strong assets and the potential to provide PFA services. It is likely that developing new providers and facilities will play a key role in the success of PFA.
 - In this option, the City could provide an "on ramp" pathway for providers who show strong potential to become PFA providers. This might include carrying out plans to enhance their organizational capacity, increasing their staff's professional qualifications, and/or adding to their facilities. PFA would identify supports and incentives to help these programs meet PFA standards as soon as possible.
 - For many preschools, the first step in this process will be to get licensed, so that they can operate for more than four hours per day and be eligible for the Early Achievers program. Because the licensing process can be a challenge, we recommend that support for preschools seeking to become licensed as a step toward becoming PFA providers should be an element of contracts for building organizational development skills (listed below).
 - Any program accessing capacity funding to become a PFA provider should be required to submit a strategic plan outlining the steps they would take to become a PFA provider within four years.
3. **Capacity building efforts focused on the City's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Step Ahead programs.** This would be particularly appropriate if all of the City's ECEAP and/or Step Ahead providers are required to become PFA programs in the first four years of implementation, if facilities are available and after support is given to meet PFA standards. Prioritizing phase-in plans for these programs from the start would create the opportunity for PFA to impact a large number of at-risk children right away. It would also create leadership opportunities for these programs to share their expertise, possibly becoming a hub that supports the emerging PFA system as a whole.