

Washington



WASHINGTON DEVELOPED AND ADOPTED AN early learning plan in 2010 that represents its unified vision and goals for an early learning system across public and private sectors and settings. This plan was driven by the identification of several key barriers to early learning reform, including the need for greater capacity to reach children with high needs, the need for clear standards, the need for greater accountability, and the need for data-driven decisionmaking. The state’s plan for early learning is focused on the key principles of

- aligning all early learning services across settings, funding sources, ages of children, and authorities;
- creating a system that ensures that key quality components are available, accessible, and used across early learning programs and services;
- creating a continuum of services from pregnancy through third grade;
- prioritizing services and practices to address the needs of children who are at the highest risk;
- using a comprehensive “whole child” approach, which means supporting and educating parents and caregivers, health care services and providers, teachers, schools, and communities; and
- promoting transparency and accountability in all early learning policies, services, and programs.

Washington’s state plan is organized around five areas called the Ready Framework: Ready and Successful Children; Ready and Successful Parents, Families, and Caregivers; Ready and Successful Early Learning Professionals; Ready and Successful Schools; Ready and Successful Systems and Communities. Each area includes detailed outcomes and strategies. Washington proposes ambitious RTT-ELC plans to accelerate and further implement state plan strategies through an increased focus on improving child outcomes and closing the readiness gap

Applicant

Office of the Governor,
State of Washington

Lead Agency

Department of Early
Learning

Contact Information

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Total Federal Award

\$60,000,000

Grant Period

January 1, 2012 –
December 31, 2015

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) discretionary grant program supports states in building statewide systems that raise the quality of early learning and development programs and increase access to high-quality programs for children with high needs, so that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Information in this abstract is drawn from the state’s RTT-ELC grant application.

for children with high needs. Its theory of change is that by establishing strong leadership and governance, aligning critical system components across integrated services, and employing common statewide quality assurance measures, the results will be lasting outcomes for children.

Washington's RTT-ELC proposal has the following goals:

- To expand a tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS) system at scale that promotes quality improvements and improves access to quality for high-needs children.
- To expand use of consistent early learning standards that are aligned with K-3 standards and serve as the basis for all early learning programs in Washington.
- To integrate family engagement and parenting support throughout the early learning system.
- To promote consistent and high-quality professional development opportunities to improve instruction in early learning programs.
- To scale a high-quality kindergarten assessment that informs early elementary teachers, early learning programs, parents, and policy-makers.

Washington addressed the following Focused Investment Areas in its application:

*Early Learning
and
Development
Standards*

(C)(1) Developing and using statewide high-quality early learning and development standards. Washington's Early Learning and Development Benchmarks are a longstanding foundational component for many other parts of its system. The Benchmarks are currently being revised and, with other system components coming into full implementation, the timing is right to fully integrate common learning standards across all services and systems.

*Family
Engagement*

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families. Washington has recently adopted family engagement TQRIS program standards that integrate the Strengthening Families Framework. As TQRIS participants, Washington's Head Start/ECEAP programs are ideally positioned to be leaders in family engagement, sharing resources and training with other child care programs.

*Establish
Workforce
Knowledge and
Competency
Framework*

(D)(1) Developing a workforce knowledge and competency framework and a progression of credentials. Washington has completed statewide core competencies, a career lattice, and a professional registry. Fully implementing and integrating these professional development components with the TQRIS is critical to supporting the successful expansion of the TQRIS and quality improvement goals.

*Kindergarten
Entry
Assessment*

(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. Washington has recently completed first phase implementation, testing, and evaluation of an innovative kindergarten assessment process called WaKIDS. WaKIDS is ready to be scaled and is

critically needed to inform parents, teachers and state leaders about school readiness rates.

Washington has 193,492 children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families. The state reports that it is leveraging \$91,381,972 in other funding sources to support this effort.