



Briefing Report: Department of Early Learning Pre-Audit

Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee
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Presentation Overview



- Background of the Department of Early Learning
- Scope and Objectives
- Pre-Audit: Data Collection Plan

Pre-Audit

- An evaluation of the Department of Early Learning is due to JLARC by July 2010
- JLARC developed a plan with the Department to identify data
- The plan was prepared to ensure we have the data needed for the upcoming evaluation



Background

- The Legislature established the Department of Early Learning in 2006 (2SHB 2965) to:
- Implement state early learning policy
 - Coordinate, consolidate, and integrate child care and early learning programs
 - Administer programs and funding as efficiently as possible

The Department Consists of Existing Programs and New Initiatives



- Two major new initiatives include:
 - Private-public partnership between Thrive by Five and Department
 - Voluntary quality rating and improvement system
- The Legislature transferred existing early learning programs and related functions from other agencies

Early Learning Programs Transferred to the Department

DSHS



Working Connections
Child Care (WCCC)

Child care licensing

CTED



Early Childhood
Education and
Assistance Program

OSPI



The Early Reading
Initiative



Washington State Department of
Early Learning



Scope and Objectives

JLARC will evaluate the implementation and operation of the Department of Early Learning based on the nine evaluation objectives provided in statute.

Study Objectives

1. Have services and programs that were previously administered separately been effectively integrated?
2. Have reporting and monitoring activities been consolidated and made more efficient?
3. Has consolidation resulted in administrative efficiencies within the Department?

Study Objectives

4. Have child care and early learning services improved?
5. Is subsidized child care available?
6. Is subsidized child care affordable?
7. Has the Department been an effective partner in the nongovernmental private-public partnership?

Study Objectives

8. Has the Department put in place procedures to respect parents and legal guardians and provide them the opportunity to participate in the development of policies and program decisions affecting their children?
9. Has the Department conducted parent outreach and education?

Data Collection Plan

- Plan developed by the Department and JLARC staff
- The Data Collection Plan is provided in the Briefing Report
- The following summarizes the areas we will be measuring for the nine objectives provided in statute by topic areas

Objectives 1-3: Integration, Consolidation and Efficiency



Data Collection Plan Addresses:

- Integration of processes and standards for early learning programs
- Consolidation of reporting requirements and efficiency of Department staff to monitor providers
- Relative costs for programs previously administered separately



Objective 4: Service Improvement

Data Collection Plan Addresses:

- Levels of education of early learning program providers
- Establishment of measures and processes to identify the quality of early learning programs participating in the voluntary rating system

Objectives 5-6: Subsidized Child Care Availability and Affordability



Data Collection Plan Addresses:

- Eligibility requirements for parents to receive subsidized child care
- Level of subsidy payments to child care providers
- Eligible families served by Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidies
- Parent input on affordability
- Amount parents eligible for subsidies pay for child care in relation to their income

Objective 7: Private-Public Partnership



Data Collection Plan Addresses:

- Results of Department involvement in the partnership
- Establishment of measures and processes to evaluate projects with the partnership

Objectives 8-9: Parent Involvement, Education and Outreach



Data Collection Plan Addresses:

- Department use of parent input
- Parent satisfaction with their participation
- Results of Department investments in local communities
- Department use of outreach and education methods

Next Steps

- Statute requires the Department to submit a report evaluating the effectiveness of its programs in improving early childhood education
 - Department report is due two years after the implementation and every two years thereafter
- JLARC's performance audit in 2010

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