

Strengthening Early Learning Transitions

Collaborative, cross-organizational approaches to effective transitions to create continuity in children's growth and development and their relationships from birth into school and beyond. Approaches support successful transitions by including the child, family, early care and education providers, pre-K and school district staff, and the larger community.

DCYF and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI): Supporting Two Approaches to Support Effective Transitions



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

100 Schools Reach Initiative

The 100 Schools Initiative, a national initiative, provides grants to reduce the effects of systemic injustice and disproportionality and strengthen effective transitions for children furthest from opportunity. For more information, go to www.dcyf.wa.gov/news/100-schools-initiative-awards.



**11 School District/
Community
Partnerships**
funded in
Washington

"Systems are effective only to the extent that children and families see, hear and experience the benefit. Families deserve a greater role in leading and advocating for their children's well-being. Washington's children deserve more equitable transitions, and the Preschool Development Grant offers a valuable window to improve accountability in our systems."

- 100 Schools Report. March 2021

In March 2021,¹ the 11 selected Washington 100 Schools Community Cohorts reported activities in the following areas, intended to strengthen early learning/K-12 transitions:

- 10 cohorts focused on **professional development**, with 3 of those sites teaming around **collaborative trainings** across K-12, early learning, PTA/PTSA groups, and family collectives
- 8 cohorts focused on **data collection and reporting to stakeholders**
- 5 cohorts explored **accessible and interactive tools** for family communication
- 5 cohorts utilized strategies for **strengthening partnerships and elevating family voice**

1. Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2021). *100 Schools Initiative Monthly Reports*. Retrieved March, 2021.

2. Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2021). *Transitional Kindergarten: Preschool Development Grant Mini-Grants: Learning and Recommendations*. Retrieved July, 2021.

Transitional Kindergarten

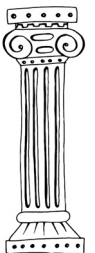
Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a program which serves 4-year-old children with no access to other high-quality early learning opportunities. Enrolled children are assessed as needing additional preparation before kindergarten.²



- **9 school districts** selected to receive 2021 mini-grant to implement TK programming
- **235 students** served across sites by initial cohort

In FY2021, to support the Pillars of Transitional Kindergarten, which include collaborative efforts that do not adversely impact enrollment in other early learning programs (Pillar V).

- OSPI partnered with DCYF to share family engagement frameworks and build on funds of knowledge to best support families without access to early learning
- 26 educators participated in *Creative Curriculum*[®] training and 27 administrators in *Coaching to Fidelity*[®] to ensure high-quality programming
- 18 district administrators engaged in four TK community of practice sessions to develop effective practices in early learning collaboration and establish a single point of entry through coordinated recruitment and enrollment for families



<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/early-learning-washington-state/transitional-kindergarten>

WASHINGTON'S PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT BIRTH THROUGH FIVE RENEWAL FY2021 EVALUATIVE BRIEFS

www.dcyf.wa.gov/publications-library/IAA_0004.pdf



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Timeline to Transitions: Compelling Cross-Agency Partnerships

2020

- PDG-R B-5 funding brings together transitions leads from DCYF and OSPI to align work streams, expand collaboration, and leverage partnerships.
- 100 Schools Reach, a highly successful initiative through the Office of Head Start, selected as an initial approach to support community-school and birth-5 years/kindergarten-12th grade partnerships.
- Transitions leads review existing workstreams to support opportunities for topical engagement. Collaboration expands with extraordinary support and participation of the Office of Head Start, OSPI's Office of Native Education, Title I Part A/Learning Assistance Program, Migrant Education, Bilingual Education, Early Childhood Special Education, DCYF Inclusion and Trauma Informed Care, and the Washington Association for Head Start and ECEAP.

2021

- TK identified as a pivotal access point to strengthening transitions for underserved families and demonstrated need for inclusive classrooms across Washington.
- Identified a paramount need for systems to incorporate family voice, leadership, and advocacy to support effective transitions. Specific populations of focus include historically marginalized and underserved groups: children with disabilities, children from migrant and immigrant communities, children of Black/African American or Native heritage, among others. Prioritized family voice in the development of a protocol for future listening sessions.

2022

- DCYF and OSPI will offer family voice listening sessions through spring of 2022. Engagement of tribal families is conducted through a culturally-specific contractor.
- Strengthening early learning Transitions to explore an inclusive learning collaboration with the Washington Pyramid Model.
- *0-5 and Beyond Transition* Manual in development.

CHIEF LESCHI ELEMENTARY

Trust and Access

The intergenerational trauma inflicted on Native families is central to the distrust and low uptake of childhood screenings. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians staffed screenings with trusted partners, but lost that capacity. Through the 100 Schools Reach partnership, Chief Leschi was connected with the OSPI Office of Native Education, who supported the procurement of Washington State safety gap funding; enough to offer culturally sustaining screening within the tribal community. Twenty-four children received screenings in 2021, while the school gained full access to resources available through both OSPI and ECEAP.

Centering Family

Strengthening early learning transitions benefits all families, but particularly those who are underserved by education systems. In 2021, a family whose four children had limited access to schooling, experienced a great tragedy — the death of their parent and primary caretaker. Living near the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the children were cared for by an auntie and tribal community member. Chief Leschi's 100 Schools Reach team connected the family to screening within the tribal community and identified needed supports. The family, school, and community together are building effective transitions for children to learn and thrive.