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| The Early Start Act mandated that DEL update the child care licensing rules so that the early learning system has a unified set of foundational health, safety and child development regulations that are easy to understand and align with other requirements by providers in the field. (RCW 43.215.201)DEL is taking a transparent, methodical, and inclusive approach to this legislatively-mandated process.  The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 updated the federal child care law, placing an emphasis on quality child care. There are new requirements related to children’s health and safety. The implementing regulations specify that lead agencies (which, in Washington, mean the Department of Early Learning) can rely on Caring for Our Children Basics (http:// www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/caringfor-our-children-basics) for any minimum standards required by the federal law and regulations. (See Fed Register https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-09-30/pdf/2016-22986.pdf Page 67484 last column) The regulations go on to state, “Lead Agencies are encouraged, however, to go beyond these baseline standards to develop a comprehensive and robust set of health and safety standards that cover additional areas related to program design, caregiver safety, and child developmental needs, using the full Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards guidelines.” (Id.) This is precisely what the Department of Early Learning has done in these proposed regulations in addition to proposing regulations that directly implement the federal requirements.  This section defines expectations about developmental screening, school readiness and kindergarten transition. The focus is on connecting families to community resources as early learning programs communicate with families about the importance and  availability of developmental screening and kindergarten transition to improve child outcomes. | | |  |  |
| **Child Outcomes - Developmental screening, communication to parents or guardians** | | | **WSA/HS/ECEAP Comments** | |
| **Family Home WAC** | **Center WAC** | **Proposed WAC** | **Satisfactory/Minor/Major revisions; Concerns; Suggested AlternateLanguage** | **Conflicts with ECEAP, Head Start, Schools District Standards and Practices** |
| No current WAC | No current WAC | **170-300-0055**  **Developmental screening, communication to parents or guardians.**   1. An early learning provider must inform parents or guardians about the importance of developmental screenings for each child from birth through age five. A provider must keep documentation of this communication to parents in the facility records. Weight #4      1. An early learning provider must share information with parents or guardians about organizations that conduct developmental screenings such as a local business, school district, health care provider, or specialist. Weight #4 |  |  |
| **Justification:**  The Child Care and Development Block Grant of 2014 (CCDBG) regulations require distribution of information on developmental screenings. See Section 98.16(b)(1)(4) and 98.33(c). Consistent with the federal regulations, these proposed licensing regulations require early learning providers to inform families about the value of developmental screening, and to provide information about local organizations that provide developmental screening. Educating parents about the importance of developmental screening, and where it is available, is a cost-effective way to assist with screening that can lead to early intervention. According to *Caring for Our Children, 3rd edition*, approximately seventy percent of children with developmental disabilities are not identified until school entry. See 2.1.1 General Program Activities, Standard 2.1.1.4: Monitoring Children’s Development/Obtaining Consent for Screening. As part of supporting these new proposed regulations, the Department will prepare and disseminate materials about organizations that conduct developmental screenings, and will also provide training to early learning providers on this topic.  Additionally, the proposed revision incorporates vital feedback from 467 stakeholders who participated in series of 23 meetings in April and May 2016 to share their feedback on proposed licensing standards drafts. The participants represented all types of early learning providers and a wide variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, refugee and immigrant, income, and linguistic communities including but not limited to: Native American, African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Yakama Nation, East African, Filipino, Spanish-speaking, Somali-speaking, Oromo-speaking and Russian-speaking. These stakeholders supported developmental screening. They raised concern about provider training and cost while supporting the importance of families knowing about and understanding the value of developmental screening. In response to some of these concerns, the proposal focuses on information sharing to support families using available community resources to obtain developmental screening rather than have screening done as part of the early learning program. | | |  |  |

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| **Child Outcomes – School readiness and family engagement activities** | | |  |  |
| **Family Home WAC** | **Center WAC** | **Proposed WAC** | **Satisfactory/Minor/Major revisions; Concerns; Suggested Alternate Language** | **Conflicts with ECEAP, Head Start, Schools District Standards and Practices** |
| No current WAC | No current WAC | **170-300-0065**  **School readiness and family engagement activities.**   1. At least once per calendar year, an early learning provider must supply to parents or guardians kindergarten or school readiness materials. Weight #3      1. These materials must be similar to relevant material posted online by OSPI or the department, and must address: 2. Kindergarten transition activities if a child is ready to transition to kindergarten; and 3. Developmentally appropriate local school and school district activities designed to engage families.   Weight #4 |  |  |
| **Justification:**  The Department of Early Learning’s goal is to assure that 90% of children in the state are ready for kindergarten. This proposed regulation requires early learning providers to share materials on kindergarten or school readiness, once a year, and include information on kindergarten transition and school transition activities that engage families. Providing families with valuable information about school readiness, kindergarten transition, and school activities in support of transition helps met DEL’s goal. The proposed regulation provides a cost-effective approach to sharing information with families. DEL will provide sample information for early learning providers, such as materials at https://del.wa.gov/helpful-resources/kindegarten-readiness/kindergarten-readiness-tips, and providers may also use information from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).  This proposed regulation is also consistent with the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Birth through 3rd Grade 2012 which includes many references to kindergarten and the importance of the transition into kindergarten. This is reinforced through the ongoing commitment to Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), which serves as a process for welcoming students and their families to kindergarten, assessing students’ strengths, discussing the characteristics of children’s development and learning that will enable them to be successful in school. The proposed regulation aligns with the approach being taken in K-12 education on this critical area. | | |  |  |