

# Early Educator Design Team Platform for Child Care



With public solutions that recruit and retain a thriving workforce, our vision is that all families – beginning with those most in need – have access to affordable, quality early care and education opportunities.

We envision universal access to affordable child care in Washington State through significantly expanded eligibility for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC).

A thriving workforce is essential for efficiently and effectively implementing child care for all and, as we create a plan for incremental expansions to WCCC eligibility, we must also address compensation, professional growth, and funding for the entire system.

## 1 Improve compensation, benefits, and wellbeing for early educators and their families

- **Fill the gap between current wages and living wages for early educators** with publicly funded subsidies for early educators delivered through DCYF's workforce registry.
- **Provide licensed programs with resources to support hiring, onboarding, and consistent access to substitute coverage** so educators have sustainable and balanced time for planning and professional development.
- **Ensure premium assistance and navigators for healthcare coverage and develop a plan for healthcare coverage** so early educators and their families don't lose access to affordable healthcare as their wages increase and their eligibility for public assistance decreases.
- **Make early educators categorically eligible for child care assistance** through Working Connections Child Care.

## 2 Support equitable opportunities for professional growth

- **Scale access to PACE** so all members of the workforce who choose community-based training pathways have access.
- **Streamline requirements and credentials for early educators and make additional advanced training options available** so pathways for career growth and training opportunities are more accessible, and attractive.
- **Significantly expand scholarships and support successful program completion** including access to educational advocates, tutoring, stipends for expenses, and child care co-payment assistance.

## 3 Increase and stabilize revenue for licensed expand access to small business supports for licensed programs

- **Increase reimbursement rates for WCCC to the 85th percentile and in 2025 transition to a cost of quality care rate setting model** that incorporates living wages and benefits.
- **Pay providers based on enrollment rather than attendance** to make revenue more predictable.
- **Increase rates for infant care and non-standard hours care** to bolster the most underfunded parts of the system that stand in the way of access for families.
- **Scale shared services** so programs who choose to take part can benefit from business supports as part of an economy of scale and so programs can benefit from peer-learning opportunities.
- **Offer business development/startup grants and supports** to individuals and organizations launching licensed child care programs.