



Washington Association for the Education of Young Children

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Provider Caucus Subsidy Meeting 8/4/09

Early learning and afterschool providers and advocates met August 4th to review preliminary results from the child care subsidy survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather data about the challenges and barriers providers and families experience participating in the subsidy program. To view the results, go to <http://www.waeyc.org/documents/ProviderCaucus/SubsidySurvey.pdf>.

The survey was completed by 426 providers from a variety of settings (e.g. licensed and licensed-exempt child care and afterschool, Head Start, ECEAP). Here's a sampling of the results.

- 36% of programs limit the number of families served with subsidies due to the low subsidy rate
- 45% of programs have staff that help families navigate and enroll in the subsidy system
- 28% of providers experience an average wait time of 15 or more minutes when calling DSHS
- 30% of providers responded that 10% or more of their families' subsidy applications and renewal paperwork are lost by DSHS in an average month or year
- 33% of providers responded that 10% or more of the documents or work they get from DSHS includes errors caused by the caseworker
- 39% of providers responded that 10% or more of the subsidy denial letters their program receives are received after the last day that the child will be subsidized

The top policy priorities identified by providers in the survey are to

- Extend eligibility during job search
- Allow subsidy during education/training
- Count only income received, rather than owed
- Have families work with the same caseworker at DSHS each time

At the August 4th meeting, providers commented that

- The low subsidy rates and other subsidy challenges disproportionately impact children of color and children in low income families and their child care providers
- There are a lot of challenges and barriers related to participating in the subsidy program and many of the challenges and barriers have existed for quite some time
- Some of the challenges and barriers are policy issues and others are procedural
- Training, for providers and DSHS staff, is one part of the solution

Next steps by the Provider Caucus include

- Share the survey results with the Department of Early Learning, the Early Learning Action Alliance's subsidy workgroup and the Early Learning Advisory Council
- Collect subsidy stories from providers and families to share with policy makers
To share your story, go to <http://www.waeyc.org/PublicPolicy.htm>

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