“The family support helped my family set goals and gave my family the tools and resources to continuously keep trying to meet our goal.”
— ECEAP Parent

“ECEAP has helped me with resources and to get the things together that I need to. It is the first time our family has had someone really believe in us.”
— ECEAP Parent

“ECEAP was an absolute lifesaver for me. When I first discovered the program, I was a single mom going back to college. ECEAP assigned me a family support specialist that helped find the resources I needed as well as the peace of mind that I could leave my child in a setting where she was safe, learning and had opportunities for social-emotional development. I could go back to school, get my grades back and do what I need to do.”
— ECEAP Parent

Early Childhood Education
Washington State Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) is the lead agency for state-funded services that support children and families to build resilience and health, and to improve educational outcomes. DCYF oversees several services. Some examples include: the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Child care licensing, Child Protective Services’ investigations and Family Assessment Response, licensed foster care, adoption support, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program for preschoolers (ECEAP), Working Connections Child Care, Home Visiting and the Office of Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR). JR programs include juvenile rehabilitation institutions, community facilities and parole services. DCYF programs promote a comprehensive approach, with a vision to ensure that the state’s “children and youth grow up safe and healthy—thriving physically, emotionally and academically, nurtured by family and community.” To do this, DCYF partners with community organizations, tribes, and other state agencies to deliver programs to families across the state.
Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) reaches 3-4-year-old children most in need of foundations for learning. ECEAP is Washington’s pre-kindergarten program that prepares 3- and 4-year-old children from families furthest from opportunity for success in school and in life. Programming includes parent engagement where providers begin their partnership with families by assessing each child’s development, physical health and family well-being, then they partner with parents to set goals to address the needs of the whole family. This is part of their comprehensive and differentiated services approach which includes education, family support program, and health services.

ECEAP SERVICES INCLUDE:

Education – Preschool classes with a comprehensive research-based curriculum, developmental screening, ongoing assessment of development and individualized planning to support kindergarten readiness.

Family Support – Individualized approach to enhance family resilience, stability and financial security using a Mobility Mentoring® informed approach.

Health – Ensuring each child is up-to-date with preventative care and screening, receiving nutritious meals and referred for mental health services if indicated.
**Phase One:**
DCYF formed a Preschool Operational Workgroup and invited ECEAP contractors to participate. This group was tasked with selecting a research-based approach that provides individualized service for families. Mobility Mentoring was one of two models considered.

**Phase Two:**
DCYF brought together staff from participating ECEAP contractors to create a family assessment form. The assessment was important to track where families started and where they ended-up. They ultimately designed the assessment to be a conversation with families that is completed three times a year.

**Phase Three:**
DCYF hosted trainings at locations across the state for EMPath to train ECEAP staff on the Mobility Mentoring model.

**Phase Four:**
Program staff met with families to introduce the model, complete the assessment, and enter data (including identified needs, strengths, goals, and progress).

**IMPLEMENTATION**
In 2014, the ECEAP began exploring a few models to strengthen program outcomes for families. They considered two models including Mobility Mentoring. They ultimately choose Mobility Mentoring as the statewide approach in their Family Support program. Mobility Mentoring is a research-based approach that provided DCYF the flexibility needed to build requirements into existing databases, and EMPath’s structure ensured continued in-depth training and technical assistance for state leaders and direct service staff. This approach helped to address the impact stress and trauma has on cognitive and behavioral development.

Between 2014-2018, ECEAP piloted Mobility Mentoring as part of the Family Support programming across the state. The pilot was rolled out in four phases with 19 of 52 ECEAP contractors implementing the four Essential Elements of Mobility Mentoring all at once (Coaching for Economic Mobility, Bridge to Self-Sufficiency®, Goal Setting and Recognition). During the different phases, DCYF and the ECEAP contractors formed a prototype, gathered participant feedback, adapted the tools, and tested changes.
TOOL ADAPTATION

In 2018, after DCYF expanded the Mobility Mentoring informed approach statewide, they started receiving feedback about aspects of the Bridge that didn’t work for families within certain communities. While there was a variety of feedback received, the most consistent feedback was that the current Bridge didn’t celebrate families’ choice in key areas (that included cultural norms) such as cohabitation. ECEAP contractors also said it was hard to adequately translate related documents and that miscommunication with families was prevalent. With the feedback received, DCYF decided to adapt the Bridge so that it shifted more towards the self-determined journey of the families they work with and minimized bias. DCYF also wanted to incorporate language to support the conversations they were having with families. For example, with housing they wanted to talk about how safe the family felt in their home, not only how much they were spending.

When the Mobility Mentoring model was fully implemented in 2018, they had expanded from 19 to 56 contractors across the state.

In 2019, ECEAP implemented two work groups, a Mobility Mentoring Tribal work group and a Mobility Mentoring Equity work group, to support this work. The process included monthly meetings where they discussed the Bridge and training needs. All contractors were invited to participate in these meetings. They also hired a consultant, The National Equity Project, who used Liberatory Design tools and approaches to address the concerns expressed by workgroup participants. They created design challenges and tested them with 2,500 families across 16 ECEAP contractors. The design challenges addressed implicit bias and structural racism themes in the training materials and embraced strength-based and equitable language in the Bridge. They also created an evaluation mechanism providing parents an opportunity to give input on the tools. The final adapted Bridge released in June 2020, is simplified into more generalized wording and language that can more easily be translated into multiple languages and be more culturally relevant for each of the pillars. In addition, “I” statements were added to make the language more participant focused.

The new Bridge was designed to be a walking bridge with people moving in multiple direction across the bridge, so that it doesn’t look like movement is only in one direction or that there is only one destination in this work. The imagery for the Bridge was chosen to represent the communities of Washington State and capture the Pacific Northwest culture. The animals, like the raven and salmon, are often found in traditional Northwest tribal artwork. The other imagery is iconic of the state, like the Space Needle and windmills for wind farms. The bright colors were inspired by the Washington State Racial Equity Theory of Change (RETOC) poster. The new Bridge design was well accepted by participants and staff - 83% of staff thinking the Bridge was easy to transition to and 45% believed it led to deeper conversations about goal setting. The design of the adapted Bridge took place over 18 months of planning, 17 design meetings with 50 workgroup members. Their adapted Bridge is called, Bridge to Child and Family Self-Reliance.
STAFF SUPPORT AND TRAINING

To support ongoing staff training and skill development, a small group of ECEAP staff and contractors were certified to train staff through EMPath’s Train-the-Trainer program. This enabled them to deliver EMPath’s Mobility Mentoring Essentials foundational curriculum. DCYF also contracts with EMPath to facilitate monthly webinars for supervisors and family support specialists. The monthly webinars focus on the tools and issue areas identified by ECEAP contractors. To monitor program quality, the DCYF Program Quality Specialist convenes monthly calls with contractors to gather information about concerns and challenges. In addition, DCYF conducts in-person monitoring and interviews staff and parents.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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| 2014 | • Joined the Economic Mobility Exchange  
|      | • Preschool Operational Workgroup formed to pilot model |
| 2015 | • Mobility Mentoring Essentials training  
|      | • Pilot year, phase 1 |
| 2016 | • Pilot year, phase 1 (cont.)  
|      | • Pilot year, phase 2 |
| 2017 | • Pilot year, phase 2 (cont.)  
|      | • Pilot year, phase 3 & statewide training (included 19 self-selected ECEAP contractors) |
| 2018 | • Pilot year, phase 3 & statewide training (included 19 self-selected ECEAP contractors) (cont.)  
|      | • Participated in EMPath’s Mobility Mentoring® Train-the-Trainer model  
|      | • Statewide implementation complete |
| 2019 | • Mobility Mentoring Equity Group formed |
| 2020 | • Mobility Mentoring Equity Group formed (cont.)  
|      | • Bridge adapted, Bridge to Child and Family Self-Reliance |
OUTCOMES DATA

“Children whose parents received Mobility Mentoring informed coaching showed gains in child development measures compared with children whose parents did not receive coaching.”


### 2019 ECEAP SURVEY

**Percentage of Families Served**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Improved physical &amp; mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29%</td>
<td>Increased parenting skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Increased support networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>Managed stress better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>Improved skills for family conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Improved housing situation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LESSONS LEARNED

- Contractors learned that the Mobility Mentoring tools helped staff have deeper conversations with families, ensuring services and resources fit the family’s needs.

- DCYF learned that systems need to be established for ongoing skill and program development, such as feedback loops with contractors about the delivery of services. Also, it is important to create regular opportunities for staff to participate in trainings, like monthly webinars, foundational training for new staff, calls and in-person visits with contractors.

- Hiring a consultant to guide the Bridge adaptation process was a success. Having an external organization lead the process helped eliminate power dynamics between the state and workgroup participants.

- DCYF understood the need to more purposefully incorporate the impacts of structural racism into related documents and training so staff can identify their biases and purposefully work to convey to families how structural and institutionalized racism shapes and impacts their current situation.

- DCYF asked contractors to volunteer to be part of the initial pilot, which meant they had willing partners to try things out. When they went statewide, they did not have the same reaction. If they could repeat this process, they would have more slowly built the requirements to implement this in phases, or would have randomly selected pilot participants.

- In using the Liberatory Design approach to this work, DCYF realized the need to have ongoing feedback loops built into this work so that provider and parent voice help to determine the direction of the adaptation made to the Bridge.

SUMMARY

A phased pilot and collaboration from the 19 contractors were key in implementing a Mobility Mentoring informed approach in the ECEAP in Washington State. Using the Liberatory Design approach to addressing equity challenges and change efforts in complex systems with community partners and the families allowed them to gather insights to inform the development of the model for their communities. The systems they created for monitoring and supporting providers also allowed them to ensure quality delivery of the program. The success of the implementation process is demonstrated by the outcomes gathered from the program.