

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Early Childhood Special Education Initiatives

ECSE Initiatives Purpose Statement

To prioritize the intersectionality of social emotional development and embedded inclusionary practices in early childhood programs, OSPI's Special Education division has funded the following initiatives to increase positive outcomes of young children (3–5 years) with disabilities with coordinated intensive technical assistance, professional development, and systems-level coaching for early childhood staff in integrated early learning environments. For more information visit the [OSPI Early Childhood Special Education webpage](#) to review the [ECSE Initiatives Summary One Pager](#), and the [ECSE Initiative Activity Map](#) to learn which local districts and ESDs near you are engaging the projects described below.

Washington Pyramid Model (WAPM) Implementation

Washington state was awarded the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) Intensive Technical Assistance Grant in January 2019, which resulted in the development of what is now known as Washington Pyramid Model (WAPM). WAPM supports the development of [Multi-Tiered System of Supports](#) (MTSS) structures across grade bands, P–12. The State Leadership Team's (SLT), which includes a variety of cross agency partners supporting early childhood programs, mission is to employ responsive systems that partner with the adults in children's lives to promote social-emotional health through the framework of the Pyramid Model, so all children, prenatal–5 years, experience high-quality, inclusive early learning settings. For detailed information related to Washington Pyramid Model implementation review the [Washington state NCPMI 2020 Annual Report](#) or [contact Julie Dean](#).

Learning Experiences and Alternative Program (LEAP) Replication

The LEAP Preschool Model reflects both a behavioral and developmentally appropriate approach for teaching children with and without disabilities within an inclusive early childhood environment. In LEAP Preschool Models, the typically developing peers are trained how to communicate and engage in reciprocal social relationships with their classroom peers with ASD. The LEAP PreK Model also uses an integrated curriculum approach (i.e., designing learning experiences that promote children's skill development across multiple domains) to provide opportunities related to all areas of development (e.g., social/emotional, language, adaptive behavior, cognitive, and physical). OSPI has contracted with the University of Denver to implement LEAP PreK Models across Washington state. For more information, visit the [LEAP Preschool Model webpage](#).

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Implementation

The State's State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that is a comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year plan for



improving results for children with disabilities. Washington’s State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) states that intensive technical assistance in the area of social-emotional development along with system level coaching in MTSS development for program staff in integrated early learning environments will increase the social-emotional learning (SEL) performance rate of students upon entry to kindergarten (based on the WaKIDS fall assessment data).

It is the hypothesis of the WA state SSIP State Design Team that lack of access to inclusive, high-quality early childhood learning experiences with integrated SEL infrastructures contribute to opportunity gaps in social-emotional development as these students enter kindergarten. These opportunity gaps increase year after year, leading to more restrictive placements, less access to core instruction, increased achievement gaps, and poor post-school outcomes. For this reason, OSPI is committed to implementing and assessing the effectiveness of SEL, intensive technical assistance, coaching, and professional development associated with the Pyramid Model (PM), an early childhood MTSS infrastructure, as activities necessary to meet our SiMR, and in turn to increase the quality of teaching and learning for all partners involved (family, child, educational practitioner, and community partner).

Research to Action: Pre-K Inclusion Champions (PIC) Network

The purpose of the **Research to Action: Pre-K Inclusion Champions Network** is to make available small awards to the special education divisions within the Educational Services Districts (ESDs) and local school districts across Washington state to create an early learning system that enables state, tribal, district, and community partners to collaboratively create integrated classrooms that serve children, 3–5 years of varying socioeconomic backgrounds, abilities, races and/or cultures. The Pre-K Inclusion Champions Network (approximately 60+ participating local school districts) is committed to leveraging the impact that regional leaders, district, and community-based champions have on promoting inclusionary placement options for preschoolers with disabilities to deepen their collective experience using research to resolve prominent and relevant inclusionary policy and practice challenges.

ESD leads work with teams of Pre-K Inclusion Champions and community-based partners that represent a cross-sector learning community aligning early childhood and K–12 systems. Project activities include:

1. Removing barriers created using multiple funding sources, policies, and regulations;
2. Ensuring adequate placement options and access to a typical early childhood program for students with disabilities; and
3. Creating greater alignment among programs; coordinated recruitment and enrollment, curriculum, quality.

Additionally, OSPI has partnered with the University of Washington Haring Center for Inclusive Education to create Early Childhood Special Education [demonstration sites](#) highlighting best practices in inclusive education across the state.