



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # WA-5035

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Lead Monitor: [redacted]
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CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Criterion, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 20. Includes detailed description of the criterion and sub-points (a) through (d).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

(a) The state of Washington displays a strong commitment to high-quality and accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services in section (A) (1) of the RTT grant application. In relation to the State's population of Children with High Needs during the January 2007 to 2011 time period, the state funding has increased substantially. This increase in State funding for high needs children is well aligned with the priority areas of this RTT grant. The fact that the State of Washington has displayed evidence of this commitment before the grant became available is evidence of its high commitment and ability to achieve the goals it sets forth. (b) From January 2007 to the present, the state of Washington demonstrates that serving children with special needs and their families is a high priority as evidenced by the dramatic annual increases in enrollment in each of the 12 state-funded programs. (page 22) (c) Beginning with the Common Early Learning Standards in 2005, the State of Washington has demonstrated major benchmarks and legislation nearly every year that aligns private and public sectors, consolidates services under one agency, and provides a solid foundation for early learning that leads to successful kindergarten readiness. (d) The State of Washington indicates that appropriate and comprehensive assessment measures are used in its State-funded Pre-K, Early Head Start and Head Start, IDEA-funded programs, and Title I programs, as well as its programs funded by CCDF. The State of Washington enlists a set of Early Learning and Development standards that address infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in all the five essential domains of learning. Health practices use a tiered rating and improvement scale that encourages health promotion, health literacy, and safety. Meaningful and systematic family engagement strategies such as classroom volunteer opportunities, committee work, and program assessment and review, are included. Valid and reliable Kindergarten Entry Assessments, including Teaching Strategies GOLD, are listed for each of the key domains on Table (A) (1)-12. Statewide administration of all assessments is specified for 2014-2015, which is a realistic date for administration; given the fact that 2014-2015 is the final year of the RTT grant, results of the assessment tools will yield important evidence of program effectiveness. Further, Appendix 9 provides a detailed and well aligned listing of strategies, implications, and outcomes that demonstrate the integration of the key areas in the proposed grant. In summary, the State Plan has fully and convincingly addressed this criterion in an admirable manner.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	16

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

(a) The five goals for improving program quality are well aligned and supported with related outcomes. In turn, the expected degree of success for each of the outcomes is clearly delineated using percentage figures. While all of the five goals that address TQRIS, early learning standards, family engagement, professional development, and kindergarten entry are realistic, some of the expected outcome measures may not be sufficiently ambitious. For example, by the end of the grant, only 54% of all programs in TQRIS will have attained Level II-V and only 62% of high need children will be served in TQRIS levels II-V. Also, by the end of the grant in 2015, 54% of TQRIS participants will be trained in family engagement. Since family engagement is an important aspect of the grant, it seems reasonable that more participants will have undergone this training. Further, the low percentages of the total early childhood workforce who will have earned a CDA or a BA degree, with expected levels in 2015 of only 20% and 15%, respectively, do not seem sufficiently ambitious. The specified levels are probably attainable but, given the fact that teacher training is deemed important in this grant and, specifically mentioned by the Governor, expecting a higher level of credentials seems logical. (b) The interrelations of children, parents, and professionals in achieving an effective reform agenda are well delineated in Figure A7, Educating children, parents, and professionals by enlisting learning standards, kindergarten assessment, TQRIS, and government and agency support will provide a continuous and aligned approach. This interrelationship, while clearly delineated in the figure, is brief and summarized in overly general terms. Additional information would have provided more specifics about the respective roles of all of the parties, and especially the government and agencies. (c) The State of Washington has selected Early Learning and Development Standards and Engaging and Supporting Families as its area C focus investment area choices. This selection seems reasonable, given the fact that Washington currently has long-standing Early Learning and Development Benchmarks in place that will be revised into full implementation for the RTT grant. Likewise, the selection of C4-Engaging and Supporting Families seems a logical choice, given the fact that Washington has recently adopted TQRIS family engagement standards. The selection of D1, Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials is critically important for purposes of maintenance and expansion, given Washington State's completed statewide core competencies, career lattice system, and its professional registry. Addressing E1, Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry, is a natural choice since WaKIDS, an innovative K assessment process, is now ready to be scaled. The information gleaned from the implementation of the new program will provide important information to parents, teachers, and state leaders about children's school readiness rates. This response was scored as a medium-high quality response, because of its unique and innovative approach to family engagement, using the TQRIS approach to Family Engagement. Full points were not awarded due to the lack of specificity in delineating governmental roles in supporting TQRIS and in the relatively low expected levels of degree attainment for child care professionals by the culmination of the RTT grant in 2015.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	9

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

- (a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (A)(3)

(a) (1-2) The State of Washington responded to a thorough review of Washington's entire education system, Washington Learns, which resulted in a cabinet-level Department of Early Learning, the lead agency for this RTT grant. In addition to this aspect of the State's responsiveness to the review, the State also created a public-private partnership (Thrive by Five) to enable timely coordination across sectors. This responsiveness indicates a willingness on the part of the State to adapt the educational system by implementing necessary changes. Together, the DEL, the ELAC, Thrive by Five, the Early Learning Plan, the Leadership Plan, and the Early Learning Guidelines show strong coordination, and shared goals, directions, and priorities. (3) Meetings are held regularly among partnership agencies to ensure smooth operations. The Early Learning Partnership includes some of the key early childhood agencies in the State: DEL, the Office of Superintendent and Thrive. Additional information regarding the respective roles of the three bodies in making decisions and resolving disputes is not provided, however. (4) Although the grant application specifies a number of representatives and parent panels and councils, all of them housed under the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), it does not provide information regarding when and how these specific groups will be involved in the planning and implementation of activities. A MOU is provided (in appendices 4, 5, and 6) for three agencies: DEL, the Department of Health, and Thrive by Five. (b) (1) Figure A8 provides a clear overview of the various entities that will work together to implement the State Plan. In the MOU's, these agencies show a strong commitment to collaborating. As a result, these collaborative efforts will maximize the number of Early Learning and Development programs that become Participating Programs. (2) The MOUs contain very specific and detailed descriptions of expectations in relation to the scope of the State Plan, the Project Administration, the Agency's responsibilities, and the state's recourse in the event of an agency's failure to perform. Not included is a specific time frame or schedule that describes junctures in which the various work of the agencies and parties will be completed during the four year cycle of this Project. (3) A signature is included from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency. (c) (1) (2) Many letters from many different organizations and individuals are included in the appendix of this State Plan. Impressive is the uniqueness of each letter which clearly specifies the agency's or individual's potential role in the State Plan. This set of letters, that are obviously highly supportive of early learning, families, the TQRIS system, and the State Plan, in general, are a definite strength of the entire application. They lend great credibility to this extremely well planned and ambitious project. Aside from the lack of absolute clarity regarding the roles of the advisory council members, this criterion was well addressed, and has earned a high score of 9 out of 10 possible points.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	13

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

(A) (4) (a) Figure A9 clearly illustrates how the RTT funding will constitute 40% of the Operational State Budget needed to implement and sustain this grant. The other 60% is contributed by state, federal, local, and private sources. Although the \$151 million dollar investment from the sources, above, is significant, the grant application builds a strong case for requesting additional RTT funding, given the scope and goals of this Washington Early Learning Plan. Budget Figure 6 reveals the sources of funding from 2012 until 2015. It is noteworthy and commendable that the State plans to maintain this total budget of over 600 million per operating year out of existing streams; State funding will not decrease if the current grant project is funded. (b) (1-2) The goals for the proposed State Plan appear ambitious and yet achievable. The Plan is realistic in its projections of necessary expenditures and limitations, and yet allocates sufficient and appropriate funding that is needed to realize its goals and outcomes. The proposed budget of just over 27.7 million in 2013, rising to 47.7 million in 2016, for a total of 151.4 million over four years, is appropriate in consideration of the increasing annual operating expenses and the goals. However, it is unclear as to why the budget table notes that the grant will begin in 2013, and not 2012, and why the budget table notes that it will end in 2016, and not 2015. Also, the decision to significantly increase the allotment of funding from the RTT-Early Learning Challenge Grant between the years 2015 and 2016 is questionable, given the fact that the State Plan claims to reduce its dependency upon RTT funding by 2015. (3) The specific allocations of funding are clearly described in Budget Figure 11. Specific funding is devoted to local implementation, including coaching, teacher training, professional development, program evaluation, and WAKids. However, the allocation of funds for more local implementation practices, such as family involvement, services to high need children, and health services, is derived from existing funding agencies, including DEL. (c) The sustainability of the grant is very clearly explained, DEL will maintain its responsibility, in full, for the personnel and related expenses of the operational budget. From previous experience, DEL has learned that the initial programmatic framework was too costly, therefore, the implementation of awards for professional development credentials and a tiered reimbursement structure within the TORIS are steps that will allow for a more reasonable and sustained budget. The documented involvement of Harvard University's Frontiers of Innovation will provide financial support, along with program advice and resources. As a result of these agencies and Resources maintaining support for the program, even after the cessation of the funding period, it is reasonable to infer that the State Plan will continue into the foreseeable future. Although funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has decreased in 2011, the financial contributions by the State and other private parties is strong and continuing; therefore, the State Plan will most likely be sustained and expanded for many years to come, even beyond the four year scope of this RTT grant funding. Partial credit was scored on this criterion because of the contradictory years listed for the RTT-Early Learning Challenge and because of the unexplained, disproportionately higher increases in requested RTT funding (located in the budget) for years 2015 and 2016 of the project. However, a strength in the response is the strong private sector and State funding that matches the amount of funding requested in the RTT grant.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	8

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

(B) (1) (a) The State Plan exhibits Early Learning and Development Standards that are closely aligned with Developmentally Appropriate Practice and research support. A Comprehensive Assessment System is implemented using ongoing (formative) assessment ratings of environmental quality, and Child Outcomes. The State was among the first in the nation to pilot the CLASS tool to determine high quality teacher-child interactions. This initiative by the State of Washington is indicative of its motivation to improve the environment and relationships that exist in early childhood programs. Professional development is rewarded with points for the AA certificate and the BA and MA degrees, which will most likely motivate many teachers to earn higher degrees. The following TQRIS Program Standards are addressed in an overly general manner, and are in need of clarity and additional information: *Professional Development for teachers is expected and rewarded, but the manner in which professional development is administered is not specified in this criterion; *The Family Engagement Strategy of "partnering with parents to determine the child's strengths and weaknesses" does not include information regarding how and when this partnering occurs; *Health promotion practices include several promising programs and Developmental Screenings; however, it is not stated how the results of the screening will be used and how often the Screenings are conducted. *Effective data practices does not specify how Environmental Supports (ERS) relates to data practices. (b) The standards are clear and measurable for this criterion. Differentiated program levels are specified. Motivating incentives such as tuition reimbursement and scholarships reinforce teachers' sustained engagement in education and their attainment of higher degree levels. A point system is used for a five-level program. (c) Washington's licensing requirements are commendable, since they have received sixth place nationally for regulation and oversight. Children with high needs are served, given the fact that all centers that participate in Washington's Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) must be licensed. A tiered reimbursement policy is planned that will motivate high-quality programs to serve high-needs children. The establishment of a statewide data system in 2012 will further support TQRIS by providing systematic monitoring. This data system is critically important in consideration of the increasing population of children and families, and the ambitious goals for expansion in programs that are detailed in this State plan. A very detailed and clear table is included that demonstrates how participating programs are aligned with TQRIS Program Standards and Quality Levels. Overall, this criterion was rated in the medium-high quality response category, due to the lack of detailed information regarding the TQRIS standards.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	12

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

(B) (2) (a) (1) In some detail, the State Plan explains the TQRIS monitoring and rating system in which Head Start, state-funded Pre-K programs, and Early Learning and Development Programs participate. However, the Early Head Start program is not addressed for this criterion, nor are children ages birth through two who are also a focal group for TQRIS (Early Head Start is addressed, however, in B-2-b). The lack of information about Early Head Start children, including toddlers and infants, as well as information about children/infants with disabilities, is problematic in this response. (b) The State is required to expand the ECEAP Pre-K program until all eligible children are served, beginning with populations of children who are experiencing high poverty rates. The plans that are provided, for extending eligibility for family eligibility for ECAP, Head Start, and Early Head Start families at the 2012 Legislative Session, are overly general and do not contain sufficient detail in this criterion. (c) Target numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the TQRIS are clearly delineated for this criterion. The progression from Level I programs into Level V programs is expected to climb substantially for Head Start programs whose goal is climb from 23% to 73%. Other programs are also projected to show substantial increases in TQRIS levels from 2012 until 2015. These targets are ambitious and achievable, and indicate that pre-kindergarten children will be served in high quality programs with increasingly well trained and competent child care providers. This criterion was scored in the medium-high range because of the promising aspects of the TQRIS levels and the more challenging aspects of the family eligibility details and the fact that the TQRIS is not yet fully implemented.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	14

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

(B) (3) (a) The State Plan uses the CLASS and Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) in TQRIS, both of which are well established and reputable measures, for rating programs. Additional valid and reliable scales are used for infants and toddlers who are enrolled in TQRIS programs. Reliability procedures for the CLASS and the ERS are explained in good detail, and excellent reliability results were achieved as a result of the training. One-third of all programs are evaluated every three years, which will help to ensure continuity of quality services. (b) As delineated on the Table, ratings will be available on Child Care Check and the WSRRN database beginning in 2012, making program information readily accessible to most parents. A branding initiative, using money from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will be implemented in late 2011-2012 that will make program quality information readily available. In addition, DEL will make information available to parents by coordinating with Head Start, ECEAP, and other programs serving high-needs children. The State Plan does not specify how it will reach non-English speaking parents or non-literate families. In summary, the evidence that is presented in this criterion is clear and indicates that parents and families are high priorities in this State Plan. Aside from the lack of information on reaching non-English-speaking parents, this criterion was fully addressed, and has earned a rating of high with a score of 14 out of 15 points.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	16

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

(B) (4) (a) Washington State offers Quality Improvement Awards that are used for higher wages, increased levels of staffing and other efforts. This Award system is highly effective, as shown in Figure B5. The state's coaching model design is state-of-the-art and foundational to Washington's TQRIS. Approximately eight hours per month is offered for coaching at each facility. However, specifics of this coaching model are missing, and it is not clear as to which teachers receive coaches and how this coaching is scheduled. An exemplary "train the trainer" model that is planned is a cost-effective way of expanding coaching. Scholarships and grant opportunities will expand dramatically between 2012 and 2015 with only 113 professionals supported in 2012 and 1842 professionals supported in 2015. These incentives, offered to individuals who have reached levels III-V, will support and maintain highly qualified TQRIS teachers. (b) Higher rated programs in TQRIS will receive higher support levels. This tiered support system will encourage programs to increase and maintain a high quality education and support full-day, full-year programs for children. Coaches assist programs in developing Quality Improvement Plans that will further engage families and meet their needs. Although there is no mandate for this, programs can elect to spend their improvement money on items to support high needs children and their families. In addition, section (C) (4) of this grant application describes Private Resources that support families in significant ways, including Love.Talk.Play Parent Campaign, Reach Out and Read, and WAKids, a Parent Ambassadors Program, and a Panel Advisory Group that meets monthly. (c) (1) Whereas the 2015 goal for Head Start/ECEAP project is that a high proportion of programs (73%) will be in Tiers II-V of TQRIS, the projected goals for levels II-V for children in family child care, licensed child care programs, and all programs, collectively, is only 54% by 2015. While these goals are most likely achievable, they are not truly ambitious. Also, predicted increases in participation are not equal across the four years of the project, with the earlier years of the project predicting a larger increase than the years 2014 through 2015. No rationale is provided that explains this lower increase in the later years of the project. (2) Clear and reasonable, yet ambitious, predictions for increases in children's enrollment in TQRIS are provided and discussed in the Table. However, no baseline or target figures are included for children with high needs in IDEA, Title 1, or CCDF programs. Overall, this criterion contains some promising aspects, such as scholarship and grant opportunities and family support systems, and some challenging aspects, such as providing target figures for children with high needs. Therefore, this criterion was rated in the medium-high level.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	10

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

(B) (5) (a) A recent quantitative study provided validation of the Phase One TQRIS statewide implementation. An experimental group that enlisted intensive, high quality coaching and quality improvement grants was compared with a control group that received funds for professional development and supports. However, this coaching study and its results were not related to this criterion. Later studies, that were more aligned with the criterion, confirmed that TQRIS Ratings and ERS scores improved dramatically in a short time period, allowing for further refinement of quality standards. However, further differentiation of the various tiers (I-V) and studies that investigate the differences between and among the various levels is needed in order to fully address this criterion. A commendable practice that is proposed for this criterion is that of evaluating an individual child with special needs, using the CLASS or ERS, in order to determine if the TQRIS system is as effective with children with special needs as it is with the general population of children. (b) The State Plan provides some information in Table form regarding research designs and measures of progress. However, additional information is not included regarding the specific quality standards and system supports that are examined, the type of child assessments that are implemented, and the content of the training series and formative assessments. Overall, this response was rated in the medium-high quality range, since some data and information on standards and supports were not provided, and differentiation of the various tier levels is not specified.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application—

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	27

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

- (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;
- (c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and
- (d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

(C) (1) (a) The Benchmarks (renamed the Guidelines) provide an extremely comprehensive and detailed 200 page guide to expected norms for children ages birth through 5 in five important areas: Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches Toward Learning, Cognition, and General Knowledge, Development, and Language/Literacy. These Benchmarks address all the essential domains requested in this criterion. However, the Birth through Three standards are overly general and not discussed in sufficient depth or with sufficient clarity. (b) The OSPi (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction) guidelines are carefully and extensively aligned with all of the Benchmarks. In addition, the Benchmarks are aligned with Head Start and Early Head Start standards in order to maintain continuity of instruction and learning across the domains and the content areas. (c) The Benchmarks were used to create the TQRIS, ensuring continuity of goals and expectations between the Benchmarks and the TQRIS. Also, the Professional Development System enlists the Benchmarks. Finally, criteria and assessments for the state pre-K programs must align with, and enlist, the Benchmarks. Early learning staff in these programs have completed training in using the Benchmarks. Availability of the Benchmarks is by state-wide electronic and hard copy distribution, ensuring that these Benchmarks reach a

wide audience. In 2009 a user survey was distributed to assess respondents' use of the Benchmarks. Although 85% of the respondents claimed to use the Benchmarks a lot or some of the time, data were not provided regarding the number of respondents, the means of distributing the survey, and the selection of facilities, state-wide. Information regarding respondents' comments or suggestions regarding improving or modifying the Benchmarks is also not provided. This information might have been instrumental in the process of refining or clarifying of the Benchmarks that is planned for future years. (d) The Benchmarks have been widely distributed and incorporated into programs across multiple state agencies including child care providers, parent outreach programs, and an Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program. A detailed Table is provided that clearly delineates targets, goals, and milestones for the next four years for building strong alignment, creating public awareness, supporting community use, and using evaluation to test and refine guidelines. This Table is well constructed and indicates a logical, systematic, and dedicated approach to achieving high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards. The Benchmarks are undergoing a revision process that will allow them to become more user-friendly and approachable by multiple users. However, no information is provided that explains the source of the information that led to a revision of the Benchmarks.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	28

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

(c) (4) (a) A very detailed and useful model of Family Engagement and Partnership is included in this State Plan. The ten focal areas align well with the RTT grant application criteria, as demonstrated in the provided Table. The Family Engagement and Partnership standards earn up to 10 points, or 10% of the total score on the point system that is used for levels III-V. Several of the components and child outcomes address the capacity of families to support their children's education and development. (b) A six-hour training is a requirement of Level II TQRIS participants. Twenty-two initial training sessions were held across the state in 2010-11; these training sessions provided feedback and information that can be used to refine the projected future training sessions. By 2015, over half of all eligible programs in the TQRIS will have completed this Strengthening Families training. This projected figure is promising in terms of parent outreach and involvement. An informative table delineating projected numbers of programs that are involved in training further clarifies the projected yearly figures and ongoing nature of this training. The increase of 11 percent to 54 percent of TQRIS participants trained in family engagement between 2012 and 2015 seems an achievable goal. However, this increase in participants' training does not fulfill the "ambitious" criterion. With each calendar year, the projected percentage increase of total TQRIS participants who are trained actually decreases from 19 percent in 2013 to an additional 17 percent in 2014 and to only an additional 7 percent increase in 2014. The projected increase in serving and evaluating families in poverty is substantial, as programs will reach 25 percent of families in 2012 and 85 percent of families in 2015, a 65 percent increase. This is a very promising and exciting aspect of the State Plan, as serving families in poverty and targeting high needs children are RTT-Early Learning Challenge priorities. (c) Primary parent engagement approaches from the private sector are plentiful and appropriate. They include Love. Talk. Play., Reach Out and Read, WaKids, Early Learning Fellow, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT), and the Panel Advisory Group. Also, home visiting is an area of increased focus and investment, with private expenditures matched by public expenditures, thereby connecting both sectors in setting and achieving important program goals for parents. The State Plan is to be commended on increasing its focus on home visiting and other methods of engaging the family. This criterion earned a rating of high because of its obvious and active support of families with children with high needs.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
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(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	40
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The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

- (a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;
- (b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and
- (c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(1)

(D) (1) (a) Washington State has designed a set of Core Competencies that are based upon current child development research. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was appropriately included in the Core Competency design to provide a strong research base and to connect the Core Competencies with the state TQRIS. The eight included content areas of the Core Competencies are aligned well with standard curricular areas in early childhood education. These curricular areas include child growth and development, curriculum and learning environment, measurement of child progress, families and community partnerships, health, safety, and nutrition, interactions, program planning and development, and professional development and leadership. These areas will meet the diverse professional development needs of teachers and caregivers of young children. A professional registry for tracking the education and training qualifications of early care and education professionals, MERIT, is one of the first of its kind in the nation. All employees in licensed child care facilities will complete background checks through MERIT, which will save time and expense and increase efficiency. This system will also prove invaluable in ensuring that state requirements for individuals and facilities are met, career lattice information, and connections with the TQRIS data system. Ultimately, the Core Competencies will promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes by uniting agencies, programs, and childcare providers. This criterion was fully met. (b) The State Plan provides a common, statewide progression comprised of 15 levels and five relevant education benchmarks that are appropriately associated with degrees and training. Incentive awards are delineated in the State Plan that correspond with the Career Lattice, with awards ranging from \$150 for Career Lattice 2 to \$500 for level 15. These awards may prove highly motivating for professionals as they progress through the career tiers. The state registry will be responsible for the career lattice in 2012, enabling MERIT to assign a professional level that conveniently and accurately verifies training and education. This criterion was partially met. (c) The State Plan offers very specific goals, targets and a timeline for important and timely professional development opportunities and innovations. These opportunities and innovations include integration of the core competencies into state training and higher education, integrating the Career Lattice into MERIT, partnering with higher education, a data registry system translated into multiple languages, expanded coaching and high quality training, and outreach and engagement to the public, thereby increasing awareness and support. Documentation in the form of a letter indicates that the Frontiers of Innovation (FOI) program at Harvard University is extremely supportive of this career lattice and progression of professional development and enthusiastic about partnering with the Washington State Plan. In summary, this criterion is well delineated and exceptionally well met, and has earned full credit.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	40	38

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

- (a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;
- (c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide

implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

(E) (1) (a) WaKids provides an excellent basis for receiving a high score on this criterion. Based upon the provided information and documentation, WaKids is a comprehensive and unique program that is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Thrive by Five Washington. It has already been piloted and evaluated with 3,000 kindergarten children. As a result of the successful implementation, in 2011-2012, 11,000 kindergarten children will participate in WaKids. This rise in numbers is evidence of the effectiveness of the program. WaKids is a process that involves the whole child and the family, and not simply an evaluative tool. A table clearly and in detail illustrates the WaKIDS Development Benchmarks Domains and the corresponding sub-Domains from the Washington Early Learning and Development Benchmarks. Teaching Strategies GOLD is the WaKids assessment tool, and it is also aligned with Washington's Early Learning Benchmarks (guidelines) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness. (b) GOLD is a valid and reliable tool, as determined by an August, 2011 technical report. GOLD is appropriate for the target population of infants and children, ages birth through kindergarten. The University of Washington conducted a research study to inform and evaluate the WaKids project using seven information-gathering tools: Initial teacher questionnaires, Whole child assessments, Parent questionnaires, Teacher questionnaires, Early learning focus groups, Provider questionnaires, and Parent interviews. This comprehensive approach to garnering data about the WaKids process and the GOLD assessment tool provided valuable information for scaling WaKids statewide. The results produced improvements in the WaKids system such as a continuance of family connections and home visits, the statewide use of GOLD, support of early learning collaboration from grades K-12 through shared training, and a bias and sensitivity review. (c) WaKIDS is now administered to 15 percent of teachers and 14 percent of children. By 2014-2015, the WaKids program will be administered to 100 percent of the teachers and 100 percent of the children. This ambitious, yet achievable, goal will be realized by training kindergarten teachers, creating WaKIDS trainers, increasing public awareness, and training early learning professionals. Clearly delineated targets, goals, and a timeline are provided in a detailed table form. (d) For each year of the RTT grant, program data will be consistently reported in the Statewide Longitudinal Data System to OSPI and SLDS, as delineated on the table. (e) Both public (state and federal) and private support enables the WaKIDS to continue and expand. The RTT grant will supply about 30 percent of the funding which is allocated for Teacher Training; the majority of the funding is from DEL (federally funded), State funding, and private funding. In summary, the State Plan provides thorough and highly convincing evidence of understanding children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. Updating is now underway on the Benchmarks to include grades K-3. However, since this system is not yet fully implemented, it was not scored at full credit.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	251

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)

(a) The State Plan indicates that a licensing and inspection system is in place that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for one or more unrelated children in a provider setting. (b) The State Plan will include a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System for all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs. An EBT program, managed by DEL, will conveniently and accurately monitor attendance data. MERIT, the statewide data collection agency, will track quality improvement progress for programs using the tiered system. Missing from this criterion is a clear and specific delineation of each of the tiers or levels involved in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--</p> <p>(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or</p> <p>(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.</p>		
Comments on (P)(3)		
<p>(b) The State Plan has earned full credit (40 points scored out of a possible 40 points) on selection criterion (E)(1), and has therefore fully met Competitive Preference Priority 3.</p>		

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.</p> <p>The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.</p>	
Comments on Absolute Priority	
<p>The State of Washington's plan fully addresses each of the criteria in the Absolute Priority. It clearly demonstrates how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs. The Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) is applied throughout the grant to teacher training and programmatic improvements. High needs populations of children and families are given special attention throughout the State Plan. The Plan describes existing funding that is already in place and ambitious, yet attainable, goals for using additional funding to revise, expand, and innovate to further improve management, data collection, and service to children of poverty or other high needs areas. The Kindergarten entry section is a strength of this State Plan, and the WaKIDS process, including the GOLD assessment, are comprehensive and will serve as a model for other states.</p>	



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # WA-5035

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/15/2011 - 7:02 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 20. Includes sub-points (a) through (d) describing criteria for financial investment, participation numbers, legislation, and system quality.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The state of Washington (WA) has demonstrated a great commitment to early learning and development as evidenced by their past accomplishments, including the following: •WA has made a financial investment in early learning and development which increased from \$395,677,925 in 2007 to \$547,127,938 in 2011. •The combined efforts of all funding sources in WA serve approximately sixty-two percent (62%) of their High Need children and the state has High Quality plans to increase this percentage. •WA has increased the number of High Needs children being served in every program in the state and even in a recession, has added three hundred sixty seven (367) children to its signature program Early Childhood Education and Assistance (ECEAP). •WA has developed Early Learning Standards for state wide use. •WA has enacted a cabinet level department called the Department of Early Learning. The Director of the department reports directly to the Governor. •The Governor has promoted Early Learning and Development programs in her public statements and is supporting Early Learning and Development programs. •WA has developed, field tested and is using a Kindergarten Assessment which measures the essential domains of school readiness[WaKids]. •The state spent one million dollars (\$1,000,000) of public and private funds to develop WaKids. •WA has developed and field tested a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and is currently preparing to adjust the system and bring it into statewide use. •The state has Early Learning and Development standards. •The state has twenty (20) postsecondary institutions which issued Early Learning and Development credentials last year and their programs are aligned with the state Workforce Knowledge and Competency framework. •In all its work, the state continues to include and support appropriate family engagement practices. •The state not only increased the number of slots for High Needs children but has also increased the budget per slot 10% in order to ensure quality. In summary, as can be seen from the evidence presented WA in the past has had significant financial, governmental, and local commitment to early learning and development. WA also has also done a great deal of work in developing the components of a high quality early learning and development system. For these reasons WA scores 20 in the area of past commitment to early learning and development.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	18

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

A (2) The state of Washington (WA) has developed and articulated a credible rationale for its Early Learning and Development reform agenda as evidenced by the following: •WA has developed a High Quality Plan which clearly outlines its' reform agenda for the next five years. The plan sets 35 ambitious yet clearly achievable goals for improving program quality and improving outcomes for High Needs children. For example, the plan calls for streamlining the eligibility for families enrolled in the state program (ECEAP), Head Start and Early Head Start which would result in continuity of care. The breaks in continuous progress for children have been a problem in the past and would be resolved by a change in the eligibility determination process. •A second example is that the plan proposes to increase the Home Visiting program for at-risk families. The purpose is to enhance parenting and promote optimal child growth. WA is already working on a proposal to the federal Department of Health and Human Services to fund increased Home Visiting services and has been given strong encouragement that the proposal will be accepted. A third example from the plan is that it requires the WA Quality Rating and Improvement System field testing be completed and used state wide. Clear actions required to do this and those responsible to do it are included in the plan for all objectives. •The state chose focused investment areas which will result in benefits for High Needs children. The only apparent omission is addressing the unique needs of different cultural groups in the state. It gives clear and specific rationales for its choice of criteria selected in the Focused Investment areas, as follows: •WA chose C-1 because its Early Learning Bench Marks are currently being revised and its Kindergarten Assessment and TQRIS are close to full implementation. There is an opportunity to integrate common learning standards across all services and systems. •WA chose C-4 because "Family engagement is a common thread and priority across the system. WA has recently adopted family engagement TQRIS Program Standards that integrate with the Strengthening Families Framework. As TQRIS and other system components are fully implemented, the timing is right to integrate and strengthen family engagement across programs and services. As TQRIS participants, WA's Head Start/ECEAP programs are ideally positioned to be leaders in family engagement, sharing training and resources with other TQRIS child care programs." •The state chose D-1 because "WA has completed statewide core competencies, a career lattice and professional registry. Fully implementing and integrating these professional development components with TQRIS is critical to support successful expansion of TQRIS and quality improvement goals." •WA chose E-1 because "WA has recently completed first phase implementation, testing and evaluation of an innovative K (kindergarten) assessment process: WaKIDS. WaKIDS is ready to be scaled and is critically needed to inform parents, teacher and state leaders about school readiness rates." •WA has a high quality plan as previously stated, which will result in providing more access to High Quality programs for High Needs children. Likewise, the state has a strategic plan which will result in achieving its goals. Selection of those Focused Investment areas is part of the plan and they are ambitious yet achievable because WA has already been involved in pilot projects testing best methods in all of those areas. As a result, the pilots have provided information to now engage state wide in these efforts. Consequently, this item is scored as a High-quality response and given 18 of the available 20 points.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	10

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

- (a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

WA state agencies are committed to support and participate in the WA State Early Learning plan as verified by: •Signatures on MOUS from the authorized representatives of the Department of Social and Health Services, Public Instruction and the Department of Health. •The MOUS each contain assurances that the state agency understands and agrees to its responsibilities. They also contain a delineation of the state agency and lead agency responsibilities; an outline of joint responsibilities and explanation of recourse if the state agency fails to comply. Also included is a scope of work for each participating agency which supports the WA state Early Learning plan. This structure and commitment of the state agencies to a specific work plan should result in a productive work environment. The importance of the fact that the state of WA has established a cabinet level Department of Early Learning reporting to the Governor cannot be overstated. •The state has an Early Learning Advisory Council which includes members from state agencies, Governor appointees including the Head Start Collaboration Office Director, a representative from Head Start, or Early Head Start, or Migrant/Seasonal Head Start, or Tribal Head Start, a representative of a local education agency and an IDEA representative. This body makes recommendations for implementing the state's Early Learning Plan. However, the Department of Early Learning has primary responsibility for implementing the state's Early Learning Plan. This is a reasonable structure which will include the ideas of participating programs as the program improvements are carried out. •The state has a great deal of support from many segments of the community. This is verified by the fact that included in the application are sixty eight (68) letters supporting WA efforts in continuing to implement the Early Learning plan. The letters are from government officials, philanthropy and business leaders, higher educators, K-12 school systems, advisory organizations, community partners and Early Learning programs. Taken as a whole the letters show a very solid statewide support for the WA plan. In summary, the state of Washington has a very strong High Quality plan to engage state agencies and program providers in moving the state plan forward. WA has the support of many segments of the community as evidenced in the many detailed letters of support included in their application. For these reasons the state is scored as a substantially implemented high quality response and given 10 points.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	14

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

A (4) The state gives a clear explanation about how existing funds will be used to support Early Learning and Development. Those funds described include: •DEL will provide all personnel and related expenses needed to implement the grant. •CCDF funds will be reallocated to support this effort. •DEL will reduce its administrative cost by 20%. •The WA Office of the Superintendent of Schools will set aside funds sufficient to administer the WA Kindergarten Assessment (WaKIDS). WA state provides a viable and clear explanation of how it will use funds from this grant to move forward on implementing its Early Learning plan. WA describes how it has isolated four elements of the plan for assistance from this grant. They are: •TQRIS expansion. •Developing TQRIS infrastructure. •Expanding WaKIDS. •Providing professional development incentives. The total budget for these efforts is \$151,381,972, of which the \$60,000,000 grant fund would comprise 40%. The state does have an excellent plan to sustain the work done in the specified areas under this grant. WA proposes to sustain the gains by reducing costs of administering the system. These cost reductions will take place as part of the grant activity. This is clearly a reasonable and attainable outcome. Also, it is proposed to give professional development incentives by recognizing credentials instead of wage supplements. This is a good alternative that will assist staff to be recognized for their educational attainments and it will also reduce costs. However, it may not encourage staff to attain higher credentials in the way that a wage supplement would. Likewise WA will be providing all ongoing personnel costs and using grant funds for primarily one-time costs. Use of these grant funds will accelerate the implementation of the four areas mentioned above. WA also commits to move funds from the State Lottery to sustain the work begun as part of this grant. The WA budget proposal is a High Quality plan. It gives clear explanations of how grant funds will be used to accomplish required tasks. It makes it very clear that WA is contributing 60% of the funds required to complete the outlined tasks while the 40% would be from grant funds. Finally it gives an excellent explanation of how gains made with grant funds will be maintained. The one small flaw seen in all this is that giving recognition instead of wage supplements to staff for attaining higher education may not be as encouraging to them as if they were getting additional salary for educational attainment. Consequently, this item is scored as High Quality and given 14 points.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	8

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;

(5) Health promotion practices; and

(6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

B1 WA has developed and tested a TQRIS system and has a High Quality plan in place to revise its TQRIS and implement it statewide. It is an excellent system based on well thought out procedures and principles as evidenced in the following elements: •It has a research based staff coaching model to improve staff/child interactions. •It is aligned with the state wide Early Learning and Development benchmarks. •Its tiered quality levels align with Head Start and ECEAP standards and thus support High Need children being enrolled in High Quality programs. •It measures impact on individual children to ensure that quality improvements affect them. •It includes incentives for providers to achieve higher ratings and maintain them. •It assesses health and promotes good health practices; it includes effective data practices, and family engagement strategies. It is a comprehensive assessment of all program systems, Standards in the TQRIS clearly differentiate program quality levels and are measurable. The system of measurement is complete and has addressed the most important areas affecting program quality. It is a very powerful use of the assessment to share the results with parents. Some examples of content from the TQRIS are: •Developmental screening is done within 90 days of enrollment and results are shared with parents. •Assessment of staff qualifications range from 25% which have the CDA or a one year certificate which scores one point to 25% have B.A. or higher degree in ECE which scores three points. WA has linked state licensing to the TQRIS by including all licensed programs in tier one of the assessment. The state is moving to provide incentives for licensed centers to move up to higher levels of quality by providing enhanced reimbursement as they move up in quality levels. This is a very good way to encourage programs to participate and should pay high dividends in having programs anxious to move up on the rating scale and thus provide higher quality programs. It is anticipated that revisions and implementation will be accomplished by 2013. The result will be that more High Need children will be served in High Quality programs. The one area that seemed not to be addressed was that of how special programs and their unique requirements might be evaluated. For example, a program like Migrant/Seasonal Head Start has different periodicity requirement for child assessments than the rest of Head Start programs. So that a TQRIS which requires child assessment within 90 days might rate a program high when for a Migrant/Seasonal program 90 days is too long to wait for a child assessment. To be effective the child assessment in Migrant/Seasonal programs must be completed within sixty (60) or even thirty (30) days since migrant children move and are sometimes in the program a very short time. In summary, the WA TQRIS is based on sound principles and has been field tested and it has a tiered program standards that are comprehensive, measurable and differentiate program quality levels and it is linked to the state licensing system. The only omission apparent is that there is no mention of how programs with unique program standards will be accommodated in the system. For these reasons the score is deemed a partially implemented high quality response and is awarded 8 points.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	12

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

(1) State-funded preschool programs;

(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;

(3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;

(4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and

(5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

B 2 WA has been proactive and has implemented policies designed to have all publicly funded programs in the TQRIS system. The policies and practices implemented have been very effective. WA has generated the political support and the community awareness needed to encourage programs to participate in the TQRIS. This has been done through the following actions: •All licensed programs in the state are by law part of level one of the system. •TQRIS recognizes and gives credit for Head Start required assessments such as CLASS rather than having programs do a separate assessment. This is an excellent idea and moves the state closer to having a cooperative assessment of Head Start programs done by the state and federal agencies. •The state preschool program ECEAP follows Head Start guidelines and so no additional assessments are required for this program. •Training Hubs will be established and available to programs participating in TQRIS. This should be a great asset to the programs as it is often difficult for smaller programs to get the high quality training needed for their staff. Establishment of the training Hubs will thus encourage programs to participate. •WA has linked state licensing to the TQRIS by including all licensed programs in tier one of the assessment. The state is moving to provide incentives for licensed centers to move up to higher levels of quality by providing enhanced reimbursement as they move up in quality levels. This is an excellent way to encourage programs to participate since additional quality will result in additional reimbursement. It is anticipated that this will be accomplished by 2013. The result will be that more High Need children will be served in High Quality programs. WA has High Quality plans to increase the number of High Quality programs and to enroll more High Needs children in them. These efforts include: •WA provides financial awards for more training as programs increase to higher rating levels. •Programs that increase to higher levels may receive higher reimbursements in the future. •The state will consider legislation in 2012 to extend family eligibility for working families and thus support their being involved in High Quality Care. This is a good example of the tremendous political support for Early Learning Programs in the state of Washington and another example of what will make their work on this grant so effective. The results of TQRIS ratings will be published so that parents are able to make informed decisions about which programs are highest quality and thus enroll their children there. This is an important factor as parents in the end the best arbiters of quality for their children. The state of WA has presented a High Quality plan to have all publicly funded programs participate in the TQRIS system. They have put forth a plan to help more families afford high quality care by extending the eligibility period for working families and thus assist them to maintain high quality care. WA has also outlined and clearly explained a phase in process which results in the year 2015 having substantial numbers of programs of all types in higher levels of the TQRIS rating system. Their projections are reasonable and the explanations of how to achieve them complete and very achievable. For these reasons the partially implemented high quality category and is given 12 points.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	12
<p>The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--</p> <p>(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and</p> <p>(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

B 3 WA has chosen reliable monitoring tools, assured rater reliability and developed an appropriate rating frequency. This is verified by the following: •WA uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System developed by Head Start [CLASS] as well as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R); the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R), the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised (FCCERS-R), and the Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Toddler CLASS). These are all assessments that have been used for many years and have proven reliable. •Rating is done on one third of the classrooms every three years unless some factor such as director change or high staff turn-over should dictate a more frequent assessment. •Rater reliability for one factor on the class document was mean agreement 90%, standard deviation .06 and range from 88% to 100%. For other rating factors, the level of agreement was very similar. All of the data cited indicate a high degree of rater agreement. This is important when selecting an assessment instrument. •For the ERS document mean agreement was 92% the standard deviation was .025 and the range was 87% to 99%. Again there is a high degree of rater agreement which indicates that the rating instrument is clear and reviewers generally score the same factor in the same way. The state of Washington has a High Quality plan to provide extensive quality rating and licensing information to parents. This is a great asset to parent and to the community and gives parents another tool to guide their children's education and development. •WA did a parent survey in 2008 and determined some areas of improvement wanted by the parents. The state has consistently considered the needs and wishes of parents in their planning and program development. This is a very powerful part of their system •WA is working with the Gates Foundation to develop a brand and recognition for TQRIS so parents will recognize and trust it. This is another wonderful idea to assist parents to make the best

choices for their children. Part of the plan is to translate parent materials into Russian, Somalia, Spanish and Vietnamese. This is a good thing in that there are some mono-lingual parents who will be assisted to understand the system better and to make better choices for their children. In summary WA has chosen reliable rating instruments and processes and has a High Quality plan to provide program rating information to parents. Consequently it is scored in the partially implemented high quality range and given 12 points.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	16

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation, meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

B 4 WA has effective policies which provide incentives for early learning programs to improve. For example, the state provides quality improvement awards which are awards of funding to improve the programs facility. This is an excellent way to get programs to want to participate and increase the quality of their program. Likewise, once programs reach higher levels in the system scholarships and grants are provided for staff to continue their professional development. This is very important as staff in private programs particularly may not have access to continuing professional development. WA provides a series of trainings for all statewide staff which explain state standards and generally orient programs and staff to what is required to increase program quality. WA encourages its Head Start and ECEAP programs with an annual financial incentive to become training hubs for other programs. This is an excellent strategy as Head Start programs have very high standards which they must meet and are staffed with extremely knowledgeable employees. WA has also has promoted legislation to extend the eligibility of working families for child care subsidies. This in itself will ensure that families have more access to high quality programs. In addition the state has implemented several other important policies, including: The state not only increased the number of slots for High Needs children but has also increased the budget per slot 19% in order to ensure quality. The fact that the state has a policy of increasing not just the number of child slots, but also the cost per slot is a significant indicator of emphasis on quality. An entity that would increase only numbers of children served and not attend to the cost providing high quality services would not increase the cost per slot. WA has increased the number of High Needs children being served in every program in the state and even in a recession, has added three hundred sixty seven (367) children to its signature program (ECEAP). This is an extraordinary example of the political will of the state of WA to serve children in its high quality ECEAP programs. These programs are high quality because they must meet the same standards as Head Start programs meet and these are very high quality. WA has developed ambitious yet achievable goals for increasing the number of High Quality programs and the number of High Need children enrolled in them. The examples which follow underscore ways in which WA proposes to build on its already firm foundation of program development. The fact that WA has added funding for high needs children in a budget deficit is exemplary and another example that the state has the political will to serve high needs children. WA has developed a High Quality Plan which clearly outlines its reform agenda for the next five years. The plan sets 35 ambitious yet clearly achievable goals for improving program quality and improving outcomes for High Needs children. For example, the plan calls for streamlining the eligibility for families enrolled in the state program (ECEAP), Head Start and Early Head Start which would result in continuity of care. The breaks in continuous progress for children have been a problem in the past and would be resolved by a change in the eligibility determination process. This would be a very great benefit to Children with high needs as they would experience more continuity and articulation of programs. A second example is that the plan proposes to increase the Home Visiting program for at-risk families. The purpose is to enhance parenting and promote optimal child growth. WA is already working on a proposal to HHS to fund increased Home Visiting services and has been given strong encouragement that the proposal will be accepted. The home visiting program as described is a very strong and rich asset for parents to help them understand and practice promoting optimal growth in their children. Increasing this program would be a significant benefit to more Children with High Needs. A third example from the plan is that it requires the WA Quality Rating and Improvement System field testing be completed and used state wide. Clear actions required to do this and those responsible to do it are included in the plan for all objectives. When implemented state wide this system will provide a catalyst for many programs to increase their quality and thus more access for Children of High Needs to these programs. Another example is that WA has a requirement in the TQRIS that programs must provide support for working families in terms of full day programs, transportation, meals and the like in order to achieve higher quality ratings. The state uses the Strengthening families framework as the basis of its family assistance assessment on the TQRIS. This is an

excellent policy since programs will be attempting to reach higher levels on the TQRIS for at least one reason, to receive higher reimbursements, and will thus improve their services to working families and provide a higher quality environment for high needs children. As can be seen WA has policies and practices which support the continuous development of Early Learning Programs. Also WA has strong supports for working families. And finally WA has a high quality plan for achieving the ambitious targets of increasing the programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS and the number of High Needs Children enrolled in them. Consequently, the score is in the partially implemented high quality category and given 16 points.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

B 5 WA has been working to validate the effectiveness of its TQRIS for some time now and has had research studies done by Mathematica Policy Research [2009] which used a control and treatment group research design. The study did determine that changes in program quality were accurately assessed by using the TQRIS measures. Unfortunately the study did not determine whether the TQRIS levels are related to children learning. However, WA has a High Quality Plan to continue to evaluate its TQRIS by contracting with the University of Washington. In this study a reliable research format will be used and will assess the correlation between the TQRIS Ratings and Children's learning and development. In all of this WA has demonstrated that it is interested and capable of ensuring that the TQRIS levels of quality do correlate to increased progress and school readiness. WA has used appropriate research methods to validate that the TQRIS levels do reflect quality levels. When its long term research plan is completed it is anticipated that the link between higher levels on the TQRIS and child progress will be well established. Because WA has not yet established the link between its TQRIS levels and child learning and development, but has a plan to do so this item is scored in the medium quality range and given 12 points.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E)

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows.

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	28

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

- (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;
- (c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and
- (d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

WA has developed a set of learning standards appropriate for all preschool age groups and that cover all domains and is culturally and linguistically appropriate. For example, there is a section on dual language learners which provides accurate and clear information on second language acquisition. In each of the domains the standards give a clear explanation of what a child should know and be able to do in the age groups of birth to 18 months, 18 to 36 months, 36 to 60 months, and 60 months to Kindergarten entry. The standards at Kindergarten entry are very clear about what K children should be able to do. Finally, the standards have very good teaching strategies designed to help develop desired learning and abilities in children. WA has done an excellent job of aligning its standards to the states K-3 standards in all domains. For example, in the Domain of Cognition and General Knowledge, the sub domain in the standards is "children compare, contrast, explain and evaluate experiences, tasks and events." The corresponding K-3 standard in mathematics is "analyze information, verify results." The alignment document continues in this way to make a clear connection and articulation from the preschool standard to the K-12 standards. It is clear, accurate, appropriate and well done. WA has provided a great deal of support to promote understanding of its Early Learning and Development Standards among the preschool programs in the state. One way this is done is that the standards have been sent to all Early Learning and Development programs across the state and WA provides state wide training sessions on the standards. When TQRIS is revised, training on the standards will be revised. The standards are also advertised to parents through mailings by the Department of Health and the IDEA part C program. The approach to publicize and having programs use the standards is excellent. WA presents written evidence that the Early Learning standards are incorporated into the workforce knowledge competency framework. Also, a review of WA TQRIS verifies incorporation of the standards. Finally, the standards were developed in alignment with the Head Start Performance Standards and the state ECEAP program. The ECEAP requires program sponsors to select curriculum which are aligned with the standards. In addition, the revised TQRIS will require all programs to select curriculum aligned with the standards in order to advance to higher levels. WA has done an amazingly good job of developing, publicizing and aligning its Early Learning Standards. The state is also in the process of updating the standards and will maintain the "academic rigor" but will make them more user-friendly. The current status of the standards, however, is excellent and so the item is scored in the Substantially Implemented High Quality range and given 28 of the 30 possible points.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	24

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

WA has developed a set of family engagement standards which do support the ability of families to support their children's education and development. However, there is no evidence given that the standards are culturally or linguistically appropriate for the families served. WA has adopted the "Strengthening Families" model which uses "Five Protective Factors" which are actually designed to reduce child abuse. However, these factors do teach parents how to promote optimal growth and development in their children. Consequently, it is an excellent model to use. However, there is no evidence shown that there is any accommodation or adjustment in its uses with various cultural or linguistic groups and this is a flaw in the process. WA has done an excellent job of including family engagement activities in its TQRIS document. However, once again the documents do not provide evidence of cultural and/or linguistic appropriateness in family engagement areas. This is an issue which should be rectified in the system. WA has done an outstanding job of publicizing the need and importance of family engagement and has leveraged other sources to support family engagement and involvement. This is indicated by the following: •At level two of the TQRIS, a child care center director or family home licensee must attend a six hour training class called "Strengthening Families." It is estimated that this will ensure that 60% of all programs will have completed the training by 2015. •In 2010/2011, 22 training sessions on Strengthening Families were provided across the state. •The WA MERIT system captures all training in every participant's record and will record the percentages of Early Childhood Educators who complete the Strengthening Families training. •Head Start and ECEAP programs have many experts in the area of family engagement. WA TQRIS provides incentive awards for these programs to become training hubs and to train others in appropriate family engagement strategies. •WA has applied for a grant to increase its home visiting program. •The WA state Thrive by Five, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and statewide partners have engaged in a campaign to use people that the parents trust to assist them in developing parenting skills. •The WA Reach Out and Read partners with medical providers who "prescribe" books and encourage parents to read to their children. •As part of the WaKids Kindergarten Assessment, parents are included with teachers in planning for their child's needs and strengths. In general, WA has a very powerful approach to family engagement and has mechanics in place to encourage programs to involve families. The state has also done an excellent job of leveraging other existing resources to support family engagement. However, the cultural and linguistic components are lacking and must be included in order for the family engagement program to be totally effective. Consequently, this item is scored in the Partially Implemented High Quality range and given 24 of the available 30 points.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	40

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to—

- (a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;
- (b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and
- (c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (b)(1)

WA has developed an exemplary Workforce Knowledge and competency Framework. The framework includes eight content areas with five levels in each, describing what staff should understand and be able to do. For example, in content area one dealing with child growth and development, the first item is "recognize that development occurs in a continuum" while the last item in level five is "communicate major theories...relevant to child growth and development to families in a way that is meaningful." The entire document is well laid out, clear and appropriate. Evidence is also presented that it is aligned with the TQRIS and NAEYC professional standards. WA has developed a statewide progression of credentials and degrees called the Career Lattice, which is effective. The Career Lattice is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and this encourages acquisition of knowledge and abilities encompassed in the framework. It provides appropriately for staff to get credit for training classes as well as formal education and thus move up the lattice. WA also has a plan to embed the career lattice into its state professional developmental registry so that there will be a record of an individual's placement on the career lattice. This is an excellent system which WA has developed and promises to improve as adjustments are made. WA has done an excellent job of engaging postsecondary institutions and other providers in aligning their programs to the Knowledge and Competency Framework. This is clearly evident by the fact that their community college system provides education for early childhood professions and the curricula are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency framework. The state has 20 such postsecondary institutions which issued Early Learning and Development credentials last year. Also a program

called the WA Early Care and Education Apprentice Program is sponsored by the WA Department of Labor and Industries. This program provides on-the job training at selected sites. The training program is aligned with and designed to help students in acquiring the knowledge and abilities included in the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The state of Washington has done an exemplary job developing, aligning and publicizing its Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. It is continuing to increase the numbers of staff with higher levels of credentials and has High Quality plans to increase these numbers in the future. Consequently, it is scored in the Substantially Completed, High Quality range and given 40 points.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	40	32

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

- (a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;
- (c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;
- (d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and
- (e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

WA has an excellent Kindergarten Assessment which is aligned with the state early learning standards and covers all developmental domains (WaKids). The assessment was piloted in 2009/2010 with 3,000 children while in 2011/2012, 11,000 incoming Kindergarten children have been assessed using it. The tool is well designed as it was developed by a research team that took great care to align it with the state's early learning guidelines as well as the Essential Domains of School Readiness. In addition, the assessment has a family connection component which encourages teachers to meet families before the school year begins. The WaKids assessment has been validated by professional researchers as valid, reliable and appropriate. The research presented in the application verifies that the WaKids assessment is effective and free of bias of any kind. The effectiveness of the instrument has been well validated and the evidence presented is convincing. In addition, WA plans to have an ongoing evaluation of the WaKids assessment and this will ensure that it is kept current. This is a very positive feature of the WA plan. WA has a High Quality plan to implement the WaKids state wide by 2014/2015. This is a reasonable and believable goal as WA has been working with this assessment since 2009. It has been piloted and researched and is being gradually introduced for use in more schools, from 3,000 children in 2010/2011 to 11,000 in 2011/2012. This is excellent progress and verifies the intention and ability of the state to take the system statewide. This phase-in system is also quite effective in having leaders understand and accept that the WaKids is a very useful instrument. The state has a High Quality plan to report WaKids data on the State Longitudinal Data System beginning in 2011. The plan also calls for the data to be formally reported to the state legislature. This is an excellent idea as Early Learning currently enjoys great political support in WA and keeping the legislature involved and positive is important. WA has a firm grasp of what will be required to continue to finance WaKids. The funds from this grant will be used mainly for one-time costs designed to accelerate the expansion of WaKids by supporting teacher training on the tool. Ongoing costs will be paid with private funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation and public funds from the state and the WA Thrive by Five. This is an excellent plan which should result in statewide use of this valuable assessment tool. The state has done a great job of developing, field testing and preparing to bring the WaKids to full scale use. They have done appropriate tests, used appropriate research methods to validate the instrument and have High Quality plans to implement the assessment state wide. Therefore, this item is scored as partially implemented and given 32 points.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	246

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)

WA has linked state licensing to the TQRIS by including all licensed programs in tier one of the assessment. The state is moving to provide incentives for licensed centers to move up to higher levels of quality by providing enhanced reimbursement as they move up in quality levels. It is anticipated that this will be accomplished by 2013. The result will be that more High Need children will be served in High Quality programs. The TQRIS is based on the following elements: •It has a research based staff coaching model to improve staff/child interactions. •It is aligned with the state wide Early Learning and Development benchmarks. •Its tiered quality levels align with Head Start and ECEAP standards and thus support High Need children being enrolled in High Quality programs. •It measures impact on individual children to ensure that quality improvements affect them. •It includes incentives for providers to achieve higher ratings and maintain them. •It assesses health and promotes good health practices; it includes effective data practices and family engagement strategies. It is a comprehensive assessment of all program systems. Standards in the TQRIS differentiate program quality levels and are measurable. Some examples are: •Developmental screening is done within 90 days of enrollment and results are shared with parents. •Assessment of staff qualifications range from 25% which have the CDA or a one year certificate which scores one point to 25% have B.A. or higher degree in ECE which scores three points. Washington has an exemplary TQRIS and licensing process. The state makes great effort to encourage programs to reach higher levels of the TQRIS. Current licensing regulations require all programs except a few exempt programs to be licensed. Consequently, this item is scored as fully implemented and given a score of 10.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

The state earned a score of more than 70% on item E1, and so it met (P)(3)(b).

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Comments on Absolute Priority

WA has achieved the absolute priority for promoting school readiness for children with High Needs for the following reasons: •It has developed and is improving a TQRIS system which incorporates all licensed centers and provides training and incentives for programs to increase to higher levels of quality. •It has made significant financial investments in Early Learning programs and intends to continue making such investments. •It has developed and is using a Kindergarten assessment and intends to continue refining it. •It has developed Workforce Knowledge and Competency Standards and its schools of higher education align their curricula to the standards. •It has Developed a set of Early Learning and Development Standards •It has developed a set of family engagement standards. •It has articulated its standards so that they work together and are compatible.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # WA-5035

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/16/2011 - 12:02 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	20
<p>The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--</p> <p>(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The State has a demonstrated past commitment to building a strong early childhood program through fiscal allocations, legislative actions, and early childhood practices. Over the past five years State allocations for early childhood increased 30% (\$395-\$517 million) and there was a significant increase between 2010 and 2011. This indicates Washington's strong support for early learning and development programs, especially in these economic times when funds are being cut. This financial support correlates with the increased number of children with high needs participating in early learning programs; for example, 40% of the children from African American, American Indian, Native Alaskan, and Latino families are now being served. One major area of increase were children under Working Connections Child Care (CCDF funds); from a little over 8,000 in 2007 to a little over 37,000 in 2011. Governor Gregoire initiated a comprehensive review of the state education system from birth through college in 2006 which resulted in recommendations for educational reform. One result was the formation of a cabinet level agency overseeing all State early learning programs. This was the Department of Early Learning (DEL). From this initial system review, multiple initiatives have followed. Some of these include:

- Creation of state early learning advisory council (ELAC)
- State early learning plan which is comprehensive in that it addresses multiple areas
- Early Learning Partnership (ELP) in 2009 which was a partnership with DEL, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five (a partnership for leveraging private and public funds for common goals)
- Apple Health for kids: health care for all children; 39% of all children are now enrolled
- Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills (WaKIDS): new State kindergarten entry assessment. It will be fully implemented in all state funded full day kindergartens by 2012-2013.
- Full day kindergarten is being phased in, beginning with high poverty schools first. 22% of the children now being served in full day kindergarten. It will be fully implemented by 2017-2018
- In 2010 the Legislature mandated that all eligible preK children receive services as an entitlement by 2018 which will be a 300% increase in the number of children being served in prekindergarten. This action will prepare young children for kindergarten and ultimately greater school success.
- The State is also currently considering a universal prek program which will strengthen the kindergarten readiness initiative because children will be more competent when entering kindergarten.
- Home visiting services expanded 55% over the past five years
- Legislature required DEL to develop core competencies and career lattice for professionals in early

childhood. It is clear that the State of Washington has a strong focus on improving the outcomes for young children based on the actions of the Governor in creating a new cabinet level position which has resulted in a number of new initiatives. The initiatives are focused on improving kindergarten readiness for young children which will greatly impact future school success. The State is building on its current initiatives and practices with a plan to implement in full over the next 5-7 years. Their goal is to have a high quality early learning and development system which includes the following:

- The TQRIS was developed two years ago and the current plans are for it to be used across all programs by 2015. Part of this initiative is to encourage other programs such as Head Start and ECEAP (Early Childhood Education Assistance Program) to share their trainings with child care providers.
- As mentioned, the WaKIDS (Kindergarten entry assessment) plans to be implemented by 2013.
- The Early Learning and Development Standards were developed in 2005 with experts and are integrated with the TQRIS, professional development competencies and WaKIDS. It is currently under revision with a completion deadline of 2011; the revision will include linkage to K-12 system and more inclusion of cultural diversity. These standards have not been widely used but DEL plans to expand their use.
- Comprehensive Assessment Systems (CAS) are being used by all programs for continued funding. It is currently part of TQRIS and will be required in the higher rating levels to provide incentives for programs to do CAS if they are not doing so.
- Health promotion practices are currently being implemented through Apple Health with a goal for all children to be part of this system.
- Family engagement strategies are currently part of Head Start, ECEAP and WaKIDS (includes families as part of the assessment process). Plans are to expand HS/ECEAP practices to other community programs as part of TQRIS.
- Effective data practices are currently in place but are continuing to develop. For example, TQRIS and the Professional Registry (MERIT) will expand to track professionals' progress toward degrees and professional credentials, etc.; currently it tracks the different types of training activities. A major initiative is an IES grant awarded to the University of Washington to support development of a P-20 longitudinal data system which will launch in 2012. The State of Washington has many initiatives in place with target deadlines for full implementation and has financial support for expanding the programs. These initiatives form the foundation for a high quality early learning and development system that includes ELD standards, a comprehensive assessment system, health practices, family engagement, development of early educators, kindergarten entry assessment and effective data practices.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	18

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

Washington's philosophical approach for change is based on improving child outcomes. A pyramid figure visually represented the components and how they build together. Strong leadership is the foundation of their change process, then the aligning of systems for data, professional development and standards that will then inform services that are integrated and finally evaluated for successful child outcomes. This is a very logical framework for implementing change. The State Plan initiated by the Governor and directed by their legislature has goals that are congruent with the RTT-ELC expectations. They identified five broad goals with a total of 35 strategies to be implemented from 2011-2014 so they are just beginning to implement their plan. In developing the RTT-ELC proposal the State realized that in implementing their State plan there were areas that needed greater improvement. For one, high need children were not the initial focus of the plan so, one purpose of this proposal is to focus on these populations as well as to provide supports for professionals so that all programs across all of the early childhood areas are using common standards. Finally, the State plans to develop a system of accountability across all programs and to use the data for making meaningful decisions. Their overall goal is to 'strengthen, accelerate implementation and sustain their State wide early learning system' which correlates with the expectations of RTT-ELC. Washington's plan is to focus more intensely on children with high needs which strengthens the application. They propose to do this through five major goals related to expanding the TQRIS, expanding the early learning standards to all early childhood programs, integrating family engagement strategies across all early childhood programs, promoting high quality professional development, expanding the Kindergarten entry assessment to all children, families and programs. These are ambitious goals, however, they were realistic in their implementation plan by targeting specific strategies for each year with the expectation that by the end of the grant they will be well on their way to reaching 100% success within a few years after the grant period ends. Washington is planning to have 100% of the teachers trained to administer the WaKIDS inventory and all children entering kindergarten to be assessed. They have identified a clear plan for training all of the teachers which is ambitious but feasible given their plans for staggering training. Further they anticipate that 75% of the children entering kindergarten will be ready for success in 3 out of 4 domains. It is very reasonable to plan for children to be successful in 3 out of 4 domains given the variability in young children's development and learning. There are a couple of concerns about their plan. While they specifically mention that they are going to focus on high-needs

populations, it is not clear in their plan how they are targeting those particular children. There was no explanation about how the WaKIDS inventory is sensitive to children with disabilities as well as English learners as it was not explained in the proposal. Also, there was no mention of how the early learning standards address children with disabilities, English learners, homeless, etc. In the professional development goal, information about developing high quality training, career lattice and expansion of coaching was mentioned but not in the context of high-needs learners. Strategies specific to training professionals for working with high-needs learners is not included. Another concern is in the Family Engagement goal, which provides information about promoting family engagement statewide and increasing quality training but again, specific strategies for doing this were not included. Also, it was not clear how family members would be included in the development of the family engagement goal and strategies. It is understandable that they would be partners with professionals in developing this goal and strategies. Washington chose focus areas C1, C4, and D1 so that they will be able to accelerate the implementation of the State plans. These focus areas are all connected to the TQRIS plan and E1 expands on their current plans for kindergarten entry. It is a strength that Washington is focusing on ELD standards, family engagement, workforce competencies and kindergarten entry as they support the components of the TQRIS and are intensely connected with their plan for kindergarten entry. The Standards and family engagement will increase the quality of the workforce as well as child outcomes. These focus areas will assist Washington in achieving their goals. Washington has a strong rationale for early learning and development reform but strategies for implementing the Family Engagement goal were not included. Likewise, strategies for addressing children with high needs was also missing, as a result the State's response received a score of 18 out of a possible 20.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	9

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is the lead on the RTT-ELC project. They are already the agency responsible for the State plan that is currently being implemented so it is logical that they continue in this role. The Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) is the group that will oversee the State plan implementation activities and it is understandable that they do this since it is their role with the current State plan. Washington is strongly positioned to implement this plan with the support of a top state agency as well as an advisory group. Advisory groups provide guidance to projects and tie the outcomes and expectations to practical application which is a strength. MOUs between DEL and other agencies have been developed which specifically identify their roles and responsibilities for the different goals and strategies. Each MOU is individually developed including a detailed 'scope of work' and signed by the agency official. It is clear from the MOUs that each agency will have a very clear vision of their expectations and how they interface with the project activities. The Early Learning Partnership (ELP) is a collaborative group of three agencies, DEL, Office of Superintendent of Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington (THRIVE). THRIVE is a non-profit partnership combining private and public funds for long term development of the state early learning system. The ELP functions as a decision making body related to the State plan's progress. All dispute decisions are resolved in the Governor's office. ELAC also makes recommendations for implementation of the State plan as it has member representation from all state agencies, as well as governor appointees which include: Tribal Head Start representation, and migrant Head Start among others. Stakeholders have several ways of participating in the State plan including through the ELAC. Parents have other venues, such as, Parent Advisory Groups to DEL, ECEAP, and Part C of IDEA. While it appears there are multiple venues for stakeholder participation, it is still lacking in participation from other unrepresented groups. For example, based on the data shared, there is a small population of homeless children which is growing and it seems that representation from someone in that group would be warranted. Also, there is a large population of English learners and their representation would also be important. Overall, the letters of support (68 in total) represented many different stakeholders and groups throughout the State. However, letters of support from some of the high needs populations that were described in the data for the State were missing. There is one letter of support representing English learners (Refugee and Immigrant Family Center) and it appears that this is a local Seattle center, rather than a State-wide center. There were no letters from advocacy groups representing this population. Letters from families or professionals representing children with disabilities were also missing. There was a letter from the commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs but nothing from a representative of the homeless. While it might be hard to solicit support from all groups, they are the target for this proposal so it would seem that letters from constituent groups would be important. The alignment and coordination of early learning and development is fully implemented, so this criterion was scored in the high quality response range.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	14

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

The State will need over \$150 million to implement the project; 40% of the funds will be from RTT-ELC and the remaining 60% from the State, federal, local and private sources. DEL will repurpose CCDF funds to support the plan beginning in 2012. The majority of the RTT-ELC funds will be to expand the TQRIS, with some used for infrastructure, kindergarten readiness and then professional development initiatives. The funds for each of these activities are clearly described with many of the funds going to local programs. The State planned for no future state and federal funding increases during this time period given the current economic climate. Given the scope of the project and the allocation of the RTT-ELC funds, the budget is reasonable. The State is requesting the funds to accelerate the implementation of the State's plan and the funds will be necessary to do this. The State plans for sustainability by utilizing the majority of the RTT-ELC funds in the earlier years and gradually utilizing funds from other sources during the later years of the grant period. While this was discussed in the narrative, the Figure A12 does not support this notion. For example, a total of almost \$28 million will be needed in year one with about \$10.5 million coming from the RTT-ELCS funds, then by year 4 over \$47 million will be needed with almost \$20 million from the RTT-ELC grant funds. So while additional funds will be needed each year, the RTT-ELC funds also increase each year rather than decreasing. It is anticipated that the State will be able to sustain the project after the RTT-ELC funds end. For example, the State has a strong record of receiving funds from local and private corporations and organizations and are planning on this continued support. Likewise, the State agencies have made a commitment to allocate additional funds if needed to sustain the projects. For example, the Superintendent of Education will allocate funds from his assessment budget to support the kindergarten assessment process beginning in 2016. Several other sources of funding possibilities were included, such as requesting additional funds from the State Lottery. Other State agency allocations are being considered as possible sources for sustaining the project. The majority of the funds are going to be used for the TQRIS development and implementation and once developed, those funds will not be necessary. All of this leads to strong early learning and development support once the project funds are expended. Based on evidence provided, the State has a high quality plan and earns a score in the high quality response range.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	7

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

The TQRIS is based on five levels which build on each other; the first level requires the program to be fully licensed with approved certification; level two involves completion of training and documentation requirements (training includes online modules to facilitate participation); levels 3-5 are based on points earned for child outcomes, family engagement, professional development, and curriculum. This is a good system as the different levels build on each other and the first level is based on licensing requirements; this means that programs will be able to achieve at least one level and then make plans for moving up to another level. The assessments used are ERS, CLASS, surveys, and others. These assessments are reliable and valid and are used widely in the field so, they will support movement from one level to another. Technical assistance will be provided for programs on levels 1 & 2; coaching will be available for levels 3-5. Washington's TQRIS was previously named "Seeds for Success" and this program was piloted for two years with 60 programs. They found significant changes in several areas but the area of instructional supports did not indicate improvement. The State is currently making changes based on this pilot with a major focus on the area of instructional supports since the pilot indicated that the measures did not indicate changes in teachers teaching strategies. Some of these changes include addressing individual child quality through Child Focused measures; formative assessments aligned with WaKIDS; incentives and supports to achieve higher TQRIS ratings; and working to align TQRIS with all state systems, such as, WaKIDS, professional development, and data systems. These changes are congruent with the state plan for kindergarten readiness for young children with high needs. The current Early learning standards (ELS) are being revised and plans are for completion by 2011. The proposal indicates that the TQRIS is aligned with the Early

Learning Standards, however the plan for aligning the revised ELS to the TQRIS was not discussed in the proposal. There is evidence describing how the WaKIDS is aligned with TQRIS but not the ELS. The program requirements for Head Start, Early Head Start, Washington licensed child care and ECEAP programs are cross-walked with the TQRIS. One area that appears to be missing is the emphasis on High Needs Populations such as, children with disabilities, ELL, Native Alaskans, etc. which is a focus of the RTT-ELC proposal. This is a weakness. Also, the applicant describes the different components that are part of the TQRIS but there is little evidence of it. For example, Family Engagement strategies are described as based on National Family Principles which is a strength as the National Family Principles are based in research. However, it does not describe how they are aligned with the TQRIS or what they are. Professional development for teachers was mentioned but there was no description of how it will be done. The State TQRIS is based on a comprehensive assessment system which includes ongoing assessment and individual assessments. The ERS and CLASS assessments are being implemented with trained observers through the University of Washington; Child outcomes or Focal Child measures are planned by sampling children with disabilities but no plan discussed for other High Needs Populations. Health practices are missing from the TQRIS. The TQRIS addresses all of the program standards areas, except for health promotions. Health promotions is a very important area because it addresses basic care needs for young children, especially those from high needs areas. DEL will develop and implement tiered reimbursement for licensed centers and family homes in 2013. DEL is considering requesting policy to require all programs to achieve level 2 for subsidy reimbursement once TQRIS is fully implemented which is very good as it will enhance the quality of the programs. DEL is currently developing a system to monitor TQRIS ratings with an anticipated start date of July 2012. MERIT, a registry that tracks professional development activities for individuals will be part of the TQRIS system and by July 2012 all TQRIS program staff will be entered in the system. It is ambitious to have all staff entered but Washington has a solid plan for doing so. Washington's tiered quality standards were finalized in August 2011 with input from multiple sources. These standards include the areas of child outcomes, curriculum, learning, environment, interactions, professional development and family engagement. These standards reflect national standards and are measured using reliable and valid measures (ERS, CLASS, surveys). The levels are based on increasing levels of quality. For example, level two is based on professional development and levels 3-5 are based on points earned for child outcomes, family engagement, professional development, and curriculum. The TQRIS standards are aligned with the ELD standards. The TQRIS is linked to the State licensing system as all licensed programs with certification will be level one. Programs will move from level one to level two based on training they receive and then levels 3-5 based on a point system. The State TQRIS is based on a comprehensive assessment system which includes ongoing assessment and individual assessments. The ERS and CLASS assessments are being implemented with trained observers through the University of Washington; Child outcomes or Focal Child measures are planned by sampling children with disabilities but no plan is discussed for other High Needs Populations. Health practices are missing from the TQRIS. The TQRIS addresses all of the program standards areas, except for health promotions. Health promotions is a very important area because it addresses basic care needs for young children, especially those from high needs areas. The TQRIS is currently not fully implemented but there are strong and comprehensive plans that will enable full implementation.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	12

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by—

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories—

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

A clear plan for implementing TQRIS has been developed. Various supports have been targeted for programs to participate in the TQRIS, such as, free training, coaching, on-going evaluation of the program, and incentives for subsidy reimbursement. While these are incentives for programs to participate, plans for assisting families to afford higher quality child care were not discussed. A number of legislative and policy initiatives have been approved. For example, the legislature approved serving all eligible children in the ECEAP by 2018 so enrollment will incrementally increase over the coming years. DEL policy targets the expansion to initially be focused on high poverty areas and those where the lowest percentage of Head Start and ECEAP children are served. These are also the areas in which full day kindergarten will be implemented first (also mandated by the legislature). The major goal is for all Head Start, ECEAP and other certified programs to be at level one at the end of 2012 and 11% of all programs at levels 2-5. By the end of 2013, 30% of all programs will be at levels 2-5; by the end of 2015, 54% of all programs will be at levels 2-5 and more programs serving high needs children are at higher TQRIS levels (not specified so not clear what this will be). By increasing the number of programs at higher levels, more children with high needs will be receiving higher quality programs. These goals are very ambitious but reasonable to implement given their previous experiences. Children with disabilities are served in child care centers and in self-contained programs (self-contained programs are not under DEL). Children in the child care centers will be part of the TQRIS system and plans are to develop procedures and recommendations for those in the self-contained to participate. Plans are for Part C and Part B programs to be part of the TQRIS by convening a group of experts to develop recommendations to implement by 2013. Children served in home settings will not be part of the TQRIS since home based settings are not required to participate. Children with disabilities are currently not under the DEL but since they are under the age of five and if DEL is serving the early childhood population it is not clear why they are not included. Head Start and ECEAP will be considered leaders in TQRIS because of their prior experience in the program. Implementation feedback will be solicited from them for use with other programs. While the state has a strong plan it is not fully implemented and therefore has received a score of 12 out of 15 points.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	10

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

The Washington TQRIS uses a number of reliable and valid tools for monitoring programs. They include the ERS (for various settings) and CLASS (preschool and toddlers). These instruments are administered by an external evaluation team from the University of Washington. The evaluation team is reliable on all instruments as they have been piloted for two years. ERS and CLASS reliability and validity scores were included in the proposal. Data is collected using local assessors who have been trained by the University of Washington evaluation center staff. Four of the assessors are bilingual and a plan is to develop a more diverse assessor team. It is a strength that Washington has bilingual assessors given the high percentage of ELL in the state. It is also very good that local assessors are being used as the system is more likely to be fully institutionalized. Families can access information about health and safety issues for particular centers using an online program or calling/emailing DEL directly. If needed a Spanish speaker responds to the family. The plan is for TQRIS ratings to be posted online beginning in 2012. In addition, plans are to consolidate the two online systems so families will be able to access health, safety and TQRIS ratings in one location online. While not implemented, DEL plans to assist programs serving high need children to disseminate and communicate information about TQRIS. DEL is also developing (through funds from the Melinda and Bill Gates foundation) a 'common approach' to sharing the TQRIS information across the State and early childhood programs. While DEL plans to share the information in a 'common way', the specific strategy for developing a common language that is sensitive to families of different races and those in poverty was not discussed. It is a strength of this plan that there is a strong focus on assisting family awareness and understanding. Approaches for sharing the information with families in poverty was not discussed and this is a very important group that needs to be addressed based on the data presented in the proposal. The strategies for sharing the information during home visits and from family support staff was included but it is not clear if all families in poverty participate in home visits or are in contact with family support staff. This is a very comprehensive plan for assuring families be well informed about the TQRIS. Washington has a strong plan with some aspects partially implemented but others are still in the planning stage.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	14

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

The State plans to provide incentives for programs to improve their programs such as, coaching, awards for improvement, and professional development, all of which have been effective in the past. The State contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct an impact evaluation. The evaluation found higher than expected outcomes when incentives were used. Other incentives include scholarship funds for staff to work on their early childhood credentials or degrees and opportunity grants for low-income adults to earn a credential. Another incentive, Head Start and ECEAP will become training hubs and provide leadership and support to child care programs. Finally, there will be a tiered child care subsidy reimbursement beginning in 2013. These activities will strengthen the quality of the early childhood programs as expectations of quality will be higher. All programs in the TQRIS will be required to meet the family support standards and many of the programs are full day and full year so are available to working families. This will increase the availability of child care for working families. The State anticipates with the TQRIS that more programs will be rated higher because of the incentives so, more families will have access to higher rated programs. As the mandate to serve all eligible children in the ECEAP programs is implemented more children with high needs will be enrolled. A tiered reimbursement for licensed home and family child care programs will be implemented in 2013 with the higher rated programs receiving greater funds. This is a strong plan for increasing the quality of the programs and ultimately preparing young children for kindergarten. The focus of Washington's proposal was on accessing higher quality programs but other issues, such as transportation, meals, contact with teachers, etc. were not addressed. Plans are for 54% of all programs to be in tiers 2-5 by 2015 and 62% of high need children to be served in 2-5 tiered programs. Tier one is automatically given to programs that are licensed or credentialed so most programs will qualify for this level. While the quality of the programs will increase with the TQRIS, the plan for children with high needs is not ambitious as tier 2 is based on minimal additional training that may or may not be related to the population of children who have high needs. Washington has a strong plan for implementing a high quality program for young children who have high needs but it is partially implemented at this point.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	12

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

The TQRIS was piloted for two years so evaluation data has been collected. Mathematica Policy Research conducted an impact and implementation study of the coaching and incentives and their impact on program quality. Programs which volunteered to participate were randomly assigned to control or treatment groups, however it was a small group of programs. Overall, program quality did improve, however this study is limited because the goal was to evaluate the purpose of coaching and not an evaluation of the TQRIS. Two measures used, the ERS and CLASS are validated and reliable. In addition two other surveys, one a self-assessment and the other, professional development survey were used, however, there was no information about the validity or reliability of these instruments. Washington reported that they are using information from their previous evaluation to enhance the TQRIS. However the Mathematica study's purpose was different from the purpose of the TQRIS evaluation. The University of Washington and DEL are developing a long term evaluation plan which will be ongoing. This will be a comprehensive evaluation addressing all aspects of the TQRIS, such as, alignment with WaKIDS, whether program quality measures predict school readiness for the children, how child outcome data informs practices, etc. Washington has developed a very strong evaluation plan that is comprehensive in scope and includes valid and reliable measures.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D), and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	28

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

- (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;
- (c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and
- (d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

Early Learning and development standards were developed in 2005 with a team of national experts and State stakeholders and are currently being revised to include cultural competence, align with birth to grade 3, and to be more user-friendly. They are currently out for review and will be completed by December 2011. The standards include the domains of physical well-being, health and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, cognition and general knowledge, and language, literacy and communication. The milestones for each respective age range (infants, toddler, preschool, kindergarten) are delineated. The process for originally developing and now revising the standards is very good. Involving the stakeholders as well as national experts provides a strong approach for developing quality standards. Likewise, receiving feedback from the field of early childhood professionals who will actually be implementing them will foster greater buy-in for implementation. The revised standards include alignment with K-3 for all domains, including literacy and mathematics and the connections to the ages prior to K-3, except for B-3. Specific information about how this will be implemented was included which is a strength. The TQRIS included the early learning and development Standards in the development process and the WaKIDS also is based on the Standards. Aligning all of the programs and their components with the TQRIS is a strength because all programs will be comprehensive and

consistent in their approaches. It is mentioned that the Professional development system core competencies were aligned with the Standards but documentation to support this was not present. The Standards (Benchmarks as they are referred to by Washington) are distributed widely across the State and training sessions have been provided. It is great that programs and early educators have access and training to the Standards so they will be able to more effectively implement them. While the Department of Health shares information about child health and development with families, there was no mention as to how this information is shared with early educators. Washington has been implementing high quality standards for early learning and development for many years; however, they are currently being revised so they are aligned with the K-3 standards. Therefore, this criterion was scored as a high quality response.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	22

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

There is a plan in place to provide training to programs on the Family Engagement and Partnership standards with 60% of eligible programs completing the training by 2015. The current Strengthening Families training is being put into an online format to reach a wider audience of professionals. Further, participation in this training results in additional points in tiers 3-5 of the TQRIS. While this is a very good plan, the quality of the training may be compromised with an online format unless it is synchronous in format. It is a strength to have this training tied to increased points in the TQRIS. Family engagement is a critical component and programs need to partner with families who are the child's most important life teacher. One of THRIVE's major activities is to provide parenting activities to families across the State. Initiatives such as 'Love, Talk, Play' have provided families with strategies for receiving supports from others. The focus was on vulnerable families, especially those with children ages birth to three. Another initiative is 'Reach out to Read' which enables pediatricians to provide books to young children from low income families. WaKIDS includes family members as equal partners in the kindergarten assessment process. Families are included through legislative action in DEL for developing policies, and program decisions. A parent advisory group provides this feedback and guidance. While there are many initiatives related to family engagement, information related to culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement was not found in the proposal. While Washington has a good plan for supporting families of children with high needs, it is partially implemented at this time.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	32

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

- (a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;
- (b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and
- (c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(1)

In 2009 the legislature requested DEL to create a system of professional development that addressed core competencies for early childhood professionals. The system was approved by the legislature in December 2010. The core competencies include the principles such as, creating a supportive and nurturing environment, the importance of the family role in their child's education process, cultural diversity, the variety of roles professionals assume, and the importance of self-reflection. These competencies are based on current research in the areas of brain development, child development, early childhood special education, and developmentally appropriate practices which are the major areas of focus in the early childhood field. These competences were purposefully aligned with the TQRIS and the Early Learning Standards, however, they are not aligned with child outcomes. The competencies address the areas of child growth and development, curriculum, assessment, families, health, safety, nutrition, interactions, program planning and development. Each of these content areas includes five different levels of competence so professionals move from novice professionals to master professionals. From this a career lattice with 15 levels was developed for professionals with five education levels identified from entry level to master's degree. This coincides with the core competencies. This career ladder will become part of the State Merit system in 2012. It was clear how the 15 levels are included in the five levels of competence. Also from level one to level two, early educators need to have a minimum of about 18 hours of training which is a strength of this proposal. The core competencies have been adopted by the community and technical colleges that provide training for the child care workforce. A comprehensive plan for examining the current status of the workforce beginning with what is included in the MERIT system has been developed. Plans are also articulated for working with other higher education institutions and encouraging child care professionals to seek bachelor's and master's degrees. Washington has identified specific strategies for including IHEs in the adoption of the core competencies; however, those plans were not clearly described, they report that they will just happen. Washington has developed a good plan for implementing core workforce competencies; however they are not fully implemented and IHEs are not currently involved.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	40	32

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

- (a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;
- (c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;
- (d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and
- (e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

WaKIDS is the assessment process developed for Washington by the University of Washington. The key word is 'process' in that it is an approach to assessment rather than the use of an instrument(s). It is comprehensive in scope as it considers the whole child which includes abilities, skills and growth areas and collects information from parents, the kindergarten teacher and preschool teacher. A process approach is one that meets the needs of children from high needs populations as it addresses where they are in learning and development and builds on the child's strengths. It is aligned with 15 of the Early Learning standards that correspond with the Kindergarten learning standards. These ELS represent the child's development in the areas of cognitive, linguistic, physical and social/emotional which are the essential domains for kindergarten readiness. The State Superintendent's office compiles the data which is then entered in the P-20 Longitudinal Data System. Kindergarten teachers meet with the families to identify the child's strengths and challenges to plan for the kindergarten year. This is a unique approach and is considered innovative as planning for all children is individualized and kindergarten is focusing on child strengths and challenges rather than preconceived expectations. Collaboration with kindergarten teachers, preschool professionals and parents will help ensure that each child is developing at his/her optimum and provide a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten. The assessment tool used with WaKIDS is an observational instrument called GOLD. The Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation's (CEME) technical report indicates that it is a reliable and valid tool. Observation is one of the most reliable sources of a young child's strengths and challenges so, GOLD is an appropriate instrument. In 2010-2011 WaKIDS was piloted with 115 classrooms and about 3000 kindergarteners representing different sections of the State with considerations for race, ethnicity and income. During the pilot teachers and parents provided feedback (surveys, questionnaires, focus groups) on three different assessment tools that they considered most helpful for kindergarten readiness for high needs children. The State has a legislative mandate for WaKIDS to be implemented in all kindergarten programs and plans are for it to be fully implemented with all incoming kindergarteners by 2014-2015. A combination of state and private funds are being used to support implementation of WaKIDS. The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation is supporting this implementation for the 15 school districts receiving P-3 Early Learning Leadership funds. The State operating budget includes funds, THRIVE is contributing funds and it is anticipated that State funds will continue to be allocated for the implementation. Funds from RTT-ELC for one time training in the GOLD assessment system will be used to expedite the full implementation of WaKIDS. Washington has used a very comprehensive approach for developing their kindergarten readiness entry process; it has been extensively piloted and is now ready to be fully implemented. While WaKIDS is ready for full implementation, training of teachers, parents and school district personnel is still a large component needed for full implementation. A plan for doing this has been developed and includes educating school districts, developing a group of trainers and increasing public awareness. While Washington has a very strong and comprehensive plan, it is partially implemented for all high needs children.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	230

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)
Although some of the State child care centers and Head Start programs that are not full day programs are exempt from licensing, plans are in place for them to be part of the TQRIS. This is a strength as all of these programs will be part of TQRIS which will increase the quality of programs that serve some children with high needs, especially those in working families. Beginning in 2012 all State licensed and certified programs will participate in TQRIS. This meets the RTT-ELC expectations that all programs be included in TQRIS by 2015. However, all of these programs will automatically be included in level one with the expectation to move to other levels over the subsequent years. While all programs will be part of TQRIS level one, the licensing requirements are considered rigorous in the State. Currently Washington is ranked in the top 10 of the nation's child care resources and referral agencies. Currently State early childhood special education programs are exempt from licensing but are governed by special education school system regulations and requirements. Plans are to explore how these programs can

be integrated in the TQRIS. The plan for this competitive preference priority includes all of Washington's early learning and development programs, except those serving children with disabilities will be part of the TQRIS by 2012.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--</p> <p>(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or</p> <p>(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.</p>		
Comments on (P)(3)		
<p>As indicated in E(1) above, Washington has implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment system that is aligned with the Early Learning and Development Standards and addresses the major domains and expectations for kindergarten readiness. They are using a process approach versus a typical testing measure or instrument. A process approach is more comprehensive as it considers the whole child and involves family members as well as teachers and other professionals. Process approaches provide opportunities to consider a child where they are in their development and builds future academic programs on it. It is a strong process but often difficult to implement consistently because it is time consuming to administer. The State has met (a) of this competitive preference priority.</p>		

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.</p> <p>The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.</p>	
Comments on Absolute Priority	
<p>Washington has developed a comprehensive plan that builds a quality system for increasing quality early learning and development programs for children with high needs so they are ready for kindergarten. To do this Washington will integrate and align resources and policies across state agencies, has developed a Department of Early Learning and has initiated a number of State-wide activities to support this plan. Comprehensive plans have been developed to improve quality in workforce standards, enhance the current TQRIS, develop a comprehensive evaluation system that is based on reliable and valid measures, enhanced early learning standards and family engagement strategies. The TQRIS program and a kindergarten assessment process are both aligned with the State Early Learning Standards and the State data system. A focus for these is with the Head Start and ECEAP programs since most of the children with high needs are located in these programs. Children with disabilities placed in self contained settings are governed by School District regulations but plans are in place to explore how these programs can also be part of the TQRIS and WaKIDS. The legislature has supported these initiatives by mandating the full implementation of the WaKIDS. With the TQRIS the workforce will have opportunities to increase their competence. All of these plans together will position the State of Washington to implement a high quality early learning and development program that will prepare children with high needs to enter kindergarten well prepared. Many of these plans have been partially implemented in the State which further enables them to be successful with this major initiative.</p>	



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # WA-5035

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 6:21 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	20
<p>The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--</p> <p>(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

Washington has progressively received private funding and excelled at building capacity and infrastructure to continue planning to provide outcome-oriented high-quality, accessible comprehensive Early Learning and Development Programs. For example, in the 2007-2008 school year, the state phased in state-funded full-day kindergarten, beginning with the highest poverty schools. Washington has presented sound methodologies to support low-income families and improve child development outcomes, including strategically implementing evidence-based early literacy programs. Washington's progressive legislative efforts and politically aligned resources include private funding of more than \$48 million to focus on strategies to scale system planning, alignment and governance and increase access to services for high needs children. Washington has excelled in pre-planning efforts to effectively collaborate with partners and stakeholders to achieve significant accomplishments. For example, Washington has completed phase one implementation of key components critical to ensure improved outcomes for children that are clear and tangible such as evaluation, validation, refinement and initial implementation of effective data practices. The newer system components are Washington's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), Kindergarten Entry Assessment, Professional Development System, and Statewide Longitudinal Data System. The state's current reform efforts form building blocks for High Quality Early Learning and Development programs that are integrated throughout the system and embrace the latest research on brain science and evidence-based practices. These practices support positive whole child outcomes from birth through grade three and embrace the rich diversity of families in Washington. For example, the State has in place clear, tangible, and innovative programs such as the expanded kindergarten transition process. Washington has proposed an ambitious yet achievable plan for continuing the statewide expansion of TORIS that will bring the important components of the system to scale by 2012. Therefore, Washington's educational reform plan has been developed empirically using best practices, designing clear outcomes and goals, and through partnerships with higher education. The state uses a continuous feedback loop to ensure that program services are both effective and efficient. Washington has submitted a feasible and high quality plan proposal with highly achievable goals. To date, the state has demonstrated progress in the areas of system planning, alignment, policies and governance for all early learning programs and services, including expansion

services for high-need children. The state is committed to promoting transparency in all early learning policies, services and programs and has created an infrastructure to provide outcome-oriented, high-quality, and accessible comprehensive Early Learning and Development Programs as demonstrated by the evidence provided.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	20

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

Washington's clearly defined, affirmative reform agenda effectively sets priorities to achieve high quality standards for Children with High Needs statewide and identifies clear, consistent, measurable, and tangible strategies to close the readiness gap between children with High Needs and their peers. Washington plans to achieve these realistic goals and will implement multiple components of the Early Learning System by selecting the Ready Framework. To implement this comprehensive approach the state of Washington has efficiently planned concurrent efforts to achieve and organize around five areas referred to as "Ready" areas, including outcomes and 35 strategies detailed in the plan and the priority strategies which align closely with the RTT-ELC priorities. The State Plan provides evidence that Washington's fundamental reform efforts were guided by several key principles and focused on an established theory of change, strong leadership and governance, aligning critical system components across integrated services, employing common statewide quality assurances measures, and drawing on best practice standards. Washington's rationale includes Focused Investment Areas as follows. For developing and using statewide high-quality Early Learning Standards, the state's rationale explains that Washington's Early Learning Development Benchmarks are a longstanding foundational component for many parts of the system and are currently being revised with other system components coming into full implementation. Engaging and Supporting Families is a common thread and priority across the system. For Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials, the state's rationale is that the State has completed statewide core competencies, a career lattice and a professional registry. Fully implementing and integrating these professional development components with TQRIS is critical to support successful expansion of TQRIS and quality improvement goals. The State's rationale for focusing on understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry is to complete the first phase of implementation, testing and evaluation of an innovative Kindergarten entry assessment process. Therefore, Washington's proposed plan clearly provides a progressive, well-planned, and detailed agenda to effectively set priorities to achieve high quality standards for Children with High Needs statewide.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	10

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

The State of Washington has excelled in leadership efforts to plan and has succeeded at bringing together multiple learning programs into one cabinet level agency to create the Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC). The State's past significant efforts to achieve effective collaboration include working jointly with the lead agency, the Department of Early Learning (DEL). The State developed the Early Learning Partnership in 2009 by joint resolution, which includes DEL, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Thrive by Five. Further, the state's MOUs reflect that DEL will facilitate coordination across participating agencies and organizations in order to form a broad range of stakeholders that will assist in reaching the ambitious yet achievable implementation goals. Washington explains that one-time funding received for a federal state advisory council grant will be used to enhance and coordinate structure and that the ELAC will advise, inform, and align action to implement Washington's plan. ELAC develops recommendations to present to ELAC, comes to agreement, and solves disputes among the State's early learning leaders. The Department of Social and Health Services and the Department of Health Services also serve on the ELAC. Cabinet level agencies will report to the Governor and dispute resolutions between agencies rests with the Governor. Washington provides that the ELAC will serve as the central mechanism at the state level for providing oversight and direction. In 2007, DEL and ELAC were statutorily charged with developing a statewide early learning plan to ensure school readiness for children in Washington by working jointly to cohesively establish and create excellent strategic implementation goals, as presented in this proposal. Washington shows success in receiving support for this application as evidenced by receiving a total of 68 letters of intent or support from organizations. These demonstrate the unprecedented scope of support for the Washington Early Learning Plan (ELP) and the RTT-ELC initiative to include ambitious but achievable goals. Letters include references to the many stakeholders indicating that they are ready to assist in reaching these goals. Advocacy organizations held signature drive efforts to show broad support for the application and more than 2,500 signatures were received from the public. The State advisory council, state interagency council for Part C of IDEA, and all Intermediate Organizations and local early learning agencies provided letters of intent to support as listed in the Appendix. Overall, the state has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders, reflected by the State MOUs. The state of Washington demonstrates exemplary efforts to align and coordinate early learning and development across the state with participating state agencies and other learning and development stakeholders to meet the defined goals and objectives as presented. State MOUs reflect that the Lead Agency DEL will facilitate coordination across participating state agencies and organizations and that a broad range of stakeholders will assist in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals necessary for implementation.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	15

The extent to which the State Plan--

- (a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool, Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;
- (b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--
- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
 - (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
 - (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and
- (c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

Washington has developed an implementation budget to sustain the work of the grant and provides assurances to effectively use funding from this grant to achieve and sustain the outcomes in the state plan. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) has done significant work to ensure the best and most efficient use of funds and has developed an operational budget allowing DEL to directly oversee and control core aspects of plan. The application identifies DEL is pursuing a cost sharing strategy that will allow the agency to repurpose funds to support the operational budget. The application proposes diversified resources to continue important initiatives in the pre- and post- grant period including use of existing funds to support the state early learning plan of \$151 million. This is a significant investment from 2012 - 2016. The total Annual Operational Expenses amount from 2012-2016 is dwarfed by the approximately \$2.4 billion necessary to achieve Washington's Early Learning Plan Objectives overall during the same time period. Washington has provided assurances that they plan to effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve and sustain the outcomes in the state plan to ensure efficient use of funds and has developed an operational budget categorized into four projects, totaling \$151,381,972. The RTT Grant of \$60 million makes up 40 percent of the total. DEL resources will be repurposed to CCDF Quality funds. DEL recently contractually committed much of the identified funding stream for the next two fiscal years as part of its regular biannual budget process. The state identified the following Projects: 1. TQRIS Expansion 2. TQRIS Infrastructure 3. WAKids 4. PD Incentives Funds include local and private support and generous support for early learning, including from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Thrive by Five Washington, as well as other businesses and philanthropies. Fund sources identified support the Operational State Budget numbers and these assumptions include a total of \$11,770,279 in other State/Federal/Private Funds. The state explains that due to Washington's rapid expansion and acceleration of the TQRIS, the state has many project activities associated with the expansion that must be maintained after the grant period ends, including to sustain program efforts. The three goals identified include: 1. Controlling and minimizing costs during the grant period so there is less to sustain once RTT-ELC federal funds are drawn down. 2. Allocating and sharing in a strategic manner that allows DEL to gradually pay more for ongoing costs in a politically and administratively feasible manner. 3. Making a commitment to fund any cost differences remaining beginning in 2017 with state, local or private dollars.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	10

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

- (a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--
- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
 - (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
 - (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
 - (4) Family engagement strategies;

(5) Health promotion practices; and

(6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

The state of Washington has clearly demonstrated that they have substantially progressed toward building a system that supports high-quality, accountable programs for all young children. Washington provides a great model that ensures that the child remains at the center of the policy efforts. Statewide alignment standards are designed to integrate and align with statewide Early and Development Benchmarks (learning standards), WaKIDS, the kindergarten entry assessment, and statewide data systems. Washington has provided a high quality plan ensuring that the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) embodies a common set of high expectations and quality standards that apply to all programs, across various sectors and funding sources. Washington's plan presents effective data practices. The TQRIS standards focus on the use of data (from child and program assessments) to inform teaching and program practices with children, and to contribute to an objective statewide picture of school readiness. TQRIS program standards include all of the requirements and the State details that DEL is in the process of developing a TQRIS database that will be completed in July 2012. The response demonstrates strong collaborative efforts to promote the TQRIS information and awareness. For example, DEL in cooperation with partners is in the process of developing and implementing a final communication and brand strategy to be launched in Spring 2012 through the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Washington's plan describes detailed procedures to centralize data, create program profiles that include licensing information, track resources, inform systemic investments by aggregating site data to help the state prioritize where to invest resources based on documented needs, track the reliability of raters and processes related to data entry, provide quality control, analyze ratings data to identify trends, align system with MERIT (the state's early learning professional registry) licensing data system and longitudinal data system. Further, Washington has provided and identified a solid plan with assurances that because the implementation phase is now completed, it is ready to take the system to scale. Independent evaluators have verified and reviewed the TQRIS pilot program quality standards. Using a research-based coaching model, evaluations demonstrated a significant increase in the quality of learning environments and teacher child interactions with children.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	15

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

(1) State-funded preschool programs;

(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;

(3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;

(4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and

(5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

The state has met the goal of having all publicly funded programs included in TQRIS. State-approved certification includes Head Start, Early Head Start, ECEAP (state funded Head Start-like Pre-K), and publicly funded military and tribal programs. Programs may elect to participate in the process to attain higher TQRIS quality rating levels. Automatic inclusion encourages program to participate in the TQRIS to demonstrate their higher level of quality to parents and families seeking care for children. Programs are not required to move beyond a level one rating. However, programs that do choose to participate may use key TQRIS professional development incentive offerings to stay competitive in the marketplace to attract parents. Other outstanding progress and demonstrated efforts include consistent and achievable goals accomplished to date, include on-going implementation planning. In July 2012, all TQRIS participants were required to complete a professional record in MERIT with verified data on education and training. In 2011-12, the University of Washington will serve as collaborator to facilitate and continue as the evaluation partner, and will be responsible for rating and monitoring, focusing on strengthening framework P-3 connections to ensure that child outcomes are linked to TQRIS standards and are maintained in the k-12 system. Washington's current continuous TQRIS Training Preparation activities are being completed, program standards will be tested with the current cadre of TQRIS participants, and online training modules are being developed to meet some training requirements. Therefore, the state's present licensing requirements are adequate and demonstrate the commitment necessary to achieve the goals and objectives for this plan. Further, the state of Washington received sixth place and recognition by national ranking for regulation and oversight by the National Association of Child Care Referral Agencies (NACCRA). The state provides that the optimum child-staff ratio licensing standards with NAEYC compliance accreditation standards address the required and essential learning and development standards. The program requires and encourages parent involvement and communication with parents and Lead and teachers must complete initial training.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	15

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

Washington's licensing requirements are exemplary and demonstrate the commitment necessary to achieve the goals and objectives for this plan. Further, the state of Washington received sixth place in national rankings for regulation and oversight by the National Association of Child Care Referral Agencies (NACCRA). The licensing standards for optimum child staff ratio with NAEYC compliance address the required and essential learning/development standards. The program requires and encourages parent involvement and communication with parents, and Lead teachers must complete initial training. The licensing standards include: Child-staff ratios regarding compliance with NAEYC accreditation standards; programs are required to address essential learning/development standards; programs are required to encourage parent involvement and communication with parents and Lead teachers must complete initial training, including health and safety training. Washington uses two assessment tools, the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Tools, as the foundational components for monitoring and rating programs in TQRIS. The tools collectively provide the objective information that is needed to understand the classroom environments and the teaching practices within those classrooms. The ERS and CLASS constitute 55 percent of overall facility ratings for levels three and above. The state's TQRIS currently focuses on children through age 4 so that measures are used depending on setting and age of children served. Measures used include: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Classroom Assessment Scoring System and Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System. The state's rating process is that one classroom will be selected to represent each age group, regardless of program size, for evaluation purposes including the impact of targeted coaching and use of quality resources and supports. One-third of all classrooms are evaluated every three years, which is the recommended frequency, by the University of Washington evaluation team. DEL will re-evaluate all current participants (early adopters) in July 2012 as well as start accepting new programs. For new participants, facilities must meet all level two requirements prior to receiving a formal assessment and rating.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	20

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

The state has provided details for the Tiered Reimbursement for WCCC. DEL will implement a tiered reimbursement for licensed homes and family child care programs in 2013. All TQRIS programs are eligible. While rates are not finalized, DEL is committed to promoting quality by ensuring higher-rated programs receive the most support. The state will provide support to children and families with a tiered child care subsidy reimbursement including financial incentive embedded in the TQRIS in July 2013. At the highest level, it is expected that reimbursement rates will be at the 75th percentile, in line with federal goals. Washington has progressively taken action to extend the family eligibility re-determination period to one year, providing families continuity of care and also streamlining programs' participation in the subsidy program, thereby creating efficient administrative eligibility procedures. Washington Family Support is embedded in Washington's TQRIS model and Program Standards ensure that all programs are progressing toward providing supports for working families, especially those who have children with high needs. Washington Family Support consists of coaching, quality improvement, professional development, and incentives. Further, once implemented, the Strengthening Families Framework encourages programs to identify strategies to meet specific needs of enrolled families to serve the targeted population. The selected framework provides an effective plan to achieve a bridged approach between parents and provides an excellent opportunity to enable effective partnership for the benefit of children in care. The state provides assurances that Family Support is embedded in Washington's TQRIS model and Program Standards. To attain higher quality levels and ratings, programs must demonstrate they are providing increased levels of family support and engagement. For example, key components include: the Family Engagement and Partnership standard integrates the research based Strengthening Families framework and encourages programs to implement research based specific needs of enrolled families. For Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, the State illustrates the current baseline and targeted goals for the end of calendar year 2012 through 2015, indicating the total number of programs covered by the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The targets are ambitious and achievable. Therefore, in collaboration with Participating State Agencies, Washington has developed and implemented a High-Quality Plan and system for improving the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs, including policies, practices, incentives, and supports to help working families. Further, the state's TQRIS is designed to seamlessly support programs (Head Start, ECEAP, etc.) serving high-need children with targeted strategies for increasing participation and quality of programs.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	11

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(6)

Washington provides extensive details and analysis about the completion of an impact and implementation evaluation of its Phase One TQRIS statewide implementation supported by research based results of two separate studies over the two-year phase one. Washington provides strong evidence that the Mathematica Policy Research impact and implementation random study demonstrates that they have validated used research-based measures by the completion of the first-year randomized control study which was focused specifically on two communities and specific standards of the TQRIS framework. Washington provides results of the assessment to validate the TQRIS by using appropriate research designs and measures of progress to evaluate the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Washington explains that the University of Washington made several recommendations to further refine the quality standards and framework and infrastructure and that the recommendations reflect the quality program standards in the TQRIS model currently adapted and in place. Washington provided that they have assessed, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness. For example, Washington's TQRIS Validation identifies that the selection criteria will include the Initial Evaluation of Standards and Model, with full implementation completed in June 2011. Results of the model and Standards revision will be based on results. To measure Children's School Readiness Rates, the High Quality Plan will collect statewide data on Focal Child Measure, as well as correlate TQRIS ratings with WaKIDS data. Washington's methodological evaluation does provide evidence that the results were valid and conducted by the University of Washington although research was limited in the pilot project. Several recommendations further refine the quality standards. The state provides a strong commitment to continued validation and evaluation in the identified Timeframe. Milestones from 2012-2015 include: develop long term evaluation, implement longitudinal research study, integrate on-going assessment, oversample data from children with disabilities and developmental delays to ensure these children receive high quality care and education. However, the state failed to demonstrate that they performed research besides the limited pilot research. As the milestones reference, the State will develop a longer term evaluation to validate the claim to fully demonstrate that the study provided the validity as referenced in the plan.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	30
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--</p> <p>(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;</p> <p>(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and</p> <p>(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation		
Comments on (C)(1)		

Washington demonstrates throughout the plan that they promote early learning and development outcomes for children and ensure they will provide an integrated system based on a common set of expectations, guidelines, and developmental milestones for young children. The state of Washington's common set of statewide early learning and development standards, released in 2005, have served to provide a key foundation to Washington's efforts to implement a comprehensive early learning system. All of the system components launched and incorporated include: TQRIS, statewide professional development, kindergarten entry assessment. The standards serve to ensure an integrated system based on a common set of expectations, guidelines and developmental milestones for young children. In addition, Washington has developed unique learning standards to meet the needs of children with disabilities and children whose home language is not English. Washington will work jointly and receive support from the Early Support Program for Infants (ESIT) and Toddlers, a Washington IDEA Part C. The program supports children and families with special needs and as part of the ESIT's outreach effort to help parents identify potential delays materials are provided that highlight the benchmarks and are used to guide parents who may have a child with delays or disabilities. The state incorporates cultural sensitivity, cultural competency and multi-cultural standards to address the planning strategies embedded throughout the plan. Further, Washington engagement strategies will include cultural and linguistic approaches that are evidence-based, serving as a key foundation in Washington's effort to implement a comprehensive early learning system. Benchmarks will be structured to promote individualization based on the needs of children, culture, special needs, and basic differences between individual children. Within the three benchmarks there is information and indicators specific to dual-language learners. The current document is available in English and Spanish and the current revision process includes making the benchmarks available in a wider variety of languages. Washington used an expert team of consultants from the National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College with Columbia University. The benchmarks were developed in partnership with a team of national experts and with a broad input from Washington stakeholders to ensure they were developmentally relevant for all Washington stakeholders from birth to age five. The resulting Benchmarks are grounded in research and best practices, reflect a whole-child understanding of development, are aligned with the K-12 standards, and include recognition of the role of cultural context in children's growth and learning. Washington provides assurances that they will conduct a formal evaluation of its quality standards framework within five years to include annual reviews of statewide implementation. The current quality standards will not be modified until Washington will have appropriate time to evaluate their effectiveness and impact on a large scale in multiple early learning settings. The state provided excellent strategies to implement and promote an integrated early learning educational system, addressing cultural sensitivity and diversity along with evidentiary best practice standards.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	30

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

The state has TQRIS program standards including a Family Engagement and Partnership standard and uses the national, evidence-based Strengthening Families Model as the basis for the required elements of this standard. Washington provides that the standards established include cultural diversity and culturally appropriate standards for family engagement. The state provides that they will build on the framework and Family Engagement and Partnership standards which are embedded into the TQRIS model. Ten points (10 percent) may be earned by participants in their level three through five ratings based on their Family Engagement and Partnership practices. In addition, other state family engagement components are included in the Child Outcome Standards, and participants can receive an additional three points for their family engagement in this standard. TQRIS Training will be provided at level two of the TQRIS standards. Participating child care director/program supervisor or family home licensee must attend a six-hour introductory training on the Strengthening Families model. The model is based on national research and evidence that recognizes the important role child care providers play in building protective factors with young children. Initially 22 trainings are to be held across the state and subsequent trainings will be provided by the WSRRN and other approved trainers. The state will immediately require that all training be captured in the Managed Education Registry and Information Tool (MERIT). Completed and verified training will be recorded on each individual's professional record through MERIT. Completion of a professional record and registration in MERIT will be a requirement for all staff at participating TQRIS facilities. Generated reports through MERIT will capture the numbers and percentages of Early Learning Childhood Educators who complete the Strengthening Families Training. The state's Head Start and ECEAP programs have been providing family support services as a cornerstone of their comprehensive services for many decades. The programs have family support staff at the direct service and trainer/coach levels and provide regular professional development in the area of family support and programs implement daily strategies to engage parents and families in children's learning and development. The state has demonstrated outstanding planning for Statewide Family Engagement strategies with family centered approaches. The engagement strategies align with the Early Learning Benchmarks;

WaKIDS is a highly effective program and aligns with the state early learning standards. Overall, Washington has extensively planned to provide and address multicultural competency and diversity including linguistically appropriate support to families of Children with High Needs and promote school readiness for their children.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	40

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

- (a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;
- (b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and
- (c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(1)

Washington demonstrates excellence and superior efforts to develop a common statewide workforce competency framework designed to promote children's learning and improve class outcomes. Washington explains the legislative support they have achieved in taking action to successfully create an integrated professional development Consortium. The consortium provided assurance that through extensive strategic planning efforts, developing and defining core competencies for the early care and education workforce has been collaboratively planned to define early learning training and policy teaching recommendations. Washington's core competencies build on and are foundational to the professional development and represent the state's vested interest to develop a common, statewide competency framework. Implementation and support for the high quality plan proposal demonstrates Washington's unique population as cultural diversity encompasses all ethnic, linguistic and socio economic backgrounds and this impacts areas of practice in early care and education. The state recognizes and has embedded cultural competency and sensitivity and recognizes that each family is unique in structure, values, beliefs, traditions and interactions and respects each family's worth to appreciate the richness of diversity that each family brings to the early care and education setting. The Core competency areas describe that the interactions provide standards on how to establish supportive relationships with children and guide children to form meaningful and pro-social relationships with peers. The Core Competency areas also include evidence-based information on attachment and emotional regulation to prevent and address challenging behaviors. Washington will use data from an evaluation of the quality assurance process for early learning trainers to review how the Core Competencies are being implemented in state-approved training and whether professionals are using the Core Competencies as a resource document that influences practice and guides future updates to the Core Competencies in 2014. Washington's plan provides key goals in developing the Career Lattice which is to be inclusive of all early learning programs and widely represents opportunities available in licensed child care, ECAP and Head Start Programs in addition to other roles that support family engagement, higher education, and community based training. Additionally, the Career Lattice specifies and uses the Core Competencies as the base of an education and training matrix that identifies a career development pathway for beginning professionals meeting minimum licensing standards and professionals who have obtained advanced degrees in the field and serve as administrators, mentors and professors of higher education. The state provides that the main intent of the Core Competency resource is to promote the accessibility of high-quality educational opportunities to meet the professional development needs of those who work with children and families. Further, as evidenced by research based development, the Core Competencies were developed and guided by research in the field and supported by content experts from institutions of higher learning and statewide technical assistance organizations. Further, they are evidence-based and were created using information and research in child development, working with children with disabilities, and developmentally appropriate practice. Through demonstrated collaborative efforts, DEL has worked with the Professional Development Data and Registry to develop a new online version of the registry that offers significantly more features for users and links directly state Core Competencies and the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT) system. This will assist professionals in finding training opportunities and access information to career pathways. Overall, Washington has provided superior achievements including the development of one of the first professional registries to track qualifications of early care and education professions.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	40	32
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)
<p>Washington's WaKIDS aligns with the state early learning standards. The WaKIDS research team chose 15 performance measures from the Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks, based on an analysis of current research, aligning early standards with end-of-year kindergarten learning standards. Washington's participating classrooms were selected from applications and through a rigorous sampling procedure to ensure representation across race, ethnicity, income and region, thereby addressing the unique diverse population including English learners during the pilot period. The child assessment tool used in WaKIDS (GOLD) is an observational assessment system for children from birth through kindergarten. The GOLD assessment system blends ongoing, observational assessment for all areas of development and learning with performance - assessment tasks for selected predictors of school success in literacy and numeracy. GOLD is designed for use as part of meaningful everyday experiences in the classroom or program setting. It is inclusive of children with disabilities, children who are English-Language or dual-language learners, and children who demonstrate competencies beyond typical developmental expectations. The assessment may be used with any developmentally appropriate curriculum; it is not linked exclusively to a particular curriculum. Washington's piloted WaKIDS program clearly has achieved and demonstrated effective and measurable results for the 2010-2011 school year by serving 3,000 children in 115 classrooms in 63 schools. However, the State has only partially implemented the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. During this current school year, approximately 11,000 incoming kindergarteners (14% of all kindergarteners) are participating in WaKIDS. Washington's WaKIDS is part of the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), a longitudinal data warehouse of education in Washington. The state is a recipient of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences \$17.3 million grant (\$3 million earmarked for early learning) for continued work on the design and implementation of the state's P-20 longitudinal data system. Led by the ERDC, the system will provide a wider array of data, improved analytical capability, and greater access while including protections for individual privacy and confidentiality in compliance with state and federal regulations. Collaborative partner agencies include DEL and OSPI. WaKIDS will be part of the P-20 State Longitudinal Data System launching in 2012. Washington provides an outstanding plan to clearly align the data system with early learning standards. Further, the state provides that it is appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities; it is valid and reliable, will be administered no later than 2014-2015, will meet state and federal requirements (including privacy laws) and will not receive funding from this grant.</p>

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	268

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--</p> <p>(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and</p> <p>(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.</p> <p>Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation</p>		
Comments on (P)(2)		
<p>Washington's TQRIS includes all licensed programs and also strategically includes some programs that are exempt from licensing. The state applied a program specific rationale in its decision to include or not include exempt programs in the TQRIS. Washington's TQRIS intentionally includes Head Start and ECEAP to ensure that programs that serve the state's most vulnerable children and low-income families are able to demonstrate and receive recognition for providing high quality care that is measured under common statewide program standards. In addition, automatic TQRIS participation may result in more Head Start/ECEAP programs providing full-day, full-year programs due to their ability to receive higher tiered child care subsidies that are a benefit of TQRIS higher quality levels/ratings. The state's comprehensive pre-K programs are leaders in many quality practices such as comprehensive assessment systems and family engagement and will serve as training hubs for TQRIS child care programs in their communities and regions. The state has excelled at planning and has met both the licensing element of the criterion and the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System element of the criterion.</p>		

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--</p> <p>(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or</p> <p>(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.</p>		
Comments on (P)(3)		
<p>Washington has already piloted and will implement Kindergarten entry assessment that meets selection criteria (E)(1). The WaKIDS model was tested in 2010 through a pilot implemented by a cohort of schools, teachers, parents and early learning staff that represent the state. The 2010-2011 pilot included 3,000 children in 115 classrooms in 63 schools. Nearly half of the participating schools serve a high percentage of High Needs Children, demonstrating that the WaKIDS process can be effectively implemented and result in increased understanding about the status of Washington's most vulnerable children's learning and development. The implementation goal for WaKIDS is for it to be used in every school and kindergarten classroom in the 2014-2015 school year. Participating classrooms were selected from applications and through a rigorous sampling procedure to ensure representation across race, ethnicity, income and region. Washington has progressively planned, already tested, and will implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment as well as met the selection criteria (E)(1).</p>		

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No

Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.

Yes

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Comments on Absolute Priority

The state's plan provides an excellent, comprehensive, and coherent approach and strategically details how the state will build a system to increase the quality of ELD Programs for Children with High needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Washington's strong and concrete proposal will lead to successful and sustainable implementation as they will build upon the statewide Early Learning plan, which contains goals, strategies, and measures for an early learning system that supports ready children, ready families, ready professionals and ready schools and ready systems and communities. Washington's sound methodology for the proposal provides that the early learning standards are integrated throughout the system and embrace the latest research on brain science and evidence-based practices; support positive whole child outcomes from birth through grade three; and embrace the rich diversity of families in Washington. Washington provides assurances that there is nothing more fundamental than an early learning system that agrees upon outcomes for children and is committed to aligning the current and future work to their early learning standards to promote their use. Washington developed Benchmarks that were made to include the unique learning needs of children with disabilities and children whose home language is not English. The goal has been to preserve the academic rigor of the benchmarks, but to change their framing, so they feel more approachable and usable by multiple audiences. Therefore, Washington commits to increase their promotion and use across early learning settings. Washington provides the Indicators for the benchmarks and the strategies to attempt to incorporate modifications to reflect children's diversity. Further, they are culturally appropriate for the linguistic needs and address the diversity of the state's population.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # WA-5035

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/15/2011 - 8:20 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	18
<p>The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--</p> <p>(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

Washington state has made significant commitment and investment in early childhood education. While many strengths are identified, there are some areas of concern to be considered. The state has focused efforts to develop the systems necessary to support a quality early childhood program, including the development of a cabinet level agency, the Department of Early Learning (DEL). The state has developed plans to serve high need children, particularly in their expanded pre-k efforts. The state has a plan to implement a TQRIS system, which has been piloted in selected communities and is ready to be taken to scale. Currently, most children are served outside of this system, although the state describes a plan to bring licensed child development centers and homes into the TQRIS system. The state identifies that 40% of the children birth through 5 come from low income families, 3.2% have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP), 32.9% are English language learners, 2.9% reside on "Indian Lands" and less than 1% are either migrants, homeless or in foster care. Since the development of DEL, the state has made increases in its support for early education. This is particularly noteworthy in its efforts to support pre-k programs for children in high poverty areas and a plan to make pre-k an entitlement program. The state has increased its support for Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS), with no contribution noted for 2007 and 2011 funding at \$48,732. The state's efforts emphasize services to 3 and 4 year olds and do not describe increasing services to infants and toddlers, who largely seem to access services through CCDF funded programs and home visitation. Access to center based care for high need infants and toddlers is through a child care subsidy in the Working Connections Child Care program. High need infants and toddlers may benefit from center based care regardless of their parent's involvement with a work activity. The state does not explicate a plan to expand center based services to infants and toddlers, although it does describe a plan to increase home visitation services. In 2005, Washington state made a commitment to young children by creating the DEL. Despite difficulty with the state's budget, DEL has been funded and the state has worked to implement increased quality in their early childhood programs. The state has field tested their TQRIS program and developed incentives and criteria for early childhood programs to improve their quality. The state is negotiating with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) regarding a tiered reimbursement system. The state has several advisory boards, including one made up of parents, who have provided direction and

guidance in developing their programs. Legislation is being considered to either fully fund pre-k or to fund it as an entitlement program to serve high need children. The state has begun implementing a kindergarten assessment, beginning with schools that serve high need children. The state has Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), which are also being revised. The state describes a Comprehensive Assessment System, but the state does not identify which screening and assessment instruments it will use, nor does it link assessment to curriculum. The state does identify use of the CLASS and the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS). The state describes screenings being completed largely in Head Start and pre-k programs and notes that programs will choose from a list of qualified screening instruments, but does not list these. Additionally, the state describes a kindergarten assessment, teaching strategies GOLD. It does not describe this assessment being utilized for birth to 5 children, nor does it link it to a curriculum to foster individual child development. The state has strong health promotion practices and describes that DEL is working with other state agencies and private sector partners to coordinate these practices. Information sent to parents through the health department is based on the ELDS. The state has devoted resources to professional development and linked it with the TQRIS system in incentives and in data management. The kindergarten entry assessment has been piloted and funding to assess high need children has been allocated, but this is not a universal practice. Supported by additional federal money, the state describes multiple efforts to improve their data collection system and integrate kindergarten assessment into this system. Overall, the state has made a significant commitment to developing a high quality early learning system, exemplified most by the creation of a state level agency. The state has or has a plan for high quality in the key elements that make up high quality early learning systems. The Comprehensive Assessment System deserves refinement for infants and toddlers and the connection to curriculum, but other systems are in place or thoughtfully planned. The response is high quality.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	16

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

Washington state has set ambitious yet achievable goals to improve the quality of their programs serving high need children to close the readiness gap. Through a comprehensive evaluation of their early learning system, the state has identified strengths and weaknesses in their systems that support early learning, and started to plan and intervene to make improvements in those systems. Key provisions of the state's Early Learning Plan include aligning all early learning services across settings, funding sources, and ages of children. Services to children birth to 5 are provided by multiple agencies and a cabinet level agency is in place to coordinate all of these efforts, along with MOUs to move efforts toward a common goal of closing the readiness gap. Efforts in the state are further supported by key private sector partners. The state has identified 5 goals: expanding the TQRIS system, expanding the use of ELDS that are aligned with k-3 standards, integrating family engagement and parenting support through the early learning system, promoting high quality professional development, and kindergarten assessment. The state sets forth a high quality plan, with clear goals and objectives to reform the early learning system in the state and justifies the selection of criteria C, D, and E through the coherence of its plan. The state has devoted attention and resources in the development of their TQRIS system which is geared to support their goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for children with high needs, and closing the readiness gap. The state requires all centers to be licensed and all homes serving more than one unrelated child to be licensed. It has also enacted a law that fines unlicensed homes significantly. Under the state's plan, all licensed providers would be required to be in the TQRIS system at level one. The goal of expanding the use of the ELDS is ambitious and achievable. To reach level 2 in the TQRIS system, early childhood staff needs to be trained in these standards, and the state describes a coaching system to implement this goal, with funding to make the goal achievable. The state has identified a family engagement strategy that works to support family strengths and promote resiliency. The state has made family engagement part of its TQRIS system, and the state has materials and programs that support this goal already in place – Reach out and Read, Child Profile health promotion, and families engaged in the kindergarten assessment process. The state has developed an integrated professional development data management system with the TQRIS system to track training and professional degree attainment. The state's goals in this area are attainable, but not ambitious with 20% of its workforce completing a CDA, 30% with an AA degree, and 15% with a BA degree. The state's goal of Kindergarten Entry Assessment is ambitious and attainable in that 100% of children will be assessed and 100% of teachers will be trained. The state also identifies a goal of 75% of children proficient in 3 of 4 domains. The state has not described a system that supports this level of achievement. The early childhood workforce is made up of paraprofessionals who will receive support in the form of coaching and training related to the early learning standards, but no specific curriculum. The state has a plan to implement these goals, a plan developed with input from many sectors which will be coordinated by the DEL. The state is consistent in its focus on ELDS, family

engagement, professional development, and kindergarten entry assessment. The state identifies the ELDS as under-girding their approach to early education and links these standards with the k-3 and practices that the state currently has in place. For example, the ELDS are a part of the Child Profile campaign in the Department of Health. DEL has partnered with Thrive by Five for a public information campaign called Love.Talk.Play, that provides parents information on how to be their children's first teacher. These efforts lead to the state's second priority, promoting family engagement. Their plan in this area is also linked with the TQRIS system in that providers receive points and potentially a higher level in the TQRIS system for completing parent engagement training. The state also recognizes Head Start family engagement as a model and hopes to make Head Start centers training hubs for other early childhood providers. The state justifies its focus on enhancing the early childhood workforce. This workforce receives training on the Early Learning Standards along with coaching to help them implement these standards in the learning environment. The MERIT data management system developed by the state will be integrated into the TQRIS system. Additionally the state has defined a birth to 8 knowledge base, further integrating early education into the k-3 system. The state's plan justifies the focus on Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The state views this assessment as providing data both up and down the system. That is, the kindergarten assessment provides information to the state on how its early childhood education programs are performing and informs schools about the learning strengths and needs of children. Overall, the state presents a high quality plan, and justifies the focus areas upon which it intends to work. The state identifies progress in many areas, particularly health promotion practices and the kindergarten assessment, and has selected focus areas that contribute to building a stronger early learning system. This section was therefore scored as a high quality response.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	9

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

Washington State has established strong participation and commitment by state agencies and the early education community in the state. The state's commitment to improving early childhood education is exemplified by the creation of the cabinet level agency DEL, which will coordinate the implementation of this grant. The Early Learning Partnership is made up of DEL, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Thrive by Five. This team makes recommendations to the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), ELAC is in place and has worked with DEL to create the state plan for quality improvement. This council is made up of individuals appointed by the Governor, from other state agencies, providers and the private sector. As a cabinet level agency, disputes between departments are settled with the Governor's office. The state does not delineate how decisions are made. Other advisory groups include the Parent Advisory Group (PAG), Parent Advisory Council as part of Head Start and pre-k, and parent advisory councils for IDEA, part C services. The state provides MOUs from Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Health, and the Department of Social and Health Services, among others. These MOUs include roles and responsibilities, scopes of work, and signatures. Participating agencies have demonstrated commitment to the plan prior to the RTT proposal, and the state provides evidence of cooperation and work toward integration of services. The state also provides multiple letters of support from universities, providers, foundations, and other partners who demonstrate commitment and support to the state's plan for quality improvement and this grant. The state's efforts for improving early learning programs have worked across departments, with DEL providing an essential level of coordination. This high quality plan represents the state's continued interest in improving their system across state agencies, while valuing the participation of multiple entities and building support in all sectors. Since the state has substantially implemented partnerships and provides a high quality response, the score is in the high range.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	13

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

The state demonstrates their plan for implementing quality in early learning was in place prior to the RTT-ELC, including dedicated funding for this purpose. Receipt of the grant will allow for faster implementation. The state has a plan to utilize current funding for early childhood programs to support implementation of the state plan for quality improvement. The state will dedicate RTT funds largely for the implementation of the TQRIS system, Kindergarten Entry Assessment, and professional development. The state demonstrates that they will continue to fund early learning programs at the same level, acknowledging that state budget pressures make increasing funding at this time difficult. The state demonstrates that RTT funds will facilitate implementation of the state plan and that the state has the capacity to continue work when the funding ends. For example, the state notes that the Superintendent of Public Instruction has committed to funding WaKids assessment from 2016 at 100%. The budget and budget narrative are adequate to support the activities of the plan, and the costs included are reasonable. While the state does not explicitly describe the number of children, particularly high need children, who will benefit from this plan, the state indicates that about 40% of children live in poverty and a third live in homes where English is not the first language. Since the majority of the children served, particularly infants and toddlers, are in centers funded by CCDF, enhancing quality through the TQRIS system will have an impact on a large number of children. Overall, the state provides a high quality response, as reflected in the score, for how the state

will utilize existing funds integrated with RTT funds to enhance the quality of the early learning system. The one weakness with the state's plan and budget is the lack of explicit focus for children with high needs and increasing those children's access to high quality programs.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	8
<p>The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--</p> <p>(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Early Learning and Development Standards; (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System; (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications; (4) Family engagement strategies; (5) Health promotion practices; and (6) Effective data practices; <p>(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and</p> <p>(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.</p> <p>Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation</p>		
Comments on (B)(1)		
<p>The state has partially implemented its TQRIS system and describes a plan to fully implement the TQRIS system. The state has developed its ELDS and is set to revise these standards to ensure linguistic and cultural sensitivity with input from national organizations and the local communities. The state's TQRIS system includes ELDS, a Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS), early childhood education qualifications, family engagement strategies, and health promotion practices. The state describes a plan for effective data management, which will include licensing information, staff credentials, assessment information, curriculum information, rating information from monitoring, and alignment with the MERIT system. The state expects to complete this system by 2012. The proposed and piloted TQRIS system that the state proposes reflects high quality and has measurable standards that differentiate program quality. The TQRIS system will be linked to the licensing system, and as virtually all programs in the state must be licensed, the state's TQRIS system could significantly impact the quality of early education in the state. Since the state's plan is partially implemented, but has significant strengths, the response was rated in the high quality/partially implemented range.</p>		

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	12
<p>The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--</p> <p>(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) State-funded preschool programs; (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs; (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA; (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program; <p>(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs</p>		

(e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

The state indicates that all publicly funded programs will be included in the TQRIS system, including EHS/HS, pre-K and center based programs serving children with special needs. The state has aligned program standards with other standards to facilitate participation in the system. The state has developed incentives for program participation in the TQRIS system. For example, Head Start and pre-k programs can reach higher levels within the TQRIS system more quickly or receive Training Hub Incentives which acknowledge their program quality and offer financial incentives to train other providers. The state indicates that it is making efforts to help more families access high quality child care. The state is in collective bargaining with SEIU related to a tiered reimbursement system, which would reward high quality programs with increased reimbursement rates. This plan must be approved by the state legislature. DEL is also extending the period of time between recertifications for families who participate in the subsidy program, in hopes of attracting more high need children into high quality child care. This measure also needs legislative approval. The state has been most successful in increasing the number of high need children served in its pre-k program, and the state has enacted a law mandating that all educationally at-risk children be served by 2018. The state does not explicitly define educationally at-risk children, except related to poverty, which partially meets the RTT definition of children with high needs. In addition to possible tiered reimbursement, the state has quality improvement incentives for program participation in the TQRIS and professional development awards. Since there is integration with the licensing system and all licensed programs will be required to enroll in the TQRIS systems, the state has set an ambitious and achievable goal of 100% participation in the TQRIS. The state's plan is only partially implemented, but is a high quality response, and the state's score reflects the high quality, partially implemented plan.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	12

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

The state describes a piloted plan to monitor the TQRIS system, which was completed by a trained team from the University of Washington (UW) and utilized valid and reliable instruments: ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R, CLASS, and the Toddler CLASS. The state's plan for monitoring will be similar to Head Start monitoring of every three years, with criteria in place for re-rating if there is a change in director, license finding, or significant staff turnover. The state also describes a plan for sample monitoring, with one classroom per age group monitored regardless of program size, and about a third of all classrooms monitored every three years. The state describes a system whereby families currently have online access to licensing information, including health and safety information, and a plan to extend family access to information using the TQRIS system. The state also has a plan to create a public information campaign to inform families about the TQRIS system and provide information in Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The state's plan for rating and monitoring programs in the TQRIS system is fairly strong, but not fully implemented. The state will rely on outside monitors who are trained to ensure inter rater reliability, and plans to use valid and reliable instruments. The frequency of the monitoring is somewhat concerning, every 3 years, although similar to federal monitoring by HS programs and with safeguards in place for additional monitoring with program changes. The state's response was scored in the partially implemented, high quality plan range.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	12

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

- (a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);
- (b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and
- (c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--
 - (1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
 - (2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

The state has piloted the TQRIS system and validated its incentives to provide high quality interactions with children, to promote continuous improvement, and to increase competency of early childhood educators across the state to ensure that they are effective. Quality improvements include coaching, quality improvement awards, and professional development opportunities, funds and support. Additionally, the state is working with SEIU and the state legislature to implement a tiered reimbursement program. These are policies and practices to support high quality care for young children. The state's plan to help working families with high need children access high quality programs includes streamlining the reimbursement system to encourage more high quality programs to participate and increasing the recertification period to encourage more children with high needs to participate. These are functional systemic approaches to increasing the number of children with high needs participating in high quality early learning. The state's goals for programs reaching the top tiers are achievable but not ambitious. For example, the state identifies 7406 programs to participate in the TQRIS. By 2015, the state has a goal of 561 programs at Tier 4 and 368 at Tier 5, the highest level. This represents about 13% of the state's programs. Similarly, the state's goals for the number of children enrolled in top tier programs are achievable but not ambitious. For example, the state identifies a goal of 37% of children in CCDF funded programs will be served in programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS system. The state has partially implemented a system for improving the quality of programs in the TQRIS system, and has identified policies and procedures to reward improvement and quality. The state's goals for the number of programs reaching the highest levels are unambitious, though, so the response was rated in the higher medium range.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	8

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

- (a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and
- (b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

The state reports on two studies related to validating the TQRIS system. One evaluation with Mathematica explored the relationship between coaching and improved child care quality and higher TQRIS scores. The sample size in this study was small, the purpose of the study was not directly related to validating the TQRIS (it explored the coaching intervention), and the state does not report statistical results, making an evaluation of the study difficult. The state does not report what measures were used. The second evaluation with the University of Washington (UW) used the CLASS, environmental rating scales, self assessment and a professional development survey. This study yielded recommendations to refine quality standards and system framework in the TQRIS. The state indicates that DEL and UW are developing an evaluation plan. The state does not describe the plan or the measures it intends to use, with the exception of CLASS and ERS. Washington plans to link the evaluation to child outcomes, but does not elaborate on its plan to do so, beyond use of the kindergarten assessment. Overall, the state does not describe evaluations that validate the TQRIS system or a detailed plan to carry out this task. The

state's lack of details related to the evaluation plan renders the response in the medium range.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	30	26

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

- (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;
- (c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and
- (d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

The state has Early Learning and Development Standards, and indicates that the standards were developed with the unique learning needs of children with special needs and children whose home language is not English in mind. The standards include the essential domains of school readiness. The state also indicates that these standards are being revised to ensure cultural and linguistic competency, and that the standards will be available to families in multiple languages. The state aligns the standards with K-12 standards, although for birth to three, this alignment is weak. For example, the applicant state that in the k-12 standards, children compare, contrast, examine, and evaluate experiences, tasks and events. This standard is aligned with EHS children demonstrating improved general cognitive skills. The state indicates that the standards form the basis for the TQRIS system. To achieve high levels in the TQRIS system programs have to demonstrate alignment between the curriculum and the standards. The link to the professional development system is strong. One way that programs move from level 1 to 2 is training in the standards. Additionally, local colleges and universities teach to the standards. The state indicates that its CAS aligns with the standards, but has not provided enough specific information in the RTT proposal to make this evaluation. Beyond environmental and adult child interaction assessments, the state has not identified curriculum, assessments or screenings to be used in its programs. A strength is that the standards are used by the Department of Health in their parent outreach program Child Profile and the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) material to assist parents in identifying possible developmental delays. The state has a plan for a public awareness campaign about the standards to encourage use by providers and parents. The state has substantially put in place high quality ELDS that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate, and the state has a plan to revise these ELDS. The ELDS are linked to k-12 standards. The ELDS are used across state agencies to provide information to families on typical development and resources. The state's plan builds on these strengths and uses the ELDS as the backbone of a high quality early learning system. The state's score reflects a substantially implemented, high quality response.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	30	27

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

The state has identified Family Engagement as an essential part of its plan, recognizing that parents are first teachers to their children. Family engagement is linked to the TQRIS system developed by the state. Center directors, supervisors or home care providers are required to attend a 6 hour training on family engagement. The state's goal is for 60% of programs to receive this training by 2015. The state plans to offer this training online to reach additional staff. The state takes a strengthening approach to their work with families, supporting the family's role in the child's life, enhancing resiliency, increasing social connections, improving knowledge of child development, providing support, and enhancing social competence. The state plans to train programs in assessing their own family engagement practices, developing a plan of action to improve communication with families, and providing information from trusted sources on child development and parenting (e.g. CSEFEL). The state has several family engagement strategies in place. These include an outreach program to support the role of families – Love.Talk.Play, During the WaKids assessment at kindergarten entry, parents provide input about the family, their culture and values and goals for their child, Parents serve on an advisory panel to DEL. The state describes a substantial increase in the number of families served through home visiting, from 2791 in 2007 to 4335 in 2011 and is moving toward evidence-based home visitation programs. A weakness in the state's plan is that despite a third of the children identified as living in homes where English is not the first language, the state does not describe how it will reach these families. Overall, the state has substantially implemented many family engagement strategies, and has a high quality plan to build on these practices.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	40	32

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

- (a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;
- (b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and
- (c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(1)

The state's Early Learning and Development Standards form the core competency framework for professional development. The core competencies were developed based on research and in consultation with national experts from Zero to Three, Head Start, and CLASS. DEL has developed a statewide system and career lattice that uses the core competencies as the base of education and training. In Washington, early childhood educators can enter the field with a high school diploma. To achieve Core Competency level 1 requires 2 hours of training in each of the Core Competencies, a fairly low standard. The Core Competency levels go through 5, which indicates a graduate degree and a certain number of credits in ECE. The state's MERIT system tracks and supports individuals in the training and credentialing. The state offers a one-time payment of \$100 for registering with the

system as an incentive. Individuals can locate trainings from approved trainers with the MERIT system. The state offers monetary awards, as providers achieve higher levels of training and credentialing. The state also describes a partnership with Harvard University, Frontiers of Innovation and vaguely links it to the training system. The scope and availability of this training are unclear. The state has an interagency agreement with the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges to integrate the Core Competency framework into college early childhood education certificates beginning 2012. A central part of the state's training program is coaching. The state has a plan to certify trainers and coaches to ensure that the Core Competency framework is integrated throughout the state in a consistent manner. The state has substantially implemented its workforce knowledge and competency framework, and provides a high quality plan for career development and alignment with postsecondary education. While the state has developed a lattice system to promote career development, the low standard for progressing from level 1 to 2 is problematic in consideration of the overall goal of improving child outcomes.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	40	32
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)
<p>The state has started to implement a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, WaKids (Teaching Strategies GOLD) and uses the assessment to inform instruction and services in the early elementary grades. The assessment is aligned with the state's Early Learning and Development Standards, and covers all essential domains of school readiness. The state reports that the assessment tool is valid and reliable. The state has begun implementing the assessment, particularly in schools serving children with high needs. The state plans to phase in implementation of WaKids, and to fully implement the assessment, funded by the Superintendent for the 2016 school year, and meeting full implementation by 2015. The results are entered into the SLDS. The state plans to utilize some RTT funding for training, but will otherwise use state and other federal funds. Overall, the state has partially implemented the kindergarten assessment and has a high quality plan to fully implement WaKids by the end of the grant period, with funding from the state committed.</p>

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	225

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

10

10

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

- (a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and
- (b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)

The state's TQRIS system is designed so that all licensed and certified program are automatically entered into the TQRIS system. In Washington, child care centers and family child care homes that care for one or more unrelated children are required to be licensed, and the state provides significant fines for violations of these rules. Some Head Start and pre-k programs that operate less than 4 hours per day are exempt from licensing. The state has a plan to include these programs as they serve many children with high needs. The state's plan exceeds the requirements in the RTT grant to include all children cared for outside of their homes. Including all programs in the TQRIS system aids the state in providing quality early learning opportunities to all children, including children with high needs. The state's plan is substantially implemented and of high quality, which is reflected in the score.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or (b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion. 		
Comments on (P)(3)		
<p>The state meets competitive preference priority 3: Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten. The state has piloted the kindergarten entry assessment and has a high quality plan to fully implement the kindergarten assessment. The state has prioritized implementing the kindergarten assessment with children who have high needs. While that state has not already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, the state earned a score of at least 70% of the maximum points available for criterion E (1).</p>		

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes
<p>To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.</p> <p>The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.</p>	

Comments on Absolute Priority

Washington State's application reflects a thoughtful approach to building systems that support high quality early education. Since the state has only partially implemented much of their plan, their score does not always reflect the strengths of the application. The state has identified that about 40% of children birth to five live in poverty, demonstrating that they have a large number of high need children. Additionally, about a third of children in the state do not speak English as their first language. A smaller number of children are represented in the other special need classifications. The strengths of the state's plan include a piloted TQRIS. The proposed TQRIS system pushes early childhood programs toward quality. The TQRIS integrates Early Learning and Development Standards with professional education and parent engagement, and foundations for a successful early education system. The state has developed an incentive structure to promote quality and is looking to add a tiered reimbursement system as part of this plan. An additional strength of the State's application is the DEL, a cabinet level agency that will manage the grant. Through this agency the state demonstrates its commitment to the education of young children. DEL has been active in mobilizing the early childhood community in developing a plan, coordinating the efforts of multiple state agencies, and increasing public private partnerships and funding. The state has Early Learning and Development Standards that are also being revised to reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the state. The state has a goal related to professional development, based on knowledge of the Early Learning and Development Standards. Through this professional development system, the state has set up a system of incentives to increase credentialing and knowledge of early childhood providers, along with a training certification system. The state focuses much effort and resources on coaching, and has piloted this system. This approach is in line with the coaching efforts of Head Start. The state also has a partnership with colleges and universities to align early childhood education curriculum with the Early Learning and Development Standards. The state has piloted a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and has a plan to fully implement that system with funding from the Superintendent for Public Instruction by 2016. The state identifies that information from this assessment will be integrated into the k-12 database to be used for instructional planning in the early grades and to assess the quality of early childhood programs birth to 5. The state has set ambitious goals related to Kindergarten Assessment, with 100% of teachers trained in the assessment and 100% of children assessed. Overall, Washington state provides a high quality plan to continue building systems to support quality early learning programs, with integration across agencies for implementation.