



WSA Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP

*Serving ECEAP, Head Start, Migrant Head Start,
Tribal Head Start and Early Head Start
Programs and Families*



Memorandum

TO: ECEAP and Head Start Directors
FROM: Lori Pittman, Joel Ryan, Kylee Allen & April Terry
DATE: November 1, 2011
RE: 2012 Parent Ambassadors

We want to thank everyone for embracing the Parent Ambassadors Program. As you may know, in the past year ambassadors worked on preventing significant cuts to ECEAP, influencing child care subsidy policy, advocating for Head Start funding, and educating parents and programs about the legislative process. Three of our 2011 PA's were honored to present at the Office of Head Start Leadership Conference in Washington DC, as well as the NHSA Leadership Institute. Our Parent Ambassadors are well known by both Washington State and Washington DC advocates and elected officials, and many states are replicating the program in their own areas.

This 2012 year will bring many of the same challenges, tasks and expectations for the new cohort of WSA Parent Ambassadors, and we encourage you to identify parents within your program who may be good candidates. The application includes a letter of support to be signed by the Grantee/Contractor director, to ensure that you are well in the loop and can support your Ambassador/s activities and leadership development. If your program approves applications for more than one parent, we may contact you directly as we work through the selection process to get more information about your applicants.

Below you will find information and timelines for the Parent Ambassador Program:

Goals of Parent Ambassador Program

- Teach ambassadors about the legislative process.
- Train ambassadors how to educate, organize, and mobilize parents in their program.
- Give ambassadors the skills to advocate for themselves and their community.
- Help ambassadors serve as a liaison between a local program, WSA, and the larger early learning community.
- Ensure that parents have a voice in policy making discussions and deliberations.
- Provide WSA and the ECEAP/Head Start community with a strong grassroots network that can help move positive policy proposals forward.

Responsibilities of a Parent Ambassador

- Each Parent Ambassador must be available to participate in two conference calls a month. These calls take place in the evening and are meant to share information and provide updates.
- Each Parent Ambassador is expected to attend four face to face trainings put together by WSA.
- Each Parent Ambassador must commit to provide “teach backs” at their policy council meetings and/or other parent meetings.
- Each Parent Ambassador is expected to participate in the legislative process by advocating for ECEAP and Head Start at the state and federal levels.

Responsibilities of a Director with a Parent Ambassador

- Each Director will make time at policy council and parent meeting for ambassadors to share information.
- Each Director will support their ambassador(s) by mentoring via check-ins and/or through the help of family engagement/parent staff.

Who are the staff?

This year our staff includes the following people:

- **Kylee Allen** comes to us from Skagit Island Head Start. Kylee is a past EHS and HS parent. Kylee job shares the role of Parent Coordinator for the ambassador program. She provides training to ambassadors, works as a mentor and coach, and is responsible for the twice monthly conference calls among many responsibilities.
- **April Terry** of ESD113 Sound to Harbor HS/ECEAP has served on two statewide early learning advisory committees, and has been an incredible spokesman for ECEAP, Head Start, and child care subsidies in testimony, with media, and with elected officials and agency staff in both Olympia and Washington DC. April heads up our Just for Parents newsletter and shares the role of Parent Coordinator.
- **Lori Pittman** of Puget Sound ESD PA Project Manager
- **Joel Ryan**, Executive Director of WSA
- **Katy Warren**, Professional Development Manager of WSA

Timeline of Events/Activities

Each Parent Ambassador will attend four face to face trainings put together by WSA. The dates of these trainings are the following:

- January 18-20 - Dumas Bay Centre, Federal Way
- March 6th to 8th - WSA Winter Meeting, Red Lion, Olympia
- June 25 to 27 - CWU, Ellensburg
- October 10-12 - Spokane Red Lion

In closing, we would like to remind you of the costs of participation, although the grant from the Peppercorn Foundation covers the basic cost we **may** request your consideration of extending additional fiscal support from your program, especially for additional educational and training opportunities that may come available throughout the year. Making this kind of commitment creates additional growth opportunities for parents and lessens the pressure on the small Parent Ambassador budget. As you know, education, training, the Parent ambassador program and other professional development opportunities for parent may be supported with the use of program dollars and PA dollars.

Costs for Participation

All travel expenses for Parent Ambassador Program activities are paid for by WSA. This includes hotel, travel, child care, food, materials, and any registration fees. There are only two exceptions to this:

1. If a Parent Ambassador is a WSA voting representative for your local program and you budgeted to send them to the fall or winter meeting, then we are asking the local program to cover the cost of that meeting.
2. In September/October the National Head Start Association will hold its Leadership Institute in Washington DC. WSA hopes to send 5 parent ambassadors to this event. While WSA will pick up the majority of the cost of the travel, we do ask (but do not require) programs to contribute a small amount to help defray the costs.