



**ANNOUNCEMENT: ELS/KS-09 #15
FAP-09 #01
ELS/HS #05**

**OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT & EARLY LEARNING
BUREAU OF EARLY LEARNING SERVICES**

ISSUE DATE: June 4, 2009
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2009
SUNSET DATE: On-Going

SUBJECT:	Early Learning Network (ELN) and Child Outcome Reporting in 2009-2010
TO:	OCDEL Contractors and/or Grantees including: Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start Supplemental Assistance Programs; Regional Keys and Preschool Program Specialists
FROM:	Harriet Dichter Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development & Early Learning

Harriet Dichter

PURPOSE:

To announce the timeline for implementation of the Early Learning Network (ELN) in the Fall of 2009 for infants, toddlers and preschoolers served in Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs, and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care centers.

BACKGROUND:

ELN is a comprehensive unified data system for assessing individual-level child outcomes across multiple programs. It links existing data systems by child identifier and will collect additional information on child and family services across program area. When fully implemented, the data will be used to inform state policy decisions, investments and improvement efforts for early educational programs from birth to third grade.

The first phase of ELN was completed on May 30, 2009. This phase included the linking of existing child demographic database, PELICAN, with the child outcome reporting system, Work Sampling and Ounce Scale Online (WSO/OSO). The use of unique child, teacher and program identifiers allowed ELN to match data collected in PELICAN with data collected in WSO/OSO for a more complete analysis of child outcomes.

The second phase of ELN, scheduled to begin in September 2009, expands the implementation of ELN to additional Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) early childhood programs including: Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs, and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care centers.

DISCUSSION:

All infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs, and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care centers will be included in ELN reporting starting in Fall 2009. Children who are of Kindergarten or school-age will not be included in ELN even if they are enrolled in a Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care center.

Administrators of these programs should begin to prepare for ELN implementation by 1) participating in summer professional development activities about ELN and 2) by evaluating their program's technology.

Professional Development Support for ELN

In preparation for the ELN Fall 2009 timelines, OCDEL has sponsored professional development and awareness level activities. These activities include: presentations on ELN at statewide meetings and conferences such as the 2008 Early Childhood Summit, Head Start Supplemental Assistance annual statewide meeting and Career Development and Teacher Preparation meeting; over 70 trainings on the Work Sampling System, the Ounce Scale and the Online systems for both Work Sampling and Ounce through the Regional Keys; and over 100 webinars for early childhood program administrators who will be using the Work Sampling and Ounce Online. OCDEL has also sponsored the training of approximately 50 trainers who are available to provide on-going professional development on Work Sampling System, the Ounce Scale and the Online systems for both reporting tools throughout the Fall. Please refer to the professional development calendar on the PA Key website for scheduling information.

From June to September 2009, professional development activities will focus on providing the information and skills that programs will need to begin to use ELN. These activities include:

- Early July 2009 – a series of conference calls will be held statewide to provide an overview of the ELN and to describe the process for obtaining usernames and passwords for data entry. The hour-long calls will be held at a variety of times during the day, from early morning to early evening, in order to accommodate many schedules. Program administrators from Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs, and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care center should plan to attend;
- Early August 2009 – Three-hour ELN training sessions will be provided across the state. These sessions are designed for program administrators from Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs, and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care centers. The sessions will be computer-based, allowing participants an opportunity to practice entering data into ELN. The sessions will also describe the demographic data collection requirements, ideas for talking with families about ELN, and strategies for efficient data entry. A number of resource materials including flyers describing ELN for families, frequently asked questions and responses, and tips for using computers will be provided.

As training schedules and registration information is finalized, the information will be posted to the PA Key website at www.pakeys.org and will be disseminated through additional announcements, the BUILD listserv and the Regional Keys.

Technical assistance and on-going support will also be available as programs begin to enter data in ELN. Email inquiries on ELN should be addressed to earlylearningnetwork@pattan.net. This email address is currently available for any procedural questions and concerns. A toll-free phone line will be available in August 2009 for issues related to data entry and computer use.

Evaluate Program Technology

Prior to data entry in ELN, Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs, and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care centers should evaluate the computer technology available in their program, including hardware, software and internet access to insure that they are prepared. For ELN, programs will need access to a computer with internet access. While high-speed access is preferable, it is not required. No special computer software programs will need to be purchased.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs, and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care centers should begin planning for the Fall use of ELN by:
 - a. Participating in professional development on ELN,
 - b. Participating in professional development on Work Sampling System, Ounce Scale and their Online systems, and
 - c. Evaluating their program's computer technology.
2. Regional Keys should work with the Keystone STAR 3 and 4 child care centers in their region to ensure adequate training and planning to implement ELN in the Fall of 2009. All OCDEL communications about ELN should follow the ELS-KS-O8 #28 protocol.
3. Preschool Program Specialists should work with the Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs and Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs in their areas to ensure adequate training and planning to implement ELN in the Fall of 2009.
4. Regional Keys and Preschool Program Specialists should become aware of ELN policies and procedures so that they may better communicate to Accountability Block Grant Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Programs, and Keystone STARS 3 and 4 child care centers. OCDEL has developed a number of communication tools that are designed to provide ongoing informational updates.
 - a. ELN Updates: a monthly update with Frequently Asked Questions that should be disseminated to all programs participating in ELN reporting. It may be disseminated as a whole document or its components may be included in existing forms of communication. It will be emailed to the Regional Keys and Preschool Program Specialists and posted to the PA Key website.
 - b. ELN Newsbytes: short informational pieces about ELN that are designed for inclusion in existing newsletters, list serves, and other communication tools. They will be emailed to the Regional Keys and Preschool Program Specialists and posted to the PA Key website every two weeks.
5. Additional announcements will be provided with the schedules for upcoming training events. Once the schedules are available, please review and distribute as appropriate.