



CSHEL Background and History

In 1988, the Washington State legislature created the Child Care Coordinating Council (CCCC) in an effort to bring key players from various state agencies, early care advocates, business, and other interested parties together to focus the legislative agenda around child care issues. This coalition began as the Health and Safety subcommittee of the CCCC, tasked with advising the legislature on issues impacting health and safety in child care settings. The group was legislatively mandated and included representatives from the licensing agency (Department of Social and Health Services, now Department of Early Learning), Department of Health, Child Care Resource & Referral, HeadStart, ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program), local health jurisdictions, and others.

The CCCC was disbanded in 2004. The Health and Safety sub-committee continued until 2005 with the support of the Washington State Department of Health. Until this time, the committee had a dedicated, paid staff person who come to the meetings, took minutes, maintained an email list, and distributed notices. After 2005, it was decided that the committee would continue independently despite it's lack of a legislative mandate. The members felt that the issues addressed at the meetings were too important and needed to be dealt with at a state-wide level.

In 2007, the group named itself the Washington State Child Health and Safety Advisory Committee (WSCHSAC). The WSCHSAC created a charter and decided to remain independent of any agency sponsorship. In 2009, this business plan was developed and the name of the group was changed to the Coalition for Safety and Health in Early Learning (CSHEL).

During the early years as a subcommittee of the CCCC until 2004, members of this group worked in collaboration with Healthy Child Care Washington to put on statewide conferences. These conferences eventually partnered with Head Start. After a time money for such educational opportunities dried up. This committee and regional Healthy Child Care Washington meetings became the primary means for health professionals involved in child care and early learning environments to share information.