



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Provider Supports Subcommittee
Agency Updates
January 22, 2025

Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Updates

DCYF's Early Learning Division Updates

2025 Child Care Complex Needs Fund Will Open This Week

DCYF is pleased to announce that the 2025 Child Care Complex Needs Fund application will open this week. Eligible licensed, certified, and certified-for-payment-only child care providers and eligible license-exempt Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) providers can apply for the Child Care Complex Needs Fund in the [WA Compass Provider Portal](#).

What Can the Fund Be Used For?

- Adding staff members to support children with complex needs, increasing staff hours to support children with complex needs, and up to a \$5,000 hiring bonus for new staff that support children with complex needs.
- Facility improvements to comply with ADA accessibility requirements.
- Therapeutic services. Therapeutic services mean services offered by skilled professionals, that focus on curative, rehabilitative, preventative or healing practices.
- Supportive and adaptive materials and equipment.

How Much Funding Can a Provider Request?

- Eligible licensed, certified, and certified for payment only child care providers can request between \$5,000 and \$50,000.
- Eligible Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers can request between \$100 and \$2,000.

DCYF strongly encourages all providers to utilize our technical assistance partners. Individual technical assistance is available and includes guidance on preparing for and accessing the application, in addition to advice on saving receipts and documentation. Providers may access technical assistance in their preferred language and by telephone, internet, or in-person. For technical assistance contact information, please see the [Child Care Complex Needs Fund webpage](#).

The Child Care Complex Needs Fund application will close at 5 p.m. PST on March 5, 2025. If you have questions about the grant timeline or other questions, email dcyf.childcaregrants@dcyf.wa.gov.

Early Achievers Updates – Timeline and Quality Level Finalization

Exciting news! In spring 2025, DCYF will be implementing two changes to Early Achievers to support participants whose timelines were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic pause:

- **Timeline Adjustments:** DCYF will be doing a one-time extension of Quality Level due dates to be based on when a site completed its Program Profile. Participants will see this change reflected in their Early Achievers profile in MERIT.
- **Quality Level Finalization:** Early Achievers participants can finalize a Quality Level at any time in MERIT. If they do not finalize a Quality Level by the due date, MERIT will do this on their behalf.

DCYF will notify Early Achievers participants of these timeline adjustments and who to contact for questions. If you have any questions about these changes, please contact QRIS@dcyf.wa.gov.

Early Achievers Updates – Program Profile

DCYF is happy to share the revised Program Profile, made to better support early learning providers, families, and coaches. This update comes from feedback from many sources, including the early adopters survey and direct comments from users.

What's New?

- **Easier Family Surveys:** Families can now fill out surveys using a link or QR code, so teachers and directors don't have to enter email addresses one by one.
- **Self-Check Tool:** Program leaders can now review their practices at the start of the three-year cycle to see where they are and where they might want help.
- **New Report Design:** The reports now look better and make it easier to see strengths and areas for growth.

Access and Living Wage Proviso Status Update

The Washington State Legislature has tasked DCYF to submit an implementation plan to expand access to Washington's mixed delivery child care system (ESSB [5950](#) Section 229(31)).

The Early Care and Education Access and Living Wage Proviso Implementation Plan will outline DCYF's plan to lower family contributions to high-quality early care and education at no more than 7% of a family's income (a sustainable amount for a family) and uplift the early care and education workforce with a living wage and benefits.

DCYF will submit the Implementation Plan by June 30, 2025. Because the full implementation plan is not available until after the 2025 Legislative session, DCYF has prepared a [Status Update Report](#) on the plan's progress.

For more information about the Early Care and Education Access and Living Wage Proviso work, please visit [the webpage](#). For questions about the Early Care and Education Access and Living Wage Proviso, please contact DCYF's Government Affairs team at dcyf.govaffairs@dcyf.wa.gov.

Early Care and Education Updates

Additional Early Care and Education topics can be found in the most recent edition of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Newsletter, here: [Early Care and Education Newsletter | December 2024 | January 2025 \(English | Español | Soomaali\)](#). [Click here](#) to sign up for the monthly newsletter.

DCYF 2025 Early Learning Legislative Proposal Updates

Looking Ahead

2025 is year one of a biennial session, meaning it is a long (105 days) and budget-setting session. There is a new gubernatorial administration, significant lawmaker change, and current programs are outpacing revenue growth. With these realities, DCYF will prioritize legally required early learning expansions. [Governor Inslee's proposed 2025-27 biennial budget](#) focuses on maintaining and preserving access to existing early learning program services, leading to some proposed changes to DCYF's 2025 Decision Packages.

Decision Package Updates

1. **WCCC Eligibility 75% SMI & Dual Language:** Increase Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) eligibility to 75 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) effective July 1, 2025, as required under [RCW 43.216.802\(3\)](#), and to increase dual language rates to adjust for inflation under [RCW 43.216.775](#).
 - a. *Request: \$256.925M*
Funded: \$5.136M
 - b. 75 percent eligibility expansion delayed until FY30
 - c. Increase Dual Language Rates using the U.S. Implicit Price Deflator
 - d. Increased funding for outreach, resource and referral to inform families who are eligible and who have not been eligible historically
2. **Child Care Subsidy Base Rates:** Maintain child care center subsidy base rates at the 85th percentile of the most current market for child care centers as required by [RCW 43.216.828](#), resulting in a rate increase based on the 2024 Market Rate Survey (MRS).
 - a. *With Caseload updates:*
Request: \$284.897M
Funded: \$284.897M
 - b. Increase subsidy base rates beginning July 1, 2025
 - c. Note: DP includes center-based care rate increase. FCC rate increase is in the collective bargaining agreement between DCYF and family child care providers

3. **Comply with New CCDF Requirements:** Comply with the 2024 Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule change that became effective April 2024.
 - a. *Request: \$94.914M*
Funded: \$88.019M
 - b. Supports eligible children and families with a full 12 months of WCCC benefit authorization beginning July 1, 2025.
 - c. Align child care subsidy payment practices with the private market by July 2026:
 - i. Pay providers prospectively (instead of retrospectively), and
 - ii. Pay based on enrollment (instead of by attendance)
 - d. Only require overpayment collection for families approved under presumptive eligibility when federally required
 - e. One-time costs for an outreach and communication contract and training support for providers who participate in child care subsidy programs
4. **ECEAP Entitlement:** Prepare for the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) to meet entitlement per [RCW 43.216.556](#).
 - a. *Request: \$451.416M*
Funded: \$65.076M
 - b. Sustainable ECEAP slot rates, representing an 18 percent slot rate increase in FY26
 - c. ECEAP Entitlement delayed until 2030-31 school year
 - d. Convert 250 Part Day slots to Full Day slots and add 500 Full Day slots in FY27
5. **Licensing Complaint Unit:** Create a child care complaint investigations unit within the Licensing Division to address the licensing complexities for all child care licensed providers and support provider compliance.
 - a. Not funded

Rule Making Update – Recently Completed Rules

Capacity Waivers for Family Home Providers and Training Requirements
DCYF Licensing Division filed [WSR 25-01-087](#) to amend the Capacity waivers for family home providers and training requirements rules. These amended rules, WACs 110-300-0106 and 110-301-0106, are needed to allow a three-month timeframe to obtain training requirements for child care and early learning programs, specifically first aid and CPR certifications. The amended WAC 110-300-0358 is needed to issue capacity waivers to allow no more than 16 children in a family home child care program, only after they meet all other requirements. It also updated the emergency preparedness requirements and now requires better coordination between DCYF, child care providers, and local building authorities. The new rules go into effect Jan. 13, 2025.

Note:

WAC 110-300-0331, WAC 110-301-0331, and WAC 110-302-0331 were previously filed with the above WACs. These WACs will now be filed separately in January 2025.

Questions? If you have questions about DCYF rules or require an alternate format for this information, please contact dcyf.rulescoordinator@dcyf.wa.gov.

To view the original message, visit the [Rule Making Update – December 27, 2024](#).