



Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Feedback Loop

February 4, 2025

Recommendations, Input and Decisions Made, Status Updates

Follow Up Items from December 3, joint ELAC and Provider Supports Meeting:

DCYF Leadership Panel

What plans are there to promote and support the PACE program? Could be the numbers are low because of a lack of knowledge that it is an alternate pathway.

DCYF is currently updating materials to guide providers to select a pathway to meet the staff qualification requirements, including PACE. DCYF will post these materials on our website. Materials will be available to our training partners, DCYF staff including licensors and system navigators, and Early Achievers Coaches advising early learning professionals. DCYF will seek feedback from the Provider Supports (on 1/22/2025), Early Achievers Coaches (February 2025) and other partners.

How will good standing be defined for the education waiver? Hoping the pandemic timeframe when STARS classes were challenging to find will be excluded from the amount of time that is being considered. There is an experience-based equivalent for eligible staff. This experience option is not available to meet staff qualifications for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) nor for Early Achievers professional development points. Eligibility criteria include staff who have a cumulative of seven years of employment in a licensed or certified child care center or licensed family home and have completed and maintained compliance with all health and safety and child care or school-age care basics training required by the department.

Will there be additional Special Needs Rate for children needing 1:1 support? DCYF did not request additional funding for an increase in special needs rate. DCYF focused child care subsidy decision package requests on base rates, enrollment based and prospective payment and increases in family eligibility.

Will DCYF be asking for funding for the Cost of Care and Living Wage? Or is this something providers need to advocate for? DCYF requested to increase rates to the 85th percentile of the 2024 market rate. The Decision Package included the comparative rate corresponding to the cost of high-quality care. [2024 Cost of Quality Care and Market Rate Survey](#)

Why is there a waiting list for Health insurance for providers? As a result of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), licensed family home providers may be eligible for health benefits. The monthly amount that the state and union negotiated for this benefit is capped and that amount has been reached, which means that there is a waitlist. The tentatively agreed to 25-27 CBA does increase the amount which would allow more eligible licensed family homes to access health benefits in the future. The CBA is subject to approval from the Legislature. Many providers (regardless of provider type) may be eligible for free or low-cost Cascade Care plans through [Washington Healthplanfinder](#). Any employee of a DCYF-licensed child care facility can contact [Yakima Neighborhood Health Services](#) at cnavi@ynhs.org or 509-574-0826 to learn if they qualify and sign up any time during the year.

When can we see data on the increase in providers, including breakdowns by center-based and home-based care, and their distribution across state regions?

Data on provider growth is available from multiple sources:



- **Data.WA.gov** provides detailed information on the number of licensed providers categorized as center-based or home-based, their locations by region or city, Early Achievers participation, and more. To customize your search, click on the “Data” tab and use the "Columns" icon on the right-hand side of the webpage to select specific data points. You can explore this information at [DCYF Licensed Childcare Center and School Age Program Providers](#).
- The [2023 FSKA evaluation report](#) has static graphs that show provider growth by centers and homes, however these data are a couple of years old. The following page numbers may be helpful to answer the question posed:
 - a. Page 19: Total providers by year from 2019-2022 (broken down by type of care)
 - b. Page 20: Family home and child care center entry rates (and exit rates) from 2019-2022
 - c. Page 47: Provider exit rates from 2019-2022 disaggregated by county
- There is a more updated graph of statewide licensed provider growth from March 2020 – September 2024, however the numbers are still being validated [by DCYF’s Office of Innovation, Alignment and Accountability](#).

Can the provider be given any help in caring for a child with special needs without having a diagnosis? Because the waiting lists for a diagnosis are very long and then parents are discouraged from taking their children for an evaluation.

DCYF will need budget authority (from the legislature) to change rules that will increase funding requirements for the special needs process. This includes things such as not requiring a diagnosis for the special needs rate.

DCYF offers the Child Care Complex Needs Fund, which is intended to promote inclusive, least-restrictive environments, and support providers serving children with developmental delays, disabilities, behavioral needs, and/or other unique needs. DCYF is currently preparing to open the 2025 Child Care Complex Needs Fund. Learn more by visiting the [Child Care Complex Needs Fund webpage](#).

DCYF funds Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) services offered to Early Achievers participants through Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA of WA). The Holding Hope IECMHC program is designed to promote the social-emotional development and well-being of young children in licensed child care settings throughout WA state. For more information about Holding Hope IECMHC, visit the [Holding Hope website](#).

DCYF also partners with the UW Haring Center to offer training that supports child care workers serving children with complex needs. All trainings are free to providers and are held remotely via Zoom. Trainings are available in English, Spanish, and Somali. See flyer for topics and dates ([English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Somali](#)).

What can be done for providers seeking special needs rate as reviewers are requesting different things prolonging approval and providers staying stuck not knowing what they want to see? Is there an informational sheet or can something be done so that this doesn’t keep happening?

The DCYF special needs rates for child care is based on verification of a child’s eligibility. Verification may include documentation from a medical professional or other confidential information that DCYF is limited in sharing with the child care provider. This includes why an application may be pending or denied eligibility.

Families do not always provide all required information to continue with the special needs request. DCYF can share with providers that additional information is needed from the family and that the family needs to refer to their request or contact the contact center for additional information.

DCYF recently updated the special needs request page: [How to Apply for WCCC Special Needs Rate | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)



Preschool Development Grant – Open Source Curriculum

Are there thoughts on training for providers to create curriculum that can be personalized for their kiddos?

DCYF and Cultivate Learning will develop the curriculum and associated training using a design-based approach. We will recruit of a core educator team that can work alongside curriculum writers, instructional designers and graphic team to generate ideas and provide valuable feedback.

Curriculum will have the following components:

- Adaptation for individualized learning with attention to universal design and multi-age environments.
- Customizable and will attend to the progression of developmental needs of each child.
- Educators will be able to adapt for best use with their children and families.

How would this be mindful of what Early Achievers is expecting of licensed homes and centers?

The curriculum will be designed with all program types in mind including Family Child Care with mixed age settings. With help from the core educator design group, we will focus on developing a curriculum that is easy to implement across program types with attention to low cost and available resources for activities and lessons. The curriculum will be built with specific alignment to the Early Achievers Standards which are already aligned with ECEAP and Head Start Performance Standards. Currently, programs are required by WAC to document a curriculum philosophy but are not required to have a curriculum in. The WA curriculum will fulfill a much-needed gap in ensuring that all program types, not just those who receive additional resources through various fund streams, can access a research-based curriculum.

What percentage of children receiving care are with providers participating in Early Achievers? How does this percentage differ between Homes and Centers?

Early Achievers participating providers make up 4,973 out of over 6,000 providers in the state of WA as of 12/1/2024. This is 82.8% of the total provider population currently.

There are currently 3,168 out of over 3,790 Family Home Providers participating in Early Achievers. This is 84% of the Family Home Provider population.

There are currently 1,769 out of 2,210 Center Based Providers participating in Early Achievers. This is 80% of the Center Based Provider population.

You can find this information on the Early Achievers Dashboard that is updated monthly found here:

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/early-learning-dashboards/early-achievers-data-dashboard>

What process do you follow to select providers who will give feedback on the curriculum?

Targeted recruitment to represent those most likely to benefit from the curriculum and those with expertise in supporting those programs in implementing a curriculum. We propose the following provider representation based on:

- a. Languages: English, Spanish, Somali
 - b. Regions: at least one on each side of the state
 - c. Program type: FCC, CCC
 - d. Age ranges, mixed age groups, infants and toddlers, preschool
 - e. Role: teacher, owner, director
 - f. ELAC and/or Provider Supports member
 - g. Tribal program representative
- *multiple criteria can be met by one provider.



We anticipate that this group will help co-create the curriculum to some degree including trying activities out, providing feedback and sharing with their networks. This group will be recruited by Cultivate Learning and will consist of 10-14 representatives.

What is in the Early Achievers Report to the Governor?

Here is the full QRIS Spending Report that is delivered to the Legislature yearly.

<https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/QRISpendingReport-2023.pdf>

Here is a link to the WISPP study about Early Achievers that came out a few years ago.

https://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1762/Wsipp_Early-Achievers-Evaluation-Report-Four-Analysis-of-Benefits-and-Costs_Overview-of-EA-Report-Series.pdf

Can you provide a data snapshot that includes all licensed early learning sites, highlighting:

- a. **Which sites are using an evidence-based curriculum? Is there a difference in the data between Homes and Centers regarding the use of evidence-based curriculum?**
- b. **Which sites do not accept subsidy? Are there notable differences in curriculum usage between providers that accept subsidies and those that do not?**
- c. **Could this data help us identify trends or gaps in curriculum adoption?**

We only collect this information as part of the Early Achievers Program Profile. This is where providers self-identify, through a series of surveys, a variety of information about their programs, their goals, and areas in which they would like additional support. There is not currently a mechanism in place that surveys ALL Licensed Early Learning sites about their curriculum. Licensing requires a provider to have a "Curriculum Philosophy" in place. They do not collect data around which curriculum philosophies are in place, nor does Licensing require a curriculum to be implemented.

- a. **Which sites are using an evidence-based curriculum? Is there a difference in the data between Homes and Centers regarding the use of evidence-based curriculum?**

According to data from the Early Achievers Program Profile:

- For the question labeled "What curriculum is used by your program? (Check all that apply)", 540 respondents selected "No Curriculum is Used". When broken down by program type:
 - 26 Child Care Centers selected "No curriculum is used"
 - 517 Family Child Care providers selected "No curriculum is used".
- For the question labeled "Please select all the items you would like additional support with (Check all that apply)", 2,515 respondents selected "Curriculum design", and 2,511 selected "Curriculum implementation".

- b. **Which sites do not accept subsidy? Are there notable differences in curriculum usage between providers that accept subsidies and those that do not?** We do not collect this data.
- c. **Could this data help us identify trends or gaps in curriculum adoption?** Yes, this data shows us that there are gaps in curriculum adoption across the state.