

# Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

## Feedback Loop

Follow-up items from: February 10, 2026 ELAC Meeting

### Staff Qualifications Updates/Presentation

- **Is there an update on when MERIT will reflect the experience years of service waiver?**
  - DCYF is currently exploring how experience is documented and recognized through the Staff Qualifications Workgroup. Recommendations from this group will help inform updates to MERIT.
  - DCYF is in the process of implementing updates to MERIT to support how experience will be documented and recognized with the workgroup's recommendations. As part of this work, MERIT will be updated to reflect years of service based on employment information entered into an individual's MERIT account. MERIT serves as the official record for workforce education and experience.
  - Additional details about how individuals document their experience, including how information will be reviewed and verified, are still being finalized. Guidance will be shared with providers and partners once it is available.
  - A point of clarification - the experience-based competency is an equivalency, not a waiver, that honors the experience as one way to meet qualification requirements.
- **Will the Continuing Education Proposal trainings from out of state allow for more than the current 3 hours of training?**
  - Yes, Continuing Education Proposal (CEP) trainings from out of state will allow for more than 3 hours of in-service hours. The out-of-state training limits were removed during COVID to increase training opportunities available virtually. For more information about CEPs and out-of-state training, please refer to the [Workforce Growth, Quality, And Recognition Procedural Manual](#).



- **One thing that has come up with the family child care providers that I work with is the inability to use a CDA in place of a high school diploma or GED for family child care — while a CDA is accepted alongside a diploma or GED in comparable early learning roles — represents a notable equity concern. Family child care providers are held to a more restrictive qualification pathway than their peers. Is DCYF reviewing this policy? This could support a more inclusive and accessible workforce.**
  - While a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential is a recognized early learning credential, it does not replace the high school or GED education requirement. Individuals may be eligible to obtain a CDA while still enrolled in high school. As a result, the CDA alone does not consistently demonstrate completion on high school or equivalent.
  - Family child care providers are not held to a more restrictive qualification pathway; rather, requirements are designed to ensure consistency across roles while recognizing different responsibilities and settings within the early learning system.

## Understanding our Workforce Data Presentation

- **Is there a timeline for when the data will be shared?**
  - We have not confirmed when data will be available for sharing, but we will reach out for the opportunity to present it as soon as it is available.
- **What is the purpose of this presentation, and how will DCYF use the information shared?**
  - The purpose of this presentation was to collect input on:
    - Clarity of the active workforce definitions
    - How best to describe the limitations of the data
    - What information people would want to see and how they might use it
  - This work is a joint effort between the Early Learning Division and the Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability (OIAA). The primary goal is to support forecasting of workforce needs, such as training and coaching, so the right resources are in place.
  - This data will also allow us to look at broader trends and conduct analysis that leads to more useful insights over time, while continuing to improve data quality. While there are different ways to define the early learning workforce, the goal of this effort is to establish a consistent set of information that can be produced regularly and reliably.

- **Will this data better inform future budgets/leg sessions?**
  - Since the primary function of this data project is to support forecasting for areas such as training and coaching, it will be closely connected to how DCYF understands and allocates resources for job role requirements. Information about the workforce is also an important consideration in legislative decision making, and this data may help inform those discussions.

## Follow-up items from: December 16, 2025, Joint ELAC & Provider Supports Subcommittee Meeting

### DCYF Leadership Panel Presentation: Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) Topic

- DCYF plays a key role in how enrollment data is framed for policymakers. How is DCYF ensuring legislators understand that increased WCCC participation reflects rising affordability challenges for families, and what specific policy recommendations is the agency advancing as a result?
  - DCYF provides feedback regarding the CCDF requirements of affordability and equal access, including keeping family financial participation at 7% or less of family income.