



Dual Language Designation Implementation Guide



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Introduction

Purpose of Dual Language Designation Implementation Guide

This guide helps early learning programs understand the Dual Language Designation and complete the designation process.

Use this guide to:

- Learn what the Dual Language Designation is
- Understand the requirements for earning the designation
- Follow each step of the designation process
- Find information and resources throughout the process



Need help? For questions about the Dual Language Designation process, please contact DCYF at QRIS@dcyf.wa.gov

The Dual Language Designation

The Fair Start for Kids Act created a Dual Language Designation. This designation recognizes programs that support children learning in two or more languages and meet the Dual Language Designation requirements.

Programs must participate in:

- Early Achievers

What the designation means:

- It recognizes programs that support multilingual children and families
- It recognizes programs working to strengthen and revitalize Tribal languages
- It shows that a program uses practices that support multilingual learning

Program Types Eligible of the Dual Language Designation

Dual Language Programs

Dual language programs provide instruction in two languages, usually English and a language spoken in the community. At least **50%** of instruction is provided in the partner language. Each language is used intentionally during designated, equal, and predictable periods. This approach supports **bilingualism**, **biliteracy**, and strong **cultural and family** connections.

Children in these programs learn:

- To read and write in the partner language
- Cultural teachings and traditions
- School subjects in both languages

Tribal Language Revitalization Programs

Tribal language revitalization programs help preserve and strengthen Tribal languages. These programs are guided by cultural teachings and traditional knowledge passed down through generations.

These programs follow Tribal-defined approaches and not a 50/50 language model.

Several organizations work together to support the Dual Language Designation

DCYF

Leads the planning, development, implementation, oversight of the designation process and awarding the designation once all requirements are met. Develops resources with Child Care Aware of Washington and UW Cultivate Learning.

UW Cultivate Learning

Reviews submitted evidence during the quality recognition cycle. Updates CECI to support the designation process and provides training for Early Achievers coaches.

Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA of WA)

Provides coaching support to programs participating in Dual Language or Tribal language revitalization efforts.

Early Achievers Participants

Complete the required steps of the Dual Language Designation process as part of their Quality Recognition Cycle.

Dual Language Designation Framework

Overview

Early Achievers participants can earn a Dual Language Designation through the Quality Recognition Cycle.

To earn the designation, programs must submit evidence showing how they meet the Dual Language Program Standards and Best Practices.

The **Dual Language Program Standards for Early Care and Education** provide a research-based framework of best practices for recognizing, promoting, and improving dual language learning in early care and education settings.

Quality Standards Areas:

Programs submit evidence in five quality standards areas:

- Curriculum & Assessment
- Program Structure
- Cultural Inclusivity
- Family Engagement and Community Partnerships
- Tribal Language and Cultural Guidelines

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Want to learn more? Review the following resource: [Dual Language Program Standards for Early Care and Education.](#)

Getting Started

A successful Dual Language Designation process starts with understanding the requirements and available supports. This section explains who can apply, how to get started, and where to find help.

Who can Request the Designation

Early Achievers participants that offer Dual Language or Tribal Language Revitalization programming can apply for the Dual Language Designation through Early Achievers Quality Recognition Cycle process.

Participation is voluntary. Programs that choose to apply must meet the eligibility requirements and complete all required steps.

Eligibility Requirements

To earn a Dual Language Designation, a program must:

- Be an Early Achievers site with a finalized Quality Level 3+ or higher.
- List the program languages in the policy handbook and explain how the program partners with families to meet the needs multilingual learners or describe how Tribal language speakers support language revitalization.
- Have staff who provide instruction in English and the partner language or be a Tribal Language Revitalization program with an identified Tribal language speaker.
- Ensure all Dual Language lead teachers and program leaders complete the Dual Language training. (Tribal Language Revitalization Programs are Exempt) Submit evidence showing how your program meets [The Dual Language Program Standards and Best Practices.](#)

Supporting Roles

Early Achievers Coaches

Because the Dual Language Designation is part of Early Achievers, coaches can help programs throughout the process.

Coaches can:

- Help programs understand the designation requirements.
- Help providers navigate the designation request process in CECI.
- Connect programs with resources, tools, and professional development opportunities.
- Share information about the Dual Language Standards, best practices, and eligibility requirements, and timelines.

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- Connect providers with DCYF when additional guidance is needed.

Please email questions to QRIS@dcyf.wa.gov.

Cultivate Learning Community Liaisons

Cultivate Learning Community Liaisons (CLs) work with Early Achievers participants and coaches throughout the Quality Recognition Cycle.

They help programs:

- Understand the process.
- Prepare required materials.
- Complete each step of the Quality Recognition Cycle.
- Access support and guidance when needed.

Online Systems used in the Dual language Designation

MERIT

MERIT (Managed Education and Registry Information Tool) is Washington's system of tracking early learning professionals and Early Achievers participation.

In MERIT, programs can:

- Submit a Request for Quality Recognition (ReQR) application to begin the Quality Recognition Cycle.
- Track required Dual Language training completed by lead staff and program leaders.
- Finalize the Quality Level.

Coach and Educator Community Interface (CECI)

CECI is Washington's online coaching and quality recognition tool.

Programs use CECI to:

- Complete Dual Language Designation requirements
- Submit required materials
- Track progress
- Participate in the Quality Recognition process

Completing the Quality Recognition Components

Programs use the following Early Achievers components to show how they support Dual Language Learning and Tribal Language Revitalization:

- **Program Profile**
- **Video Highlights**
- **Records Review**

Additional Dual Language Designation sections will be added in 2027, and updated instructions will be provided before implementation.

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Available Beginning July 2026:

Starting in July 2026, programs must complete the following requirements:

- Complete the **Program Profile**
- Submit one **Video Highlight** in English and one in the partner language for each Dual Language classroom before requesting a Quality Recognition Level
- Meet **Strengthening families and supporting families** Standards 1, 2, & 3

Video Highlights

Video Highlights are short video submissions that demonstrate meaningful interactions between an educator and child. Each submission includes a planned lesson or activity, a recording of the interaction, and a written reflection. Video Highlights show how children experience **English**, and the **partner language** in dual language classroom settings.



Want to learn more? Visit the [Video Highlights Factsheet](#)

Coming Soon

Additional components will be added in 2027. DCYF will provide more information and updated guidance before implementation.

Note: *DCYF will update this section as new information becomes available.*

The LOVIT Way Programs

Tribal programs can earn the Dual Language Designation through either:

- The standard Early Achievers Quality Recognition process or,
- The LOVIT Way Program Evaluation Process (PEP).

Both options support continuous quality improvement and honor culturally grounded practices for Tribal programs.

Requirements using The LOVIT WAY must:

- Participate in the in-person Program Evaluation Process (PEP).
- Complete at least one Tribal language action plan for each classroom.
- Complete one LOVIT Way action plan focused on family engagement as part of the Strengthening Families self-assessment process.

Steps in a Quality Recognition Cycle for Designation Sites

1. Submit a Request for Quality Recognition (ReQR)

Required: Yes

Where to complete: MERIT

Before submitting, programs are encouraged to connect with local coaching services.

Submitting a ReQR application:

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- Signals readiness to begin the Quality Recognition Cycle.
- Opens access to complete the required Dual Language Designation components.

2. Complete the Program Profile

Required: Yes

Where to complete: CECI

The Program Profile is a self-reflection tool that helps programs identify strengths and goals.

The Program Profile:

- Must be completed before other components.
- Includes surveys completed by administrators, lead staff, and families.
- Uses the standard Early Achievers Program Profile for Dual Language Designation applicants.

3. Create a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) with Coach

Required: Yes

Where to complete: CECI

Programs develop a Quality Improvement Plan with support from a coach.

The QIP:

- Uses information from the Program Profile.
- Identifies strengths and areas for growth.
- Sets goals for continuous quality improvement.
- Guides the rest of the Quality Recognition Cycle.

4. Submit Video Highlights

Required: Yes

Where to complete: CECI

Video Highlights include short videos that show high-quality interactions in learning environments.

Requirements:

- Submit at least two and up to six sets of videos that show high-quality learning environments.
- Videos are reviewed by Quality Recognition Specialists using the QUIC tool.
- Each Dual Language classroom must submit:
 - One Video Highlight in English
 - One Video Highlight in the partner language
- Tribal Language Revitalization Classrooms:
 - Visit the Video Highlights Factsheet for further guidance ([Link](#))

5. Submit a Records Review

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Required: Yes for ECEAP. Yes for Dual Language Designation.

Where to complete: CECI

The Records Review includes documentation showing how the program meets specific quality standards.

Programs must:

- Submit documentation of current practices.
- Complete all Records Review requirements connected to the Dual Language Program Standards.
- Meet Strengthening Families and Supporting Families Standards 1, 2, and 3.

Note: Programs must meet the Records Review requirements to earn the Dual Language Designation.

6. Submit Accreditation Evidence

Required: Optional

Where to complete: CECI

Programs may submit accreditation evidence that meets eligibility requirements to earn additional recognition points.

7. Submit Professional Development (PD) Evidence

Required: Optional

Where to complete: MERIT

Professional Development points are based on verified staff education recorded in MERIT.

Important information:

- Points are applied only after all required components are complete.
- Programs can preview points in the Quality Framework tab in MERIT, in a Facility/Site Profile.
- Points are automatically calculated upon finalization of Quality Level.

8. Finalize the Quality Level

Required: Yes

Where to complete: MERIT

To finalize the Quality Level:

- Submit a request through the Quality Framework tab in MERIT, in a Facility/Site Profile.
- MERIT automatically finalizes a Quality Level if a due date is reached for a participant.

Finalizing the Quality Level:

- Ends the Quality Recognition Cycle.
- Confirms the program's final Quality Level.

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- Requires a finalized **Quality Level of 3+** or higher to earn the Dual Language Designation.

Finalizing the Designation

Quality Level, Training, and Documentation Requirements

To earn the Dual Language Designation, programs must complete all required components and training during their Early Achievers Quality Recognition Cycle.

Before Finalizing Your Quality Level:

Make sure your program has completed all of the following:

- All Dual Language Designation Components.
- A policy handbook that:
 - Lists the languages used in the program.
 - Explains how the program works with families to support multilingual children.
 - Or, for Tribal Revitalization programs, describes how Tribal language speakers support language revitalization.
- Ensure Dual Language lead staff and program leaders complete the DCYF Dual Language Training.
 - Programs may meet the training requirement by completing one of the following:
 - *Dual Language Learners: Training for Early Learning Professionals*
 - *Dual Language Learning in Early Care and Education*

Training must be recorded on the individual's Professional record in MERIT before the program finalizes its Quality Level.

Note: Tribal Language Revitalization programs are exempt.



Need help finding training? You can search for specific training through the [MERIT search tool](#).

- **Quality Level Requirement**
 - To earn the Dual Language Designation, programs must achieve a **Quality Level 3+** or higher during the Early Achievers Quality Recognition Cycle.

Certificate of Completion

After DCYF confirms that a program has met all Dual Language Designation requirements, the program will receive:

- A confirmation email, and
- An official Dual Language Designation certificate.

DCYF will send these within **60 days** after the program finalizes its Quality Level. This certificate confirms the program's designation status.

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Important Note: The Dual Language Designation certificate is separate from your Early Achievers Quality Level certificate and does not replace it.

Renewing the Designation

Programs must renew the Dual Language Designation **every three years**.

To renew, programs must:

- Complete a new Early Achievers Quality Recognition Cycle
- Complete all required Dual Language Designation components.
- Submit updated evidence.
- Finalize a new **Quality Level 3+** or higher.

The renewal timeline follows the program's Early Achievers Quality Level cycle.

To keep an active Dual Language Designation, programs must:

- Finalize a new Quality Level
- Maintain at least a Quality Level 3+
- Complete all required Dual Designation components **before their current quality level and designation status expires.**

Funding Opportunities

Dual Language Funding Awards

Programs that earn a Dual Language Designation may qualify for a Dual Language Funding Award.

To be eligible, programs must:

- Earn a Dual Language Designation
- Achieve and earn a **Quality Level 3+ or higher**
- Serve children receiving state child care subsidies or provide ECEAP services

Programs must also:

- Be licensed, Certified, or Certified for Payment Only.

And meet one of the following requirements:

- Have claimed and received a subsidy payment within 12 months before the designation was finalized.
OR
- Provide Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) services.

Dual Language Funding Award Amounts

Funding awards are issued per site to eligible programs that have finalized their Dual Language Designation. Award Amounts are:

- Dual language programs may receive **\$2,100 per site**.
- Tribal language revitalization programs may receive **\$2,500 per site**.

Note: Funding is subject to available funds.

Eligibility Notification

DCYF will send an email with the funding eligibility decision approximately **60 calendar days** after a program:

- Finalizes its Quality Level, and
- Earns the Dual Language Designation.

Allowable Uses of Funding

Programs may use funding to support multilingual learning environments.

Allowable expenses include:

- Wages for staff who provide bilingual instruction
- Staff training and professional development, including:
- Job embedded planning
- Substitute coverage for planning time
- Paid time to attend professional development
- Culturally and language appropriate curriculum
- Learning materials
- Other costs related to dual language programming

Terms and Conditions

Programs that receive funding must:

1. Use the money only for approved purposes.
2. Keep receipts and supporting records for seven years.
3. Provide receipts or documentation if asked.

Important: Programs may be required to repay funding if they cannot provide documentation showing how the funds were used.

Questions

For questions about the Dual Language Designation or Dual Language Funding Award, contact QRIS@dcyf.wa.gov.