

# Early Achievers and ECEAP Alignment Progression – Community Engagement Template

## Family Engagement and Partnerships

### Overview

**WAC:** This section has two core provisions: family support self-assessment and family partnership and communication. These regulations set requirements for providers’ communications with parents to partner in their child’s care. This section also describes expectations for program self-assessment in the area of family support.

**Early Achievers:** Early Achievers recognizes providers who use the Strengthening Families™ self-assessment and protective factors to support families. Providers will develop action plans to increase family involvement and provide ongoing support.

**ECEAP:** Relationship-based family partnerships are an essential component of ECEAP comprehensive services. All ECEAP staff collaborate with families to build partnerships that engage families in many levels of program activities, and support the development of each enrolled child’s whole family.

Key:

**New requirement.**

Federal or state requirement.

Family Engagement and Partnerships		
Proposed WAC	Proposed Early Achievers	Proposed ECEAP
<p><b>170-300-0080</b>  <b>Family support self-assessment.</b>                      (1) An early learning provider must assess their program within six months of being licensed, or within six months of the date this section becomes effective, to identify ways to support the families of enrolled children. A provider must complete the Strengthening Families Program Self-Assessment, or an equivalent assessment, applicable to the early learning</p>	<p><b>Strengthening Families™<sup>1</sup></b>   <i>Progression from WAC 170-300-0080(2)(b)</i>                       An early learning provider may demonstrate quality by completing any of the following activities:                       1. Completing the revised Strengthening Families™ Self-Assessment<sup>2</sup> and also completing the revised Strengthening Families™ Plan of Action</p>	<p>None</p>

**Early Achievers Rationale (Items highlighted in blue may be completed by a desk review):**

1. Strengthening Families is a research informed evidence informed approach which is supported by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need and social and emotional competence of children. Using the Strengthening Families™ framework, WA is one of more than 30 states shifting policy and practice to help programs working with children and families focus on protective factors.

<p>program type (center or family home).</p> <p>(2) An early learning provider must keep certificates of completion from the programs listed above in their facility records, and the certificates must be reviewable by the department.</p>	<p>2. Continuously updating the Plan of Action to show improvement. The Plan of Action will have documentation of progress within 6 months from the original date of the action plan.</p>	
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2. The proposed WAC requires early learning providers to choose between a department approved Self-Assessment or the Strengthening Families™ Self-Assessment to inform their family engagement practices. In Early Achievers, family engagement will be demonstrated using the protective factor framework, and specifically the revised Strengthening Families™ Self -Assessment. In order to demonstrate continuous quality improvement, early learning providers will use the revised tool which focuses on continuous quality improvement. This revised tool is designed to help programs identify strengths for programmatic improvement and is built around the everyday actions early learning providers can take to support families in building protective factors. By providing parents and child care professionals with more information about these protective factors, we can help build these protective factors in families with young children. Research shows that these protective factors build family strength and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development. In order to show a commitment to continuous quality improvement, after taking the assessment, providers are asked to create a plan of action. By creating the plan of action an early learning provider will demonstrate that they are taking a ‘next step’ after completing the assessment. They may choose to complete the plan of action online, and if so, will be able to use a data tracking tool to show them the progress they are making in continuous quality improvement. CSSP has training modules and tools for early learning providers to support the work. More Information about the revised Strengthening Families Self Assessments and tools available can be found at <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/practice/program-self-assesments>

**Family Engagement and Partnerships**

Proposed WAC	Proposed Early Achievers	Proposed ECEAP
<p><b>170-300-0085</b>  <b>Family partnerships and communication.</b>                      (1) An early learning provider must communicate with families to identify individual children’s developmental goals.                      (2) An early learning provider must attempt to collaborate with each child's family, upon enrollment and annually thereafter, to obtain information about a child’s developmental, behavioral, health, linguistic, cultural, social, and other relevant information.                      (3) An early learning provider must determine how the program can best accommodate each child's individual characteristics, strengths, and needs. To do this, the provider must utilize the information in subsection (2) of this section and seek input from family members and staff familiar with a child's behavior, developmental, and learning patterns.                      (4) An early learning provider must:                          (a) Attempt to discuss with parents or guardians information including, but not limited to:                              (i) A child’s strength in areas of development, health issues, special needs, and other concerns;                              (ii) Family routines or events, approaches to parenting, family beliefs, culture, language, and child rearing practices;</p>	<p><b>Community Resources</b>  <i>Progression from 170-300-0085(4)(d)</i>                      An early learning provider may demonstrate quality by completing the following activities:                      1. Sharing information about community based programs with families; 3-5 examples are required. An effort is made to ensure that program information and outreach materials are linguistically and culturally appropriate and inclusive. Materials are designed or selected to reflect the culture(s) of the program community and reflect all kinds of family structures.  <b>Transitions</b>  <i>Progression from 170-300-0085(4)(a)(iii)</i>                      An early learning provider may demonstrate quality by completing any of the following activities:                      1. Showing evidence of a written policy or plan to support transitions. The <b>policy</b> explains how the program discusses changes in an individual child’s teachers, schedules and classroom assignments with parents before implementing change. The policy will also outline how the program supports children through the following transitions:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition into the program</li> <li>• Transition out of program</li> <li>• Transitions within program (between</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>ECEAP Family Engagement Overview</b>  <i>Progression from WAC 170-300-0085 (2) and (4) (ii)</i>                      Relationship-based family partnerships are an essential component of ECEAP comprehensive services. All ECEAP staff collaborate with families to build partnerships that engage families in many levels of program activities, and support the development of each enrolled child’s whole family. Staff create safe environments for all family structures and belief systems. Ongoing, active engagement is woven into interactions throughout the year, and promotes shared goals and planning that are built from the foundation of family input. The Department of Early Learning focuses on <a href="#">Strengthening Families</a> to:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Build <a href="#">protective factors</a> to reduce risk and create optimal outcomes for children, youth and families.</li> <li>b) Recognize and support parents as decision makers and leaders.</li> <li>c) Value the culture and unique assets of each family.</li> <li>d) Share responsibility for better outcomes for children, youth and families.</li> </ul>                     Family engagement activities, personal network connections, parent education experiences and parent leadership development may be combined, if the intent of the separate opportunities is met in the planned activity. For example, a parent education event could be structured so that parents meet in small groups a portion of the time which supports building of personal networks, and where parents are peer-teaching which develops parent leadership skills. <sup>4</sup></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(iii) Internal transitions within the early learning program and transitions to external services or programs, as necessary;</li> <li>(iv) Collaboration between the provider and the parent or guardian in behavior management; and</li> <li>(v) A child’s progress, at least two times per year.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b) Communicate verbally or in writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Changes in drop-off and pickup arrangements as needed; and</li> <li>(ii) Daily activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(c) Communicate the importance of regular attendance for child;</li> <li>(d) Give parents or guardians contact information for questions or concerns;</li> <li>(e) Give families opportunities to share their language and culture in the early learning program;</li> <li>(f) Arrange a confidential time and space for individual conversations regarding children, as needed; and</li> <li>(g) Allow parents or guardians access to their child during normal hours of operation, except as excluded by a court order.</li> </ul>	<p>classes)</p> <p>2. Showing evidence that the policy is implemented using at least 3 transition supports</p> <p><b>Parent Education<sup>3</sup></b></p> <p>1 <i>Progression from 170-300-0085(4)(d)</i></p> <p>An early learning provider may demonstrate quality by completing any of the following activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing parenting tips or information on child behavior and developmental milestones and parenting issues (e.g. potty training, eating or sleeping patterns, separation issues, aggressive behavior). Evidence may include regular postings, take home materials, links to social media, resource library, information about community parenting classes. Information may be shared during regular arrival and departure time or when a parent appears to be frustrated or stressed and in need of support.</li> <li>2. Providing support for parents to attend a community based parenting class (e.g. arranging for child care during class; helping parents set up carpool to attend; arranging scholarships to attend a class; helping parents to register for a class; providing a parenting class on site)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Health Coordination Services for Families</b> <i>Progression from WAC 170-300-0085 (2)</i> Contractors must assist families to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for their child’s health and safety needs.</li> <li>• Obtain information on fluoridation, if needed.</li> <li>• Access health information on topics of parent interest.</li> </ul> <p><b>Dental Screening</b> <i>Progression from WAC 170-300-0085 (2)</i> Contractors must work with parents to ensure that children who have not had a dental exam within the last six months receive a dental exam, or screening by a dental hygienist, within 90 days of their first day in the classroom. Contractors must retain a copy of the screening or exam record in the child’s file.</p> <p><b>Medical Examinations</b> <i>Progression from WAC 170-300-0085 (2)</i> Contractors must work with parents to ensure that children who have not had a medical exam within the last 12 months receive one within 90 calendar days of their first day in the classroom. This exam must meet the standards set by the Washington State Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) program, including a comprehensive assessment of the physical and mental health, growth, development, and nutritional status of the child. Contractors must retain a copy of the exam record in the child’s file.</p> <p><b>Parent-Teacher Conferences</b></p>
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<sup>4</sup> This whole section overview is added to provide clarification on current ECEAP practices that are expected but not in standards yet. This includes previous contractor feedback.

**Early Achievers Rationale (items highlighted in blue may be completed by desk review)**

<sup>3</sup> Parent Partnership is removed as it is a duplication of WAC requirements. Parent education is revised to reflect a progression between the WAC and ECEAP, for an early learning provider that is not providing comprehensive services.

		<p><i>Progression from 170-300-0085 (4)</i></p> <p>Contractors must ensure ECEAP teachers provide a minimum of one parent-teacher conference per quarter, per enrolled child. <sup>5</sup></p> <p>To count as one of the parent-teacher conferences, each conference must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A minimum of 30 minutes</li> <li>b) Face to face with the parent or guardian</li> <li>c) In a location agreed upon with the family</li> <li>d) Scheduled based on individual family needs</li> <li>e) Be planned with individualized content for each family. <sup>6</sup></li> </ul> <p>Contractors provide additional Parent-Teacher Conferences based on family request or individual child’s needs.</p> <p>Phone or email contact may be used only for brief follow-up. <sup>7</sup></p> <p><u>Parent-Teacher Conference Content</u></p> <p><i>Progression from 170-300-0085</i></p> <p>During each conference, teachers partner with parents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Learn about the child’s family, culture, and language.</li> <li>b) Hear parent’s observations of their child’s skills, interests, needs, and goals.</li> <li>c) Gather parent’s suggestions for class activities and ways their family culture can be included in the classroom and curriculum.</li> <li>d) Agree on at least one educational or</li> </ul>
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<sup>5</sup> Requirement changing based on need to individualize time spent with each family. This language will meet the needs of all ECEAP models.

<sup>6</sup> This entire list and start of the paragraph is also changing to be able to meet the individual needs of families, and is the same expectation as family support visits, except for the content which differs greatly. Refer to “Content” sections of each type of visit for more information.

<sup>7</sup> This is added to clarify current guidance going out to contractors from DEL.

		<p>developmental goal for the child</p> <p>e) Review and update goals set at earlier conferences.</p> <p>During conferences, teachers also share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Their observations of the child’s skills, interests and development.</li> <li>b) Screening results and assessment data.</li> <li>c) The child’s progress toward meeting their goal(s).</li> <li>d) Information on school readiness.</li> </ul> <p>Teachers must document in ELMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Date, location, and duration of each parent- teacher conference.</li> <li>b) Topics covered in parent-teacher conferences.</li> <li>c) Summary of discussions from each visit.</li> <li>d) Follow-up plans and outcomes.</li> <li>e) Follow-up contacts between parents and teachers outside of regular conferences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Family Support Visits</b></p> <p>Contractors must ensure ECEAP family support staff provide a minimum of one family support visit per quarter, per enrolled family. The first visit must be held and documented according to the DEL schedule of family support checkpoints.<sup>8</sup> These visits must support families in proactively meeting personal and family challenges while focusing on self-reliance.</p> <p>To count as one of the required family support visits, each visit must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A minimum of 30 minutes</li> <li>b) Face-to-face with the parent or guardian</li> <li>c) In a location agreed upon with the family</li> <li>d) Scheduled based on individual family</li> </ul>
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<sup>8</sup> This is moving from the ECEAP contract Section 15 and is current practice for ECEAP family support visits. This aligns with the expectations of parent-teacher conferences, except for the content which differs greatly. Refer to “Content” sections of each type of visit for more information.

		<p>needs</p> <p>e) Planned with individualized content for each family for each visit.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Contractors provide additional family support visits as needed, based on each family’s strengths, needs, and requests.<sup>10</sup> Time spent in enrollment processes does not count as family visits.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>Phone or email contact may be used only for brief follow-up.<sup>12</sup></p> <p><u>Collaborative Visits with Other Programs</u> In order to better meet the needs of families with children in Head Start or Early Head Start provided by the same ECEAP Contractor, the ECEAP contractor should combine family support visits as long as all ECEAP Standards are met and other staff are included as appropriate.</p> <p>For families with children enrolled in DEL’s Home Visiting Services Program (HVSP), such as Nurse Family Partnership or Parents as Teachers, contractors must participate in joint visits whenever possible. Both programs must support families to design and achieve shared goals whenever possible, which will allow for integration of goals set with home visitor or ECEAP family support staff with families.<sup>13</sup></p> <p><u>Family Support Visit Content</u></p>
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**ECEAP Rationale:**

<sup>9</sup> This list is partially moved from the ECEAP Contract Section 15, partially aligning the same verbiage with Parent-Teacher Conferences, and partially from current standards.

<sup>10</sup> This is added to further clarify that when families need more time spent with staff, contractors need to provide more than the minimum in those individual cases based on family need.

<sup>11</sup> Moved from ECEAP Contract Section 15.

<sup>12</sup> This is added to provide clarification on current ECEAP practices that are expected but not in standards yet.

<sup>13</sup> The entire section titled “Collaborative Visits with Other Programs” comes from aligning policies and practices to reduce duplication in organizations that provide both Head Start and ECEAP, and also based on an MOU signed between two Department of Early Learning programs, ECEAP and Home Visiting Services Program.

		<p>Contractors must use the Mobility Mentoring® approach in partnership with families to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Gather information on family strengths and needs through conversation using the Bridge to Child and Family Self-Reliance.</li> <li>b) Assess family strengths and needs by fully completing the ECEAP Family Pre and Post Assessments</li> <li>c) Identify goals and next steps based on the information gathered during conversation with families.</li> <li>d) Develop family goals that are:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific</li> <li>• Measurable</li> <li>• Attainable</li> <li>• Relevant</li> <li>• Time-Limited</li> </ul> </li> <li>e) Connect families with relevant community resources and referrals, as outlined in Resources and Referrals section below.</li> <li>f) Follow up on goals and accomplishments.<sup>14</sup></li> </ol> <p>Staff must document in ELMS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Date, location, and duration of each family support visit.</li> <li>b) Summary of discussions from each visit.</li> <li>c) Follow-up plans and outcomes.</li> <li>d) Family support follow-up contacts outside of regular visits.</li> <li>e) Shared visits with Head Start or Home Visiting Services Programs</li> <li>f) Identification of family strengths and needs on the ECEAP Family pre-assessment and post-assessment.</li> </ol>
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**ECEAP Rationale:**

<sup>14</sup> This whole section titled “Family Support Visit Content” is changing significantly based on the ECEAP Family Support Pilot, which in pilot year 1 showed statistically significant pre/post differences for families in all 21 areas of family functioning assessed. This will add measurable outcome information for family support, and add a statewide framework approach for family support that has not existed and is needed.



		<p>g) Family goals and follow up on goals.  h) Mid-year goals check in date<sup>15</sup></p> <p><u>Resources and Referrals</u>  <i>Progression from WAC 170-300-0085 4) (d)</i>  Contractors must ensure staff provide experiences that enable families to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identify needed community resources</li> <li>b) Understand their rights in accessing services</li> <li>c) Navigate service systems.<sup>16</sup></li> </ul> <p>Contractors must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Inform parents of individualized community resources based on needs identified through conversations with families<sup>17</sup></li> <li>b) Provide assistance in accessing community resource</li> <li>c) Follow up with parents throughout the year to ensure the resources meet the individualized needs of the family<sup>18</sup></li> <li>d) Document referrals and follow up in ELMS<sup>19</sup></li> </ul> <p>Community resources may include services addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Energy assistance</li> </ul>
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<sup>15</sup> This whole documentation section adds the requirements for gathering data and tracking outcomes for family support work as mentioned above. This was built into ELMS for family support pilot participants in 2016-17 and will be required for all contractors.

**ECEAP Rationale:**

<sup>16</sup> This list and the introduction paragraph are added to clarify how ECEAP contractors must meet the need of ECEAP RCW 43.215.405 6 (d) and also come from previous contractor feedback.

<sup>17</sup> This language is added to clarify that resources and referrals needs of families should be also identified through conversation with families during family support visit or other services where staff are interacting with families.

<sup>18</sup> This requirement is enhanced to provide clarification to contractors about the intent of following up on resources and referrals given.

<sup>19</sup> New requirement to track resources and referrals in ELMS added to enhance DEL’s ability to track outcomes and monitoring compliance.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal services</li> <li>• Health or dental care</li> <li>• Financial literacy or budgeting</li> <li>• Mental health care</li> <li>• Chemical dependency</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> <li>• Childcare</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Clothing</li> <li>• Adult education</li> <li>• Adult literacy</li> <li>• Parenting</li> <li>• Job or training skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Engaging ECEAP Families</b></p> <p>Contractors must provide a variety of opportunities for family engagement throughout the year, including volunteering, <b>personal network connections</b>, parent education, and parent leadership development. These opportunities must include voluntary participation in classroom, site, community, family, committee, and leadership activities. <b>Contractors must write a plan to encourage involvement from:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Fathers or father figures</b></li> <li>b) <b>Parents or guardians working full time</b></li> <li>c) <b>Family members who are absent due to deployment, incarceration, or other reason</b></li> <li>d) <b>Families whose primary or home language is not English</b></li> <li>e) <b>Other underrepresented families</b> <sup>20</sup></li> </ol> <p>Contractors must ensure that participation in these opportunities is not a condition of a child's</p>
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**ECEAP Rationale:**

<sup>20</sup> This whole list and the opening paragraph are added to provide clarification on current ECEAP practices that are expected but not in standards yet, and also align with Head Start Performance Standard 1302.50.

<p><b>Volunteer Activities</b> Engaging parents in specific contractor provided volunteer activities, such as:</p>	<p><b>Personal Network Connections</b> Parents working with each other and community members to experience empowerment and supportive social connections, such as:</p>	<p><b>Parent Education</b> Parents learning and discussing topics related to parenting, child development, and building family self-reliance, such as:</p>	<p><b>Parent Leadership</b> Developing leadership and advocacy skills with parents, such as:</p>
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		<p>enrollment, but highly encouraged. Contractors must document all of the opportunities offered for family engagement. <sup>21</sup></p> <p>Topics must be based on currently enrolled families' expressed interests. Refer to <i>Table 1</i> below for topic ideas for each family engagement opportunity. <sup>22</sup></p>
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<sup>21</sup> This paragraph is added based on previous contractor feedback and provides clarification on current ECEAP practices that are expected but not in standards yet.

<sup>22</sup> Table 1 below condenses all the information in the different ways ECEAP contractors must engage families outside of individual family visits. They are a combination of current standards, services recommended by Mobility Mentoring,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom volunteering</li> <li>• Community activities that support families' interest or concerns</li> <li>• Contractor, site, classroom, community, or statewide planning or decision-making committees</li> <li>• Curriculum planning</li> <li>• DEL on-site monitoring.</li> <li>• ECEAP self-assessment</li> <li>• Family events</li> <li>• Hiring committees</li> <li>• Local school events</li> <li>• Menu development</li> <li>• Learning experiences that support parenting, career, or life goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivating community partnerships and relationships through participation in policy council, health advisory meetings and community meetings relevant to families</li> <li>• Connecting with other parents through meetings, community cafés, and supportive group settings</li> <li>• Volunteering on site or in community based organizations</li> </ul> <p>Through the opportunities listed above, parents could experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional support such as, affirming parenting skills and empathy.</li> <li>• Informational support such as, parenting guidance and recommending resources.</li> <li>• Instrumental support such as, links to jobs or financial assistance.</li> <li>• Social support such as, providing hope, advice, and encouragement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balancing work and family</li> <li>• Community resources for families</li> <li>• Enhancement of parenting skills</li> <li>• Family health safety and nutrition</li> <li>• Financial management</li> <li>• Family self-sufficiency and executive function, such as the free optional DEL Families Moving Forward curriculum.</li> <li>• Family well-being</li> <li>• Impact of environments and experiences on brain development</li> <li>• Services and supports for children's behavioral challenges</li> <li>• Positive child guidance and parent-child relationship</li> <li>• Transition to kindergarten activities, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents' rights and responsibilities concerning their child's education</li> <li>• Communicating with teachers and other school district personnel</li> <li>• Summer activities to support school readiness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting parents to advocate for their child</li> <li>• Encouraging participation on Parent Policy Council, Health Advisory Committee, and other contractor committees or advisory groups</li> <li>• Leadership training for families</li> <li>• Parent organizations and initiatives</li> <li>• Family peer networks</li> <li>• Parent-initiated activities</li> <li>• School or community events and organizations</li> </ul>
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Table 1