



WORKFORCE GROWTH, QUALITY, AND RECOGNITION PROCEDURAL MANUAL



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Early Learning Division | Approved for distribution by Tiffany Lee, Sr. Administrator, Workforce & Professional
Development



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This manual provides the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Workforce Growth, Quality, Recognition procedures for the early learning workforce.

Section 1: Getting Started in MERIT

Procedure 100. Security Oversight Access in MERIT: Internal

Some DCYF employees or those working in contracted roles may require access to MERIT (DCYF's Workforce Registry) to perform their work.

Procedure

1. Assigned roles give permission to access and edit various levels of data. Roles are assigned to ensure agency or contracted staff have access only to information that is relevant to a person's job.
 - a. For DCYF staff who require access to MERIT, your supervisor must email MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov to request, change or remove your access.
 - b. DCYF contractors that require MERIT access work with their contract manager. The contract manager makes the request to MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - c. To maintain your administrative role access:
 - i. Log in to MERIT regularly, at least once every six months.
 - ii. If you have not logged in within six months, MERIT administrators will remove administrative permissions.
 - iii. If additional access is required, the MERIT user submits a new request with new job responsibilities to determine administrative permission.
2. If you have a specific MERIT data need, you can request this without administrative permission. Make requests to MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov.
3. The following roles are given access in MERIT to track and record for meeting compliance policies.
 - a. Access level is given to the following roles:
 - i. DCYF Licensor: access to provider and facility-level data.

- ii. License Exempt Specialist (LES): access to information on Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) child care providers.
- iii. DCYF Fiscal: access to payment information and processing monetary awards.
- iv. State-Approved Trainer: this application-based role allows trainers to record annual continuing education.
- v. ECEAP Administrator: allows permissions to administer and monitor the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP).
- vi. Superuser: allows access to search for individuals within the DCYF portal. Limited administrative functions include account access, password reset, and updating basic information.
- vii. Substitute Pool Administrator: allows access to individuals interested in participating in the DCYF substitute pool.
- viii. Grantee/Contractor Role: allows access similar to the DCYF Licensor for ECEAP programs.

Procedure 101. MERIT Login Credentials

Registered MERIT users may not give their login name and password to anyone, including supervisors, coaches, or co-workers. All actions within a MERIT account are tied to the registered user. The registered user is responsible for any penalties for improper use or violations made from their account.

Procedure

1. Do not share your password.
2. If you think your account has been compromised, immediately change your password(s).
3. Treat passwords as sensitive and confidential.
4. Contact merit@dcyf.wa.gov if you need assistance with your account.

Procedure 102. Getting Access to MERIT

All licensed early learning professionals, license-exempt professionals, and support roles such as state-approved trainers are responsible for maintaining their MERIT account to be accurate and up to date. See [WAC 110-300](#); [110-301](#); and [110-302](#) Sections: [0100](#), [0105](#), [0106](#), [0107](#).

Procedure

1. See guide for:

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- a. [How to register in MERIT](#)
 - b. [How to get a STARS ID](#)
 - c. [How to add your employment](#)
 - d. [How to complete an early learning portable background check](#)
 - e. [How to complete an FFN portable background check](#)
2. If you are a DCYF state-approved trainer, DCYF-approved organization, coach, mentor, or ECEAP contractor, you are expected to maintain your MERIT account with up-to-date information for you, your staff, and training rosters.
 3. Keep your email address up to date in your MERIT account. You will receive email communication about these topics:
 - a. Portable background check
 - b. Early Achievers
 - c. QRIS awards
 - d. Education awards
 - e. Training reimbursement
 - f. Professional Development policy and implementation

Procedure 103. Facility/Site Details

This policy applies when a licensed or licensed-exempt provider needs oversight of their staff or household members. Staff and household members will only appear if connected to the provider by their employment records. Providers need a qualifying role from the list below to be assigned access. For more information see the [MERIT Facility/Site Profile Guide](#).

Procedure

1. MERIT users who have one of the qualifying roles below will be given access to manage facility/site details page.
 - a. Owner
 - b. Director
 - c. Additional designee (designation that can be assigned to any job role)
 - d. ECEAP/Head Start/Contact Managers/Site Manager
 - e. Family Home Licensee

- f. FFN Provider
2. To request access to manage the facility, a provider completes the following:
 - a. Facility/Site Registration application.
 - b. FFN In-Home/Relative Child Care Provider Registration application.
3. This above role allows the following changes to a provider's record:
 - a. End-dating employment
 - b. Updating job title on behalf of the employee
 - c. Confirming employment
 - d. Adding and confirming health and safety trainings
 - e. Appointing additional designees
4. This facility oversight tool is currently not available to military, tribal, or human resources entities.

Procedure 104. Name and Date of Birth Change

The user must submit supporting documents to the System Navigation Team to complete a name or date of birth change in their MERIT account. The sequence of these steps is important because the name and date of birth change are connected to the Portable Background Check application. See [WAC 110-300-0105](#).

Procedure

1. To update a name or date of birth in MERIT, a user must submit to MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov a copy of one of the following valid, unexpired forms of identification:
 - a. Washington Driver's License
 - b. State ID
 - c. Out of State License or State ID
 - d. Passport
 - e. Government-Issued ID
 - f. U.S. Uniformed Services ID
 - g. Military ID showing current legal name/date of birth

Section 2: Staff Qualifications

Procedure 201. Staff Qualifications for Child Care Programs

MERIT users must meet required staff qualifications for their role as identified in [WAC 110-300](#), [WAC 110-301](#), and [WAC 110-302](#) depending on program type. Staff qualifications include pre-service, training, and education requirements. Programs serving Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) must also meet staff qualifications in the ECEAP Performance Standards. Staff qualifications must be documented in their MERIT record.

Procedure

1. At time of hire, a MERIT user provides an unofficial transcript or a scanned diploma to document how they meet the hiring education requirement for their role.
2. The new hire takes all pre-service training and meets the other requirements, including the background check, Tuberculosis (TB) test, and licensing orientation (role specific).
3. To be left alone with children and depending on their role, new staff need to complete all required training within 90 days of being hired and record their completion dates in their MERIT record.
4. After completing their first year of employment, all employees and child care owners complete and document their in-service training for each calendar year (January-December).

Early Learning Qualifications

1. See [WAC 110-300-0100](#) for more information about hiring education requirements.
2. MERIT users submit an education application in MERIT for education completed to date. [See Procedure 301](#).
3. If the education submitted does not meet licensing staff qualifications or the user has no education to submit:
 - a. Users will document their selected option for meeting the education staff qualification and has at least 5 years from the date of hire or promotion to complete their selection. This is recorded in MERIT under their professional record.
 - i. For early learning providers, options to meet this staff qualification include education or DCYF approved alternatives. The availability of each option is dependent on job role.

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4. Prior to working with children, a new hire needs to complete the pre-service requirements. See [WAC 110-300-0105](#) for more information on pre-service.
5. Depending on their role, new hires need to meet their training requirements before being left alone with children, and within 90 days from date of hire. This includes Safe Sleep (if applicable), CPR/First Aid, Blood-borne Pathogen, Food Handler’s Permit (if applicable), and Health and Safety Training (initial training requirement). [See Procedure 407](#) for more information about the health and safety training requirements.
 - b. Early learning professionals also complete Child Care Basics to meet their initial training requirement. Some education and training options may meet requirements for health and safety. [See Procedure 401](#) for Child Care Basics.
6. After the first year of employment, all early learning professionals complete and document their in-service training each year. Those working in licensed care complete 10 hours each year after their first year, and those serving ECEAP complete 15 hours each year. For more information about in-service training requirements and options, [see Procedure 407](#).

School-Age Staff Qualifications

1. See [WAC 110-301-0100](#) for more information about hiring education requirements.
2. The MERIT user submits an education application to document completion of diplomas, certificates, credentials, or degrees in MERIT. [See Procedure 301](#) Education Application and Verification for more information.
3. If someone does not meet licensing staff qualifications or does not have education to submit, they need to work with their supervisor and licensor to plan to complete the required education within 5 years from date of hire.
4. Depending on their role, new staff need to finish all pre-service requirements including background check, TB test and licensing orientation within 90 days of being hired. See [WAC 110-301-0105](#) for more information about pre-service.
5. New staff need to complete all required trainings within 90 days of being hired and record their completion dates in their MERIT record before they can be left alone with children (role dependent). This includes CPR/First Aid, Blood-borne Pathogen, Food Handler’s Permit (if applicable), and Health and Safety Training (initial training requirement). [See Procedure 406](#) for more information about the health and safety training requirements.

- a. School-age providers must complete School-Age Basics to meet their initial training requirement. Some education and training options may meet requirements for health and safety. [See Procedure 402](#) for School-Age Basics.
- 6. After the first year of employment, all early learning and school age professionals complete and document their in-service training each year. Those working in licensed care complete 10 hours each year after completing their first year of employment. For information about in-service training requirements and options, [see Procedure 407](#).

Outdoor Nature-Based Staff Qualifications

- 1. See [WAC 110-302](#) for more information about hiring education requirements.
- 2. MERIT users submit an education application for completed diplomas, certificates, credentials, or degrees in MERIT for education. [See Procedure 301](#).
 - a. If someone does not meet licensing staff qualifications or does not have education to submit, they must work with their supervisor and licenser to plan to complete the required education within 5 years from date of hire.
 - i. For outdoor nature-based providers, options to meet these staff qualifications are based on program type (early learning or school-age). The availability of each option is dependent on role type.
- 3. Depending on their role, new staff need to finish all pre-service requirements including CPR/First Aid, blood-borne pathogen, food handler’s permit, background check, TB test, health and safety training (initial requirement) and licensing orientation within 90 days of being hired. See [WAC 110-302-0105](#) for more information about pre-service. [See Procedure 404](#) for more information about the health and safety training requirements.
 - a. Outdoor nature-based providers will complete Outdoor Nature-Based (ONB) Child Care Basics to meet their initial training requirements.
- 4. After the first year of employment, individuals complete in-service training. Those working in licensed care complete 10 hours each year, and those serving ECEAP must complete 15 hours each year. For more information about in-service training requirements and options, [see Procedure 407](#).

Procedure 202. Provider Access to a Community Equivalent (PACE)

Individuals working in licensed early learning child care facilities must meet the required staff qualifications for their job role as identified in [WAC 110-300-0100](#). Provider Access to a Community Equivalent (PACE) is a training equivalent option for early learning roles who need an initial or short certificate. This includes assistant teachers, lead teachers, and licensed family

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home owners. PACE is not an eligible equivalent for ECEAP Performance Standards. It will not be calculated in Early Achievers as staff education that contributes to Early Achievers Professional Development Points.

Procedure

1. A MERIT user who chooses PACE to meet their education requirement for licensing must:
 - a. Complete Child Care Basics (CCB). [See Procedure 401.](#)
 - b. Complete Enhancing Quality Early Learning (EQEL) See Procedure 408. If MERIT users were hired before August 1, 2019, and not required to complete EQEL, they will need to complete EQEL to participate in PACE.
 - c. Complete all PACE modules
2. All training must be recorded in MERIT. [See Procedure 407.](#)
3. MERIT users may count EQEL and PACE training as their in-service training for that year. [See Procedure 408.](#) Up to five hours may be rolled over to the next calendar year in accordance with [WAC 110-300- 0107\(3\).](#)

Procedure 203. Recognizing degrees, certificates, and credentials for Staff Qualifications

Educational programs may apply to have a degree, certificate or credential evaluated to see if it will meet staff qualification requirements. Approval of staff qualifications may inform DCYF scholarship policy but does not guarantee scholarship access.

Procedure

DCYF reviews degrees certificates or credentials to determine if the program qualifies as an alternative credential for staff qualifications. To be approved, the program would align with one of the following alternative credential options:

- ECE Related Degrees
- Aligned Credits
- DCYF-Recognized Certificate and Credentials

Please see the [Education Verification Manual](#) for more information.

1. The program submits the Program Review for Staff Qualifications form to MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - a. All sections of the application need to be completed.

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- b. DCYF may request additional documentation. Applicants have five business days to respond.
 - c. Applicants will receive email notification once the evaluation process has started.
2. DCYF completes program review.
 - a. Only programs that meet DCYF accreditation requirements are eligible to apply.
 - b. DCYF will decide within 30 business days and will notify the applicant of the evaluation outcome.

Procedure 204. Professional Development Plans

Users (including family-home, school-age, licensed and un-licensed ECEAP) must document their professional development progress and update their MERIT account annually.

Procedure

1. With the support of the licensur, MERIT users working on job role education requirements complete the designated professional development plan for their role.
2. Users select a pathway to meet education requirement for their role in MERIT.
3. Users update progress annually in MERIT by:
 - a. Confirming their employment in an open licensed facility or the employer verifies employment in their professional record.
 - b. Submitting education applications to show new college coursework or credentials completed during the past year.

Users who use the community-based training pathway, PACE, must have training recorded in MERIT. [See Procedure 202.](#)

Section 3: Education

Procedure 301. Education Application and Verification

MERIT users must complete an education application that leads them through the education verification process. [WAC 110-300-0100](#), [WAC 110-301-0100](#), [WAC 110-302-0100](#).

Procedure

1. MERIT user submits an education application in MERIT.
 - a. See the [Guide for How to Submit an Education Application](#).

- b. User must submit copies of transcripts or supporting documents with the education application. The documents are uploaded through the education application or emailed.
 - i. If the degree is in a language that uses characters different from alphabetical letters (for example: Mandarin, Hindi, Japanese, etc.), the MERIT user must provide a literal notarized translation of the documents.
 - ii. If domestic education cannot be verified through National Student Clearinghouse, the user submits official transcripts if requested.
- c. If a user in a role that requires a High School diploma or equivalent cannot access supporting documents to verify education, they may request an affidavit to meet their hiring education requirement.
 - i. Early Learning Affidavit:
 - 1. A user requests an affidavit form by emailing merit@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - 2. A user completes the form and returns it to merit@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - 3. Once the affidavit is approved, it is recorded in a user's MERIT dashboard.
 - ii. School-Age Affidavit:
 - 1. A user requests an affidavit form by emailing merit@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - 2. A user completes the form and returns it to merit@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - 3. Once the affidavit is approved, the user must complete a waiver in their WA Compass provider portal.
 - 4. Once the waiver has been approved by the licensing supervisor, the user's hiring education is met.
 - iii. Outdoor Nature-Based Affidavit:
 - 1. A user requests an affidavit form by emailing merit@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - 2. A user completes the form and returns it to merit@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - 3. Once the affidavit is approved, the user must complete a waiver in their WA Compass provider portal.
 - 4. Once the waiver has been approved by the licensing supervisor, the user's hiring education is met.

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- d. All supporting documents must include the applicant’s first and last name and STARS ID. Without this information on every document, verification will be delayed.
 - e. Complete applications will be processed as soon as possible. DCYF strives for completion within 45 days after all materials are received. [Note: DCYF is currently updating its verification procedures. As a result, verification timelines may be extended.]
 - f. User has 90 days from the date the MERIT application was submitted to provide supporting documents. If the documents are not received, the application is withdrawn.
2. Education applications are submitted for education verification.
- a. The degree and certificate sections of the education application are used to verify education and record early childhood education (ECE), school-age, or ECE/school-age, and non-applicable credit.
 - b. The coursework section is used to verify in-service training hours only. During the education verification process, all eligible in-service training hours are recorded even if the coursework section of the application was not originally included in the submitted application. See policy on Submitting College Coursework for In-service Hours.
 - c. If DCYF is unable to verify education documents, it may request additional information. For international education, this may include a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) course-by-course evaluation.
 - i. The user contacts a NACES organization to get a course-by-course evaluation to determine the number of ECE, school-age, ECE/school-age combined and non-applicable credits they have earned.
 - ii. Users may choose from any of the NACES members ([NACES – National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](#)).
 - iii. Price, process, and turnaround time varies by organization.

Procedure 302. Education Appeals

MERIT users may appeal a decision made about their education application.

Procedure

1. MERIT users have 60 days from the original application’s final decision to submit an Education Appeal form.
 - a. Education applications verified in MERIT and past the education appeal timeline will not be re-evaluated.
2. The DCYF Credentialing Specialist reviews the appeal form and makes the decision.
 - a. The DCYF Credentialing Specialist may request additional documentation. The User has five business days to respond to the request.
 - b. The DCYF Credentialing Specialist has 10 business days from the date additional documents are received to decide.
 - c. DCYF will notify the applicant of the outcome of the appeal by email.
 - i. If the applicant does not accept the appeal decision, the applicant can request a review from the designated supervisor. The supervisor will review all documentation and make a final decision within 10 business days. The applicant will be notified by email, and the supervisor will make a note in the user’s MERIT account.
 - ii. The final decision by the supervisor may not be appealed.

Procedure 303. Awarding Scholarships or Grants

Early learning professionals trying to further their ECE may be eligible for scholarship through the Early Achievers Grant or Washington Scholarships.

Procedure

1. Early Achievers Grants are available to early learning professionals pursuing certificates and associate degrees in ECE. They are awarded on a case-by-case basis while funding is available. To apply, applicants must:
 - a. Apply to the participating community or technical college and enroll in an approved ECE program.
 - b. Be employed at a facility participating in Early Achievers (child care center, family home, or ECEAP program) for a minimum of 10 hours per week or 40 hours per month. Be employed for at least three months at the facility (with an exception of the community and technical college course ECED& 107 Health, Safety, and Nutrition to fulfill Child Care Basics within the first 90 days of employment).

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2. Early Achievers Grants are prioritized. If a college has more applicants than available funds, they prioritize funding according to the [DCYF Scholarship Program Guide](#).
3. The Early Achievers Grant also has the following guidelines:
 - a. Participating colleges utilize DCYF information about employers participating in the Early Achievers program to prioritize scholarship decisions.
 - b. No more than one-half of the grant recipients from a single college may be employed in ECEAP programs.
 - c. Head Start employees are eligible for a maximum of fifteen credits.
 - d. Colleges approach student funding by braiding funding for eligible students whenever possible to expand the benefit of the Early Achievers Grant.
4. When selecting scholarship recipients, DCYF does not consider ethnicity, race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran, or immigration status.

Washington Scholarships

1. Washington Scholarships are available to early learning professionals pursuing specialty certificates and are awarded on a case-by-case basis. Recipient must:
 - a. Be employed at an ECEAP, child care center, or family home participating in Early Achievers.
 - b. Be in a qualifying job role.
 - c. Have worked at a participating Early Achievers facility for at least three months.
 - d. Work an average of 10 hours per week at current facility.
 - e. Complete the student release form in the scholarship contract.
 - f. Be enrolled in a DCYF-eligible credential program without a break in enrollment.
2. Washington Scholarships are prioritized. Priority consideration will be according to the [DCYF Scholarship Program Guide](#).

Procedure 304. Education Awards

DCYF offers education and training incentives, as determined by legislation or program policy, and as funding is available. To receive the education or training incentive, the provider must meet the program's eligibility criteria, which are subject to change.

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Procedure

1. The following roles are eligible for education awards:
 - a. Eligible roles working in a licensed care facility with employment recorded in MERIT.
2. The following roles are not eligible for education awards:
 - a. DCYF employees.
 - b. Out-of-state professionals.
 - c. Anyone without eligible role requirements.
3. Users must submit an education application. Once education is verified, the user may be eligible for an education award.
 - a. All education awards depend on fund availability and are awarded in the order applications are received.
 - b. Users must have a Statewide Vendor Number to receive payment. Users have 12 months from the date they submitted their education application to get the Statewide Vendor Number. If the user does not get a Statewide Vendor Number at that time, they are no longer eligible for an education award.
4. Once education is verified, users may be granted an education award based on the following verified achievements ([See Education Awards Guide](#)):
 - a. Highest level of completed education.
 - b. Up to 4 ECE majors.
 - c. Up to 3 ECE certificates and credentials.
5. Education incentive awards are outlined below:
 - a. **Degree Award – Available for Highest Level of Education**
 - i. GED (General Educational Development): \$50
 - ii. High School Diploma: \$50
 - iii. Associate’s Degree: \$100
 - iv. Bachelor's Degree: \$200
 - v. Master's Degree: \$300
 - vi. Doctoral Degree: \$400

b. ECE Major Award – Available for Up to Four Verified ECE Majors

- i. Associate’s Degree with ECE Major: \$100
- ii. Bachelor’s Degree with ECE Major: \$100
- iii. Master’s Degree with ECE Major: \$100
- iv. Doctoral Degree with ECE Major: \$100

c. Certificate/Credential – Available for Highest Level of Education (Up to three)

- i. Washington State ECE Initial Certificate: \$50
- ii. Washington State ECE Short Certificate of Specialization: \$50
- iii. Washington State ECE Certificate: \$50
- iv. Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential: \$50
- v. Home Visitor CDA Credential: \$50
- vi. One-Year ECE Certificate/Diploma (Minimum of 45 Credits): \$50
- vii. MACTE Accredited Teacher Credential in Infant/Toddler (I/T): \$50
- viii. MACTE Accredited Teacher Credential in ECE: \$50
- ix. Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Diploma in Assistants to Infancy (A to I): Covers Birth to 3 Years of Age: \$50
- x. AMI Diploma in Primary: Covers 3 to 6 Years of Age: \$50
- xi. American Montessori Society (AMS) diploma - Infant & Toddler (B-3): \$50
- xii. AMS Diploma - Early Childhood (Ages 2.5 - 6): \$50
- xiii. 13 Military Modules: \$50
- xiv. Other Certificate Equal to a Minimum of 12 ECE Credits: \$50

Procedure 305. Trauma-Informed Care Financial Awards

DCYF offers Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Financial Awards for education and training, as funding is available. To receive the TIC Financial Award, the recipient must meet the program’s eligibility criteria, which are subject to change. All TIC Financial Awards are limited to a maximum amount of \$1,200 per lifetime (per [WAC 110-15-0211](#)).

Procedure

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

1. To be eligible for a TIC Financial Award, an individual must meet the following criteria at the time of the award:
 - a. Are one of the following:
 - i. Licensed family home (LFH) owner, active in MERIT.
 - ii. License-exempt family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) provider, active in MERIT.
 - b. Currently serve children and families accessing Working Connections Child Care subsidy and have claimed a subsidy payment in at least one month of the past 12 months.
 - c. Have an active Statewide Vendor number recorded in MERIT.
 - d. Completed eligible training in the past 12 months, recorded on the DCYF MERIT training template by the approved trainer.
 - e. Have not received the lifetime maximum TIC financial award of \$1,200.

TIC Education and Training Eligibility Criteria

1. Education eligible for a TIC Financial Award includes the following:
 - a. Bachelor's degree in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
 - b. Bachelor's degree in Infant and Toddler Mental Health
 - c. Master's degree in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
 - d. Master's degree in Infant and Toddler Mental Health
 - e. Infant Family Associate (IFA) endorsement
 - f. Infant Family Specialist (IFS) endorsement
 - g. Infant Family Reflective Supervisor (IFRS) endorsement
 - h. Infant Mental Health Specialist (IMHS) endorsement
2. Trainings that are eligible for a TIC Financial Award must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Completed with a DCYF-contracted training organization by a state-approved trainer or DCYF-approved proprietary training entity.
 - b. State-approved training alone does not ensure eligibility for training awards.

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- i. DCYF-approved training:
 - 1. DCYF approved Trauma-Informed Care Training Modules – Advanced Series
 - 2. Filming Interactions to Nurture Development (FIND)
 - 3. Helping Children Develop Social Emotional Skills
 - 4. Mindful Me
 - 5. Mobility Mentoring
 - 6. Prenatal and Infant Mental Health
 - 7. PREPARE for Care
 - 8. Pyramid Model Prevent Teach Reinforce for Young Children
 - 9. WAPM Implementing Inclusive + Equitable Pyramid Model Practices (preschool or infant/toddler)

3. DCYF will not distribute TIC Financial Awards if the approved trainer has not recorded training completion on the DCYF training MERIT template.

Trauma Informed Care Education and Training awards

1. Trauma-Informed Care Major Award – Available for verified TIC Majors (IECMHCs not eligible)

- a. Bachelor’s Degree with Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health: \$1,200
- b. Bachelor’s Degree with Infant and Toddler Mental Health: \$1,200
- c. Master’s Degree with Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health: \$1,200
- d. Master’s Degree with Infant and Toddler Mental Health: \$1,200

4. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsements (IECMHCs not eligible)

- a. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Infant Family Associate (IFA): \$800
- b. Center for Early Relational Health Infant Family Specialist (IFS): \$1,200
- c. Center for Early Relational Health Infant Family Reflective Supervisor (IFRS): \$1,200
- d. Center for Early Relational Health Infant Mental Health Specialist (IMHS): \$1,200

5. Contracted Partner – Trauma-Informed Care Trainings

- a. Mobility Mentoring (ECEAP and Early ECEAP only): \$800

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- b. Filming Interactions to Nurture Development (FIND): \$800
- c. Helping Children Develop Social Emotional Skills: \$800
- d. Mindful Me: \$800
- e. PREPARE for Care Training – at least 2 modules: \$800
- f. WAPM Implementing Inclusive + Equitable Pyramid Model Practices (Modules 1 and 2): \$800
- g. DCYF Approved Trauma-Informed Care Training Modules – Advanced Series: \$1,200
- h. Prenatal and Infant Mental Health: \$1,200
- i. Pyramid Model Prevent Teach Reinforce for Young Children (PTR-YC) (WAPM Modules 1 and 2 are prerequisite): \$1,200
- j. PREPARE for Care Training – at least 4 modules: \$1,200

Procedure 306. Payments Received in Error

MERIT users who have received a payment in error will be held accountable for paying back DCYF.

Procedure

1. MERIT users who receive a payment in error:
 - a. Must notify DCYF they have received a payment in error.
 - b. Must reimburse DCYF for the full amount of the payment.

Procedure 307. Educational Advancement

MERIT users who have completed additional ECE education after the initial education application was submitted may report the degree and are eligible for an education movement award.

Procedure

1. For a newly reported degree to be considered, it:
 - a. Must be higher than the previously reported degree.
 - b. May not be the same level of degree with a different major.
 - c. Must be the result of additional training or education, not articulation of degree from credits earned before initial education verification.

2. Awards for advancement are based on verified education, education award policies, and availability of funds.
3. Users who do not report all earned degrees when they initially submit their education verification will not receive an additional education award for the degrees later.

Section 4: Training Requirements

MERIT users need to complete training and in-service requirements for their job role. Depending on their role, those requirements may include Child Care Basics/School-Age Basics, Electronic Attendance System training, Health and Safety training, and annual continuing education.

Procedure 401. Child Care Basics

Child Care Basics (CCB) includes Washington state and federally required content for early learning roles as specified in WAC. This includes, but is not limited to, the following topic areas as required by WAC 110-300- 0106: Recognizing and Reporting Abuse (0106 section 4), Emergency Preparedness (0106 section 5), Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome (0106 section 6), Serving Children Experiencing Homelessness (0106 section 7), and Medication Management (0106 section 10). Licensed child care providers are required to complete Child Care Basics in accordance with [WAC 110-300-0106 – Training Requirements](#).

Procedure

1. A MERIT user who is required to complete CCB may do so in one of these ways:
 - a. CCB training in the community offered by a state-approved trainer
 - b. CCB offered online for no cost in the [DCYF training site](#)
 - c. Approved college courses ECED& 100 or ECED& 107
 - d. Combination of both the approved ECE and DCYF online Federal Health and Safety modules:
 - i. Education eligible for this option includes: 12 ECE or ECE/School-Age college quarter credits, 13 Military Modules Certificates of Completion, a current Child Development Associate (CDA), or Montessori Credential/Endorsement (MACTE).
 - ii. Once recorded on your Professional Record, notify MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov of completion.

- e. Licensed Head Start, ECEAP, and School District programs may submit an agreement stating they meet the health and safety training requirements included in WAC 110-300- 0106. The hiring program must designate an individual to document completion of the required training in MERIT on behalf of the user.
2. If the MERIT user has met the requirement by methods accepted by DCYF before Aug. 1, 2019, and the completion is recorded in MERIT, DCYF will accept completion of CCB. The MERIT user needs to review updated federal health and safety training topics in the [Child Health and Safety Supplemental guide](#). Users will not need to complete the online Health and Safety Modules.

Procedure 402. School-Age Basics

Licensed school-age providers must complete School-Age Basics (SAB), formerly known as the basic STARS training, in accordance with [WAC 110-301-0106](#). School-Age Basics includes Washington state and federally required content for school-age roles specified in WAC. This includes, but is not limited to, the following topic areas as required by WAC 110-301-0106: Recognizing and Reporting Abuse (0106 section 4), Emergency Preparedness (0106 section 5), Serving Children Experiencing Homelessness (0106 section 6), and Medication Management (0106 section 7). Licensed school-age providers must complete School-Age Basics in [WAC 110-301-0106 – Training Requirements](#).

Procedure

1. A MERIT user who is required to complete SAB may do so in one of the following ways:
 - a. SAB training in the community that is offered by a state-approved trainer.
 - b. Approved college course. ECED& 100 or ECED& 107.
2. If a MERIT user has met the requirement by methods previously accepted by DCYF before June 1, 2021, and has the completion recorded in MERIT, DCYF will accept completion of SAB. In this scenario, the MERIT user would need to review updated federal health and safety training topics in the [Child Health and Safety Supplemental guide](#). Users will not need to complete the online Health and Safety Modules.
3. If the user previously worked in an early learning program and completed Child Care Basics, and the completion is recorded in MERIT, DCYF will accept this as meeting the initial training requirement for school-age programs.

Procedure 403. Electronic Attendance Training

Providers accepting Working Connections Child Care subsidies are required to track attendance using an electronic attendance system. This applies to child care centers, family home child care

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providers, and Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN) providers. MERIT users who use the DCYF-provided system must complete a one-time Electronic Attendance System training. This training is not eligible for in-service hours.

Procedure

1. One role per facility is required to complete Electronic Attendance System training.

Eligible roles include:

- a. Director
 - b. Assistant Director
 - c. Program Supervisor
 - d. Licensee
 - e. Site Contact/Manager
 - f. Site Coordinator
 - g. Owner
 - h. Family Home Child Care Provider
 - i. FFN Provider
2. The Training is completed in the following ways in English, Spanish, or Somali:
 - a. In-person from a state-approved trainer
 - b. Online at dcyftraining.com
 - c. Self-paced/workbook

*See the [Electronic Attendance Training and Support page](#) for more information.

Procedure 404. Electronic Attendance – Internet or System is Unavailable

Providers must maintain daily attendance records on paper during internet or system unavailability per WAC 110-15-0034(5).

Procedure

1. Providers who have a temporary power or internet outage must keep paper attendance records to enter in the electronic attendance system when it is available again.
2. Providers who are unable to use their electronic attendance system due to a planned or unplanned EAS service outage must keep paper attendance records and enter the information in the electronic attendance system when it is available again.

Procedure 405. Electronic Attendance Records – Exceptions to Rule

Providers may request an Exception(s) to the Rule (ETR) based on criteria that prevents their ability to use an electronic attendance system per WAC 110-15-0126. ETRs are subject to a review process for approval or denial.

Procedure

Providers without internet access or those experiencing other barriers to use may request an ETR.

1. Providers may request an ETR for, but not limited to, the following reasons:
 - a. Rules preventing the use of electronics at the facility.
 - b. The provider’s selected third-party system does not currently meet system approval requirements but is actively working toward compliance.
 - c. Computer access is not available.
 - d. The system is not offered in the primary language of the provider and/or families the provider serves.
 - e. The provider is experiencing challenges with technology after receiving technical assistance.
2. A provider’s approved ETR must:
 - a. Provide copies of records monthly within seven days of submitting invoice for payment.
 - b. Report to DCYF within 10 days if the circumstances around the reason for their initial ETR request changes.
 - c. Submit a request for exemption at least every two years.
3. Providers denied for an ETR may email their request to electronic.attendance@dcyf.wa.gov.

Procedure 406. Health and Safety Training

Early learning and school-age providers must complete and renew health and safety training according to WAC 110-300-0106 and WAC 110-301-0106 to meet licensing requirements. The training courses include Blood Borne Pathogens, First Aid/CPR, Food Handlers Permit, and Safe Sleep. Early learning child care providers must complete training before they provide care and throughout their career. As of Oct. 1, 2018, current FFN non-relative providers serving children

and receiving Working Connections Child Care subsidy have 90 days to complete and record health and safety training.

Procedure

1. Prior to working unsupervised with children, early learning providers are required to complete and maintain training requirement through the following methods:
 - a. DCYF-approved Health and Safety Training either in-person or using the [DCYF Student Training Portal](#).
 - b. DCYF Safe Sleep training needs to be completed annually through the [DCYF Student Portal](#).
 - c. First Aid, Infant CPR, and Blood Borne Pathogens must be completed prior to working unsupervised initially. Ongoing maintenance certifications are in-person in the local community through fire departments, the Red Cross, or other training providers.

Procedure 407. Annual In-Service Hours Requirement

MERIT users must complete 10 hours of annual in-service training (previously known as STARS hours) according to [WAC 110-300-0107](#) [WAC 110-301-0107](#). Training must be recorded in MERIT. Training is delivered by state-approved trainers, college coursework, approved conference or special events, or an approved continuing education proposal.

Procedure

1. MERIT users receive in-service hours for training delivered by a state-approved trainer or an approved pathway through:
 - a. In-person or virtual with live facilitation
 - b. An online learning management system
 - c. Self-paced workbook
2. Hybrid is a combination of the above. Ten in-service hours must be completed each calendar year (January 1 to December 31) starting in the second year of employment. Users must make sure their in-service training hours are recorded in MERIT.
 - a. If a user exceeds 10 in-service hours in a year, up to 5 in-service training hours may be carried over to the next calendar year (January 1 – December 31).
3. Providers may participate in the same in-service training courses more than once. The following applies:

- a. If a provider attends the same training in a 12-month period, in-service hours will only be awarded for the initial training date.
 - b. The same training may be taken multiple times during a 12-month period so the provider can refresh on the content or if the training is part of a professional growth plan.
4. Providers who are also DCYF staff can receive in-service hours credit for completed training if the training is not hosted by:
- a. Their DCYF team/unit, or
 - b. One of the team/unit's contracted organizations

Additional Approved Pathways to Complete In-Service Hours

College Coursework

1. MERIT users may submit college coursework through the education application in MERIT to meet the requirement for in-service hours.
 - a. User follows [Procedure 301 on Education Application](#).
 - b. Users may submit college coursework dating three years back from the current calendar year. 10 in-service hours are awarded per eligible college credit.
 - c. Up to three courses may be added to the user's record per calendar year to meet the required in-service hours.
 - d. Users must submit a transcript that shows the college coursework. A certificate or other documentation will not be accepted.

Conference/Special Events

1. Providers may attend a conference or a special event to meet the required in-service hours. The host may request pre-approval to award in-service hours for training facilitated by those who are not state-approved trainers.
2. Examples may include professional development days, specialized training with contracted trainer/organizations, or series learning events.
 - a. A conference/special event application in MERIT must be submitted by an organization/individual hosting training delivered by those who are not state-approved trainers.
 - b. Up to four applications may be submitted by an organization/individual each calendar year. This application is for those who do not offer frequent training.

- i. Applications must align with the Washington Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals or Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals.
- ii. Applications must be submitted for review at least three weeks before the event.
 - 1. Complete supporting documentation, including the learning objectives and outcomes, must be submitted to training@dcyf.wa.gov. Applications will be withdrawn after 30 days if documentation is not received.
 - 2. Non-learning moments such as lunch breaks of 30 minutes or more will be subtracted from the overall in-service hours. If an event has multiple facilitators, a mix between state-approved trainers and non-state-approved trainers, the application will still be reviewed.
 - 3. For instruction on how to apply, see [MERIT Support Conference/Special Events](#).
- c. Conference/special event applications may be submitted more than four times per year if:
 - i. The applicant is a state-approved trainer who is working with a presenter who is not a state-approved trainer.
 - ii. The applicant is with an approved organization and is working with a presenter who is not a state-approved trainer.

Continuing Education Proposal

- 1. The purpose of a continuing education proposal is to award in-service hours for training not already eligible. Examples may include out-of-state conferences, clock hour training, or trainings offered by third parties, etc.
 - a. Users can submit a continuing education proposal in MERIT for events completed in the last 12 months. They must send supporting documentation to training@dcyf.wa.gov for review within 30 days of applying.
 - b. Certificates should include the following:
 - i. Participant name
 - ii. STARS ID

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- iii. Training date
 - iv. Training name
 - v. Number of training hours
 - vi. Trainer’s name and signature
- c. If supporting documentation is not received within 30 days, the application will be withdrawn.
- i. DCYF may request additional information to process the application, including further evidence in the expansion of learning section.
 - ii. DCYF may refuse continuing education proposals if they do not meet the standards of practice and professionalism established for state-approved training/trainers.
- d. Approved continuing education proposals are eligible for training reimbursement if the training occurred in Washington state.

Procedure 408: Completing Enhancing Quality of Early Learning (EQEL) for Early Learning Providers

This policy applies to early learning providers required to complete the Enhancing Quality of Early Learning training series to meet the WAC training requirement. ([WAC 110-300-107](#)) As of Aug. 1, 2019, early learning providers need to complete EQEL within 36 months (three years) of being hired.

Procedure

1. EQEL is recorded in MERIT by a contracted state-approved trainer eligible to offer EQEL using DCYF templates.
2. MERIT users may:
 - a. Complete EQEL over 2 years.
 - b. Use EQEL to meet the annual in-service requirement for each year.
 - c. Complete a DCYF approved alternative for EQEL which includes:
 - i. ECEAP required training, including the Professional Development Plan training based on ECEAP Performance Standards
 - ii. Training required in Head Start Standards, including the Professional Development Plan based on Head Start Performance Standards

- iii. A verified Washington State ECE Short Certificate or higher level ECE degree

Procedure 409. DCYF Staff Requesting to Offer In-Service Hours

DCYF staff members may request to offer an event or training that provides in-service hours if it meets the requirements for state-approved training.

Procedure

1. DCYF staff must email training@dcyf.wa.gov to request training approval, and a training coordinator will schedule an information-gathering session with the applicant.
2. If the event meets the requirements for state-approved training, the applicant will complete the training intake form.
3. If approved, the training coordinator will create the event in MERIT and manage the roster.
4. The Applicant must collect the following information from participants:
 - a. First and last name
 - b. STARS ID number
 - c. Email

Procedure 410. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Clock Hours

Early learning providers may earn clock hours through the Office Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Procedure

1. DCYF in-service hours will be automatically accepted as clock hours. [WAC 181-85-025\(6\)](#).
2. To report their clock hours to OSPI MERIT, users complete the in-service registration form.
3. The MERIT user will ensure that their in-service training hours are recorded on their professional record in MERIT as record for OSPI.

Procedure 411. Training Certificate Verification

A MERIT user who has completed training but has not had it recorded in MERIT may submit a training certificate for verification for possible in-service hours.

Procedure

1. If an individual has a certificate from a state-approved trainer and does not have the training reflected on their MERIT record, the individual may request to have their certificate reviewed to be recorded on their MERIT account by contacting dcyf.merit@dcyf.wa.gov. Each certificate is reviewed individually.
2. DCYF will review the training certificate within 10 business days and notify the requestor whether the certificate meets the requirements.
 - a. To verify your training certificate, the information below should be submitted:
 - i. Participant name
 - ii. STARS ID
 - iii. Training date
 - iv. Training name
 - v. Number of training hours awarded
 - vi. Trainer's name and signature
 - b. DCYF will contact the listed trainer or the training organization administrator to verify the completion of a training and the authenticity of the certificate.
 - c. DCYF will contact the requestor if additional information is necessary.
 - d. DCYF requires certificates that are less than seven years old.
 - e. CCB may not always adhere to a seven-year timeframe due to changing federal health and safety requirements.
3. DCYF evaluates each certificate on a case-by-case basis.

Procedure 412. Training Reimbursement

MERIT users may apply for reimbursement for completed training.

Procedure

1. Training reimbursement is available to qualifying individuals working in a licensed facility.
 - a. Users may apply once per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) for up to \$250.
 - b. Eligible training must be provided by a state-approved trainer.
 - c. Eligible learning events include:

- i. Training provided by a state-approved trainer
 - ii. Approved conference/special events
 - d. To be eligible, users must be in a qualifying role at the time of application. Qualifying roles include:
 - i. Child care center: director, program supervisor, assistant teacher, lead teacher, assistant teacher, or aide.
 - ii. Family child care home: licensee, lead teacher, assistant teacher, aide.
 - iii. School-age program: director, site coordinator, lead staff or group leader, assistant, assistant director.
 - iv. A continuing education proposal is not eligible for training reimbursements.
 - e. The training reimbursement depends on the availability of funds.
2. MERIT users submit a training reimbursement application in MERIT.
 - a. MERIT users' employment must be confirmed by their employer/or verified by DCYF licensor in MERIT.
 - b. Training must be recorded in user's MERIT professional record.
 - c. Users must have a Statewide Vendor Number to receive payment. Users have up to 12 months from the date of training to receive a Statewide Vendor Number.
 3. Users must repay payments that were received in error. [See Policy 307.](#)

Section 5: State-Approved Trainers

Procedure 501. Applying to Become a State-Approved Trainer

A user completes an application in MERIT to become a state-approved trainer. Applicants need to complete the application requirements based on their role within 90 days of submitting the application.

Procedure

1. MERIT user is eligible to offer in-service training after DCYF approves the state-approved trainer application.
2. Trainer applicants must reside in Washington State, however, exceptions will be made for Region X states.

3. Trainers from Region X states (Alaska, Idaho, and Oregon) can apply using a streamlined process. Email training@dcyf.wa.gov for more details. All other out-of-state prospective trainers are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. To become a state-approved trainer, a MERIT user submits the state-approved trainer application that best fits their background, experience, and education along with all supporting materials, and completes the observation (if relevant for application type) within 90 days.
4. The following state-approved trainer application types are:
 - a. Specialist Trainer: Provides training/instruction in specific content areas at specific levels of the Core Competencies.
 - b. K-12/ESD (including Head Start) Trainer: Provides training/instruction to teachers, high school teachers who provide Child Care Basics; Employees who provide training for an ESD or Office of Head Start.
 - c. Higher Education Trainer: Provides training and instruction in the Washington higher education system.
5. Trainer Modules must be completed prior to approval. Modules are available on the DCYF training site.
6. Specialist Trainer applicants need to complete a training observation to demonstrate their skills meet the trainer standards.
 - a. An observation is completed by a DCYF-contracted trainer observer. Trainer applicants who are associated with an Organization Trainer Mentor (OTM) will be observed by their OTM.
 - i. Initial training observations must be live either online or in person. The training must be at least 1.5 hours in length.
 - ii. Applicants coordinate a training event with training participants. In-service hours are not awarded for this training.
 1. Co-teaching with an existing state-approved trainer is permitted. If a trainer applicant is co-teaching, in-service hours may be awarded for the portion the applicant delivers if they are under the direct supervision of the state-approved trainer. The state-approved trainer is required to uphold all standards of practice for the training they supervise.

- iii. DCYF will send the applicant the trainer standards, a description of the observation process, the observation rubric, and recording guidance (if applicable), to prepare for the observation.
 - iv. Observers may follow up with the trainer to ask additional questions to complete the scoring of the rubric.
 - b. DCYF may offer an alternative to live delivery observation, depending on the circumstances. Interested applicants can reach out to training@dcyf.wa.gov to see if they are eligible.
 - c. All applicants must have employment/education verified in MERIT. [See procedure 301.](#)
- 7. Trainer applicants from DCYF-contracted professional development organizations who will deliver DCYF curricula exclusively may use DCYF-developed curricula to complete the initial observation. These types of observation exceptions will be decided on a case-by-case basis; please notify DCYF at training@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - a. The observation will be conducted using a modified observation form for DCYF curricula.
 - b. If the training is more than two hours long, DCYF will determine the appropriate modules/sections for the observations.
 - c. All other observation procedures will remain the same.
- 8. DCYF reviews application and makes a final approval decision.
 - a. Final decisions are based on the applicants' professional experience working directly with children, youth, and families, experience facilitating learning to adults, and their academic experience.
 - b. Specialist Trainer applicants must pass with a minimum of 80% on the observation requirement in addition to the other requirements.
 - c. Specialist Trainer applicants who score between 70 and 79% for the observation may be accepted to be state-approved trainers for a provisional six-month period.
 - i. They may train for in-service hours during this period.
 - ii. This period must be used to address the areas of growth identified during the observation.
 - iii. To receive full-trainer status after this provisional period the trainer will:

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1. Work with a trainer mentor to develop a professional growth plan.
 2. Pass a live observation using the same training that was used for the initial observation. If the trainer cannot demonstrate that they have met the trainer standards, they are denied trainer status.
- iv. Trainers who are denied may reapply one year after their denial date. To reapply, they need to complete a professional growth plan and demonstrate improvement. If DCYF determines they have met the growth plan goals, the trainer will be asked to complete the full application process, as well as additional quality assurance monitoring for the trainings they intend to list in MERIT.

Procedure 502. Guiding Frameworks for State-Approved Trainers

State-approved trainers must comply with all standards and competencies for state-approved trainers, including professional conduct and recording and reporting training completions.

Procedure

1. State-approved trainers are responsible for providing high-quality professional development opportunities for child care professionals based on the following documents:
 - a. [Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals](#)
 - b. [Core Competencies for Child and Expanded Learning Professionals](#)
 - c. [Standards of Practice and Professionalism for State-Approved Training](#)

Procedure 503. Federally Required Training Topics

The following topic areas are required by state and/or federal regulations as outlined in [WAC 110-300-0106](#): recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, and exploitation (subsection 4); emergency preparedness (subsection 5); prevention and identification of shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma (subsection 6); serving children experiencing homelessness (subsection 7); safe sleep practices (subsection 8); medication management and administration (subsection 9); exposure to blood and bodily fluids (subsection 10); first-aid and CPR (subsection 11); and food handling (subsection 12). Training that includes each topic area must be finished within the required timelines and renewed as often as the rules for that topic require as described in [WAC 110-300-0106](#).

Procedure

1. Training on many of these topics can be found on the DCYF Student Portal or through designated organizations. These training topics are not eligible for in-service hours.
2. Specialized/advanced training on these topics may be considered for in-service hours. If you are a trainer and your organization is interested in training on these topics, contact training@dcyf.wa.gov. To be considered, the training curriculum must be:
 - a. Developed by subject matter experts
 - b. Designed for synchronous delivery
 - c. Aligned with the trainer standards
 - d. Beyond what is currently in the DCYF Student Portal and Child Care Basics
3. Curriculum that will not be considered for approval:
 - a. Training on licensing regulations or WAC.
 - b. Licensing orientation for new providers.
4. Restricted topics are subject to change and will be reviewed as needed.

Procedure 505. Trainers Delivering DCYF Curricula

DCYF ensures consistent delivery of DCYF-developed curricula by partnering with DCYF-contracted organizations or partner agencies who have met the qualifications. These organizations have a designated lead who makes recommendations for approval, ensure implementation fidelity, and provide ongoing support to trainers. Approved trainers use appropriate assigned templates and only DCYF-approved materials.

Procedure

1. The designated lead will recommend trainers to deliver DCYF training.
 - a. The designated lead oversees trainers and training content with the training organization. This may include an Organization Trainer Mentor or Training Organization Administrator.
 - b. The designated lead must have a signed Memorandum of Agreement with DCYF to make trainer recommendations.
2. Each DCYF training includes a trainer manual with requirements and onboarding process. Trainers who meet the requirements and complete onboarding may be eligible to provide DCYF training.
3. The designated lead completes the trainer recommendation.

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- a. The designated lead states the qualifications of the trainer specific to each curriculum.
- b. The designated lead and trainer agree to fulfill the expectations for delivering the DCYF training.
4. The designated lead signs the trainer recommendation and submits it to DCYF.
5. If approved, DCYF will assign the training template to the trainer.
6. Approved trainers must record DCYF training in MERIT using the assigned training template.
7. DCYF conducts random quality assurance observation for trainers delivering DCYF-developed curricula and independently developed curricula.
 - a. Trainers delivering DCYF-developed curricula are not penalized for standards and indicators that are beyond their control. The observation rubric will be amended for these observations.
 - b. Trainers may be observed multiple times during a calendar year for each of the DCYF-curricula they are approved to deliver.
 - c. Trainer and the designated lead will be notified of the observation results to support quality improvement.
 - d. Designated leads are responsible for reviewing observation results and provide ongoing support.
8. Designated leads must notify DCYF if a trainer is no longer associated with their organization by emailing training@dcyf.wa.gov.

Procedure 506. Providing Electronic Attendance System Training and Support

All individuals (i.e., state-approved trainers, technical assistance providers, and Learning Lab facilitators) who support providers serving children on subsidy must have a strong understanding of the Electronic Attendance System (EAS) policies and procedures. This is demonstrated by a knowledge assessment. State-approved trainers (see Procedure 501) who successfully complete the knowledge assessment will be assigned the official EAS training template in MERIT. The official training template must be used to record the providers' completion in MERIT.

Procedure

1. Individuals can request the EAS knowledge assessment by emailing training@dcyf.wa.gov.

2. Individuals have an option of completing [EAS training](#) before the knowledge assessment.
 - a. Trainers affiliated with an organization may work with their training program coordinator for additional one-on-one EAS mentoring to build their knowledge.
3. Individuals have two weeks to complete the training virtually and return the assessment to training@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - a. If the assessment is not completed and returned, access to the training environment will be removed from the SATs account.
 - b. DCYF will track the knowledge assessment information, including:
 - i. Trainer name
 - ii. EAS Training completion
 - iii. Date knowledge assessment was distributed
 - iv. Training Environment Access granted date
 - v. Knowledge assessment status (pass/fail)
 - vi. Retake (pass/fail) date
 - vii. Organization affiliation
 - viii. Additional information, as needed
4. Individuals must pass the knowledge assessment with a score of 80% or higher and not miss any system-critical questions to provide support on the system.
 - a. If individual passes the assessment:
 - i. DCYF will add the training template to their MERIT account.
 - ii. Access to the training environment remains active.
 - iii. DCYF emails the individual and their organization they have passed.
 - b. If an individual does not pass the assessment, they will receive an email reviewing the questions that need to be re-evaluated.
 - i. They will be required to retake missed questions.
 - ii. If they fail a second time, they will need to complete a one-on-one phone call with a DCYF representative to determine if the individual understands the system based on verbal responses.

- iii. If a state-approved trainer, they will be allowed to co-teach the training until they have developed the skills to pass the assessment.

Procedure 507. Trainer-Affiliated Organizations

Organizations can apply to become an affiliated training organization. Trainer-affiliated organizations employ or contract with state-approved trainers to provide training opportunities for Washington’s early learning workforce. Multiple trainers can associate with their organization when recording training in MERIT.

Procedure

1. Organizations eligible to be affiliated in MERIT must:
 - a. Be in Washington state.
 - b. Have a designated budget or funding allocated for training delivery.
 - c. Have training delivery named as a key service.
2. Organization Request:
 - a. Training organization applications are requested and submitted by email to training@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - i. DCYF reviews the application. If approved, the organization is added to MERIT as an affiliated training organization.
 - ii. Organization designates at least one state-approved trainer who is assigned as an organization administrator.
 1. Trainer-affiliated organization staff who are not state-approved trainers may be added as an administrator to manage trainings.
 - b. If an organization does not have a state-approved trainer, they complete the state-approval process outline in [Procedure 501](#) to deliver trainings for in-service credit.

Procedure 508. Organization Training Mentor

DCYF contractors that provide state-approved training may have an employee to fulfill the role of an Organization Trainer Mentor (OTM).

Procedure

1. A DCYF contracted organization, or another state agency may have a state-approved trainer that serves as a training mentor and liaison between the organization and DCYF’s trainer approval process.

2. A state-approved trainer that is employed by a DCYF contracted organization or state agency may serve as an OTM when:
 - a. They have a leadership role related to professional learning.
 - b. They are a state-approved trainer with successful experience providing state-approved training.
3. The agency nominated OTM must adhere to the role's expectations and sign an agreement with DCYF that includes:
 - a. Understanding the application and monitoring process for trainer approval and OTMs.
 - b. Observing the organization's trainer applicants and submitting completed observation rubrics to DCYF by emailing training@dcyf.wa.gov.
 - c. Providing mentorship and support for the organization's trainer applicants and existing trainers.

Procedure 509. Training Delivery

State-approved trainers, whether independent or part of an organization, may provide training to meet the early learning providers' in-service training requirements.

Procedure

1. Training will meet the standards for professional learning in the DCYF Standards of Practice and Professionalism for State-Approved Training.
 - a. This includes all [trainer standards](#), which outlines expectations for high-quality professional learning.
 - b. Trainings that do not meet the above DCYF standards will not be approved for in-service hours.
 - c. Trainings that are already in MERIT, but are found not to meet DCYF standards, may be removed by DCYF.
 - i. Communication with the trainer may happen before removal, but the training can be removed without notice.
 - ii. Trainer will receive a notification that their training has been removed, as well as the reason, within five business days.

- d. State-approved trainers that provide training that does not meet the Standards of Practice and Professionalism will be offered an opportunity to address the issues and update their training.
 - i. Upon resolution, the training may be offered again for in-service hours.
 - ii. If no resolution is reached, the training will remain unavailable until adjustments are made by the trainer.
2. The trainer determines the number of in-service hours for the training.
 - a. In-service hours include a set amount of time for content learning and completing required activities.
 - b. If a participant spends more time than the trainer allotted, the additional time will not be awarded in-service hours.
3. State-approved trainers may not provide in-service hours for learning events that promote a commercial product offered either by the state-approved trainer or a for-profit enterprise.

Procedure 510. Maintaining Records

All state-approved trainers must maintain records while delivering training for in-service hours.

Procedure

1. State approved trainers or trainer-affiliated organization administrators must record training in MERIT. All trainings must be entered at least three weeks in advance of the start date.
 - a. If your training entry is listed as an unscheduled training in MERIT, it must have a start and end date in the same calendar year. The trainer will need to re-create the training in MERIT every year.
2. All trainings must have completed participant rosters within 30 business days of the completion date.
 - a. If a participant does not provide a STARS ID, the trainer must enter the participant's name in the roster as a placeholder so the STARS ID can be added later.
 - b. State-approved trainers must provide a certificate for training completion to all participants. Certificates must include:
 - i. Training title

- ii. Date of training
 - iii. Length of training
 - iv. Core competencies included and how much time for each
 - v. Participants name
 - vi. Trainers name, STARS ID #, and signature
 - vii. Training organization or agency, if applicable
- c. State-approved trainers must distribute training evaluations after their training as outlined in the [Standards of Practice and Professionalism for State-Approved Training](#).

Procedure 511. Canceling a Training

A state-approved trainer must cancel a training if they are no longer able to deliver it due to unforeseen circumstances.

Procedure

1. If a training is canceled, the trainer must make every effort to communicate the cancellation at least 72 hours in advance to participants and display a cancellation sign at the training location.
2. Trainings available to the public in MERIT must be marked as canceled in MERIT.
3. Refunds must be provided if funds were collected.

Procedure 512. Trainer Support

A state-approved trainer can submit the trainer support application in MERIT to receive assistance for materials purchased for their training or to receive reimbursement for professional development related to providing adult learning.

Procedure

1. Trainer support is available on a case-by-case basis.
 - a. Applicant must be a state-approved trainer.
 - b. Support is available on a first-come, first-serve basis, as funding is available.
 - c. State-approved trainers may apply once per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) for up to \$200.
 - d. State-approved trainers must have a Statewide Vendor Number to receive payment.

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- i. Trainer has up to 12 months from the date they submitted their trainer support application to receive a Statewide Vendor Number. If the trainer does not get a Statewide Vendor Number at that time, they will not receive payment.
- 2. Trainer support may be used for:
 - a. Cost reimbursement for their own training as an adult educator.
 - i. For training received out of state, in-service hours can be applied through a Continuing Education Proposal (CEP).
 - ii. The CEP must be processed before the trainer support application is submitted.
 - b. Materials purchased to support trainer’s career as a state-approved trainer.
 - c. Trainer may be required to submit receipts to support purchases or expenses.
 - d. Users must follow the repayment policy for payments received in error. See [Procedure 307](#).

Section 6: Training Program Quality Assurance

Procedure 601. Trainer/Training Observations

State-approved trainers of all types are subject to quality assurance. These random observations are completed by trained observers (from DCYF or from contracted partners) who use a standardized process. For more information, see [Part III: Monitoring Training Quality](#).

Procedure

1. A training may be selected for a quality assurance observation due to:
 - a. Random selection
 - b. Reported trainer/training concerns
 - c. Monitoring of DCYF-training content
2. Synchronous and asynchronous trainings can be chosen for quality assurance observations.
 - a. Observers will be present for up to two hours.
 - b. Observers or DCYF may complete a follow-up to assess knowledge and skills that were not demonstrated.
3. DCYF notifies trainers of the outcome of the observation.

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- a. Trainers have five business days to appeal the outcome. They will provide additional evidence for unmet indicators and/or information about a deviation during the observation process. Requests for follow-up observations will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- b. If the trainer does not meet the minimum points required, they must revise the content within six months. The training is removed from MERIT during this time. At the end of the six-month period, the trainer will offer the training again to be observed. If the training still does not meet the minimum points requirement, the trainer will lose their state-approved status.
 - i. If the trainer approval status is set to be revoked, DCYF will change the window of delivery for any training to the end of the current month.
 - ii. The trainer must:
 - 1. Stop enrolling new participants.
 - 2. Notify registered participants that the synchronous event is cancelled, if applicable.
 - 3. Notify Washington participants registered for asynchronous training they must complete the course by the end of the month to receive credit.
 - 4. Process training reimbursement, if applicable.
 - 5. Complete all active training rosters within three weeks.
 - iii. The trainer will not create any new trainings under their profile.
 - iv. If the trainer conducts trainings for a national training organization, they must notify them they are no longer able to provide training in Washington state.
- 4. If an existing trainer is denied approval, they can submit another application one year after the denial date.
 - a. To reinstate approval status, the trainer must complete a professional growth plan demonstrate to DCYF they have made improvements.
 - b. If DCYF determines they have met the goals in the growth plan, the trainer will be invited to complete the full application process and participate in additional quality assurance monitoring for trainings they intend to list in MERIT.

- c. Out-of-state trainers/training organizations are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 5. DCYF can complete observations at any time without prior notice. If a trainer is not upholding DCYF trainer standards, additional follow-up may occur. [See Procedure 604.](#)

Procedure 602. MERIT Training Data Review

State-approved trainings in MERIT may be randomly reviewed by DCYF to ensure they align the Standards of Practice and Professionalism for State-Approved Training.

Procedure

1. Trainings in MERIT are randomly reviewed by DCYF to:
 - a. Confirm training template fields are completed correctly.
 - b. Ensure training content and delivery methods align with trainer standards.
2. DCYF may request additional information or edits to the training template.
 - a. If DCYF requests additional information, the state-approved trainer has five business days to respond. Additional information may include:
 - i. Trainer materials
 - ii. Handouts
 - iii. Resources or research used to develop the training
 - b. If a revision is requested, the state-approved trainer must complete the revision before delivering the training again for in-service hours.
3. If a trainer has ongoing issues with the training template after receiving technical assistance from DCYF, their trainer status may not be renewed in the next approval cycle.
4. DCYF may remove a training from MERIT if it does not meet the training standards. DCYF will notify the trainer or organization, if applicable.

Procedure 603. Trainer/Training Concerns

Participants of the training community may report their concerns to the Training Team. Concerns may be related to any content area outlined in the Standards of Practice for trainers. Examples of concerns include inappropriate or threatening behavior from a trainer or training participant, plagiarism of training content, and poor quality of training materials. Concerns are shared with DCYF through a training concern form or confidential interview.

Procedure

1. MERIT users must submit a training concern form or complete their confidential interview within 60 days of the training date.
 - a. User submits a [training concern form](#) or emails training@dcyf.wa.gov to set up an interview date and time.
 - b. DCYF will follow up with both the person who submitted the form and the trainer within 10 business days.
 - i. DCYF must receive first-hand information.
 - ii. DCYF takes all concerns seriously and upholds confidentiality.
 - c. DCYF will decide on the appropriate action based on the information learned, and in adherence with the state-approved trainer sanctions policy.
2. If DCYF finds a state-approved trainer violated the [Standards of Practice and Professionalism for State-approved Training](#) they will be more thoroughly reviewed, including:
 - a. Responding to the allegation in writing within 30 calendar days to maintain active state- approved status.
 - i. Trainers may deny the allegation but must document how the concern will be documented in future work.
 - ii. DCYF will review the response and decide when the concern has been resolved.
 - b. A state-approved trainer may submit a training concern appeal to training@dcyf.wa.gov.
3. Trainers may lose their state-approved status at any time, depending on the severity of the allegations.

Procedure 604. Trainer Sanctions

State-approved trainer sanctions are made due to lack of adherence to the standards or when an existing trainer has not been approved during a quality assurance observation.

Procedure

1. DCYF can implement trainer sanctions when:
 - a. A state-approved trainer does not meet the Standards of Practice and Professionalism for State-Approved Training.

- b. A state-approved trainer does not meet the minimum requirement during a quality assurance observation.
 - c. A state-approved trainer engages in fraudulent/illegal activity.
 - d. A trainer is disqualified from providing child care or has their license revoked or denied.
 - e. A trainer is convicted of committing a crime against people.
 - f. A trainer fraudulently keeps in-service training scholarships or participant's payments.
2. Sanctions are on a case-by-case basis, and may include one or more of the following:
 - a. Required professional growth plan with additional follow-up observation.
 - b. Goal-oriented mentorship from an assigned state-approved trainer with additional follow-up observation.
 - c. A provisional approval status until the trainer demonstrates changes in practice.
 - d. Temporary revocation of state-approved trainer status until remedial activities are complete.
 - e. Permanent revocation of state-approved trainer status.

Section 7: Relationship-Based Professional Development (RBPDP)

Procedure 701. Reflective Learning to Meet Annual In-Service Requirement

Reflective learning groups may be considered eligible for in-service hours.

Procedure

1. Only state-approved trainers may deliver reflective learning groups for in-service hours.
2. Reflective learning is documented in MERIT to demonstrate:
 - a. Specific focus areas identified with a state-approved trainer.
 - b. Reflective practice strategies outlined in relationship-based professional development standards to enhance adult learning.
 - c. Opportunities to develop new skills or concepts to enhance practice.
 - d. Monitored progress toward measurable goals.
 - e. Interactions and activities to support adult learning based on individual readiness, raising awareness, and modifying behavior.

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- f. Start and end dates and regularly scheduled in-person and virtual meetings.
 - g. Participant’s completed evaluation.
3. State-approved trainers follow the process for all state-approved training, including delivering and recording training, as well as these additional guidelines:
- a. Training that incorporates a reflective learning component recorded under one training template.
 - b. The reflective learning group will start within one month of state-approved training.
 - c. The training title in MERIT should include the title of the training followed by “Training with Reflective Practice”. For example: “Strengthening Business Practices: Training with Reflective Practice.”
 - d. DCYF does not have a training format in the training template that allows a combination of two different modes of delivery (i.e., online training with reflective learning or in-person training with reflective learning). Trainers should use “in-person” or “online.”

Procedure 702. DCYF Technical Assistance Delivery

DCYF provides DCYF-funded technical assistance by partnering with DCYF-contracted organizations or approved partner agencies. These organizations have a designated lead who make recommendations for technical assistance (TA) approval, ensure implementation fidelity, and provide ongoing support to TA specialists. Approved TA specialists will use appropriate materials and tracking for all services.

Procedure

1. The designated lead recommends TA specialists to deliver DCYF TA.
 - a. The designated lead oversees TA specialists and TA content with the contracted organization. This can include an Organization TA Specialist Mentor or TA Organization Administrator.
 - b. The designated lead must have a signed Memorandum of Agreement with DCYF to make TA specialist recommendations.
2. Each DCYF TA service includes a TA specialist manual with requirements and onboarding process. TA specialists who meet the requirements and complete the onboarding may be eligible to provide DCYF TA service.
3. The designated lead completes the TA specialist recommendation.

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- a. The designated lead states the qualifications of the TA specialist specific to each content area.
- b. The designated lead and TA specialist agree to the expectations for delivering the DCYF TA service.
4. The designated lead signs the TA specialist recommendation and submits it to DCYF.
5. DCYF approves the TA specialist and will provide any additional materials.
6. DCYF TA services are recorded in the approved method.
7. DCYF may conduct random quality assurance observations for TA specialists who deliver DCYF-TA services.
 - a. TA specialist and the designated lead will be notified of the observation results to support quality improvement.
 - b. Designated leads review observation results and provide ongoing support.
8. Designated leads notify DCYF at training@dcyf.wa.gov if a TA specialist is no longer associated with their organization.

Procedure 703. Technical Assistance Mentoring Lead

DCYF contractors that provide technical assistance (TA) may have an employee fulfill the role of a TA mentor lead.

Procedure

1. A DCYF contracted organization or another state agency may have staff who serve as a TA mentor and liaison between the organization and DCYF's TA program.
2. Staff who are employed by a DCYF contracted organization or state agency may serve as a lead when:
 - a. They have a leadership role related to RBPD/Technical Assistance.
 - b. They are familiar with RBPD practices with successful experience providing Technical Assistance.
3. The nominated agency lead will adhere to the role's expectations and sign an agreement with DCYF that includes:
 - a. Understanding the application and monitoring process for TA specialist and leads.
 - b. Providing mentorship and support for the organization's TA specialists.

- c. Observing the organization’s TA specialists at least once a year.

Section 8: Substitute Pool

Procedure 801. Substitute Eligibility

Individuals applying for the substitute pool must meet eligibility requirements, register in MERIT, and complete pre-service training requirements before they are considered for the program.

Procedure

1. MERIT users who meet the following qualifications are eligible to serve as a substitute in the state’s early care and education substitute pool:
 - a. Be at least 18 years old.
 - b. Register in MERIT, have a STARS ID, and indicate interest on the professional record page.
 - c. Meet all necessary Health and Safety requirements.
 - d. Attend a substitute pool orientation.
 - e. Complete all required documents.
2. Complete all Health and Safety Requirements. This includes the following:
 - a. CCB
 - b. Background Check
 - c. TB Test
 - d. CPR
 - e. First Aid
 - f. Blood Borne Pathogens
 - g. Food Handlers (if applicable to role)
 - h. Safe Sleep (if applicable to role)
3. Attend a Substitute Pool Orientation.
4. Complete the necessary documentation. This includes a signed agreement outlining roles and responsibilities between the substitute and the substitute pool administrator.

Procedure 802. Facility Accessing Substitutes

Licensed child care programs that want to participate in the Substitute Pool must meet eligibility requirements.

Procedure

To have a substitute placed in a facility, the program must:

1. Have a license that is not suspended, revoked, or on probationary status.
2. Complete the facility orientation and related documents required by DCYF or the Substitute Pool Administrator.
3. **Licensed Family Homes:** To access state funded substitute hours through the SEIU 925 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), the MERIT user must:
 - a. Be covered by the CBA.
 - b. Be a licensed family home provider serving at least one non-school-age child receiving subsidy within the past 12 months.
4. **Centers:** To access state funded substitute hours as a licensed center provider, the facility must:
 - a. Be a licensed center-based provider enrolled and participating in Early Achievers.

Providers may use the substitute pool for any activity, including but not limited to:

- Professional development days
- Holidays
- Personal time off (including sick and vacation leave)
- Participation in Early Achievers activities such as coaching

The Substitute Pool Administrator is the Imagine Institute. They can be contacted by phone at 206-492-5249 or by email at subpool@imaginewa.org.