

# 2024-2025 Early Learning Expansion

Addendum #3 and #4 Request for Application (RFA) Questions and Answers

January 11, 2023

## All Applicants

### 1. Is there an updated table (map) showing where current slots are located?

A map is coming, but the saturation study is the best place to find that information right now, or directly from other contractors in your area.

### 2. We hear a lot of interest in ECEAP from our child care providers who may not be ready to provide ECEAP until the next biennium. How can we share information with the legislature about future need for funding and slots?

Get in contact with Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP [WSA Head Start and ECEAP | Centering children and families who are far away from opportunities \(wsaheadstarteceap.com\)](http://wsaheadstarteceap.com) to advocate for more slots in the future.

### 3. Does a school district classroom need to go through child care licensing with DCYF?

No, a school district classroom site does not need to go through child care licensing with DCYF.

### 4. What does Early Achievers (EA) participation look like?

Please see 2023-2024 ECEAP Performance Standards, page 56-57, PAO-65 Early Achievers Participation for detailed information: [2023-24 ECEAP Performance Standards](#)

#### (1) Contractors must:

- (a) Ensure that all sites actively participate in Early Achievers and comply with the Early Achievers Participant Operating Guidelines including, but not limited to:
  - (i) Non-licensed sites complete the Early Achievers registration application within 30 days of starting ECEAP class at the site.
  - (ii) Licensed sites complete Early Achievers registration application within 30 days of enrollment in Early Achievers.
  - (iii) Participate in Early Achievers quality recognition per required ECEAP timelines.
- (b) Assign an Early Achievers contact and facility/site designee at each site in ELMS and MERIT.
- (c) Require newly hired Early Achievers coaches to attend the Early Achievers Practice Based Coaching training within six months of hire and maintain record of completion.
- (d) Require Early Achievers coaches to have the knowledge, skills and ability to use the Coach Educator Community Interface (CECI) to guide sites through the continuous quality improvement process.
- (e) Ensure coaching interactions are recorded in the DCYF determined database.
- (f) Ensure coaches support sites to develop a quality improvement plan and enter the information in the DCYF determined database.



- (g) Ensure each ECEAP site is Level 4 or 5 within 24 months of enrollment in Early Achievers.
  - (h) Ensure Level 2 or 3 sites comply with the Early Achievers Remedial Activities Policy.
  - (i) Sites not recognized at Level 4 or 5 after completion of the remedial activity period will not be funded for ECEAP in the following state fiscal year.
  - (j) Support sites with coaching and resources to attain or maintain Level 4 or 5 recognition.
  - (k) Identify an ECEAP staff representative to participate in Local Implementation Partner meetings convened by local Child Care Aware (CCA) offices. The purpose of the meetings is to build a seamless system and increase coordination of professionals serving the same early learning providers in the same sub-region (sub-regions may be identified by county, community or other groupings based on location and caseloads as mutually agreed upon by DCYF and the contractor). Focus must be placed on how to collaborate, align services, strengthen communication and reduce any duplication of services. Local Implementation Partner meetings must be held no less than quarterly in each CCA sub-region and efforts must be made to include all areas of the region in meetings throughout the year.
- (2) Tribal Sovereign Nations have the option of participating in Early Achievers through an inter-local agreement between the Tribal Sovereign Nation and DCYF. Tribal Sovereign Nations may also choose to use an alternative quality recognition and assessment process approved by DCYF.

## **5. Do we need to budget for an Early Achievers (EA) coach?**

Yes. The way some contractors do this is through an education coordinator role that also serves as an EA coach. The coach role can be combined with another role, and can potentially be the coach a provider may already have if they are a licensed facility receiving EA coaching through CCA, depending on the ratio of ECEAP to non-ECEAP children.

## **6. Is Creative Curriculum a budget item that each site will need to plan for?**

Yes, you will need to budget for one of two curricula, High Scope or Creative Curriculum. DCYF ECEAP typically provides Creative Curriculum. *DCYF is currently asking the state legislature to fund additional curriculum for expansion.*

## **7. Is there a cost associated with Creative Curriculum or Teaching Strategies Gold?**

Professional development for teaching staff is included in the cloud-based Creative Curriculum resources provided by DCYF. This training is all online.

## **8. What is the maximum indirect rate for admin costs?**

The maximum indirect rate is 15%. DCYF monitors this at the contractor level. The contractor is responsible to ensure that the total admin rate is a maximum of 15%.

## **9. Is anyone doing inclusive models in school districts?**

Yes. Several school districts across the state are running inclusive programs with ECEAP, developmental preschool, Transitional Kindergarten and/or private pay slots.

## 10. Does USDA meet nutrition standards for ECEAP?

Yes, see 2023-2024 ECEAP Performance Standards, page 28, ENV-15 Menu Planning.

### Contractors must:

- (l) Participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or National School Breakfast and Lunch Program (NSBLP).
  - (m) Include family input in menu planning.
  - (n) Use and post menus approved by a registered or certified dietitian.
  - (o) Incorporate cultural dietary preferences in menus.
  - (p) Ensure meals and snacks include a variety of nutrient dense foods low in sugar and saturated fat.
- (2) ECEAP funds may be used for:
- (a) Meal and snack costs not covered by these programs (USDA, NSBLP, CACFP)
  - (b) Substitutions for more nutrient dense food options, and
  - (c) Accommodations for children with food allergies.

## 11. For inclusive classrooms, is there flexibility about who enrolls in ECEAP?

Enrollment decisions are guided by eligibility, family choice, and ECEAP priority points found here: [2023-24 ECEAP Priority Points](#).

## 12. Can a school district transport ECEAP children on a school bus with other students?

Yes - as long as you are following OSPI transportation rules.

## 13. Is the Saturation Study available yet?

The 2022 Saturation Study is the most recent available, linked in the 2024-25 Comprehensive Early Learning Application Guide and also found here: [2021-22 ECEAP & Head Start Saturation Study](#). The 2023 report is still pending and will be uploaded to the DCYF ECEAP website as soon as it is available.

## 14. We are not sure how many slots we may need, which will depend on how many new subcontractors we may have. How many should we ask for?

Do your best to ask for what you think you will need. There is a narrative box at the end of the RFA Survey Application for you to share more information pertinent to your application; you can explain your estimation there. Final slots will be awarded when funded totals are established by the legislature.

## 15. If we are requesting B-3 slots, how do we articulate the number of slots per site, as there is no box allocated for B-3 in the site section of the survey.

Please enter the number of B-3 ECEAP slots requested in the narrative box at the end of the survey.

**16. Do school district employees need to complete a Portable Background Check?**

Bus drivers do not need a PBC but all classroom staff and bus aides who work directly with children do.

**17. What do service area agreements generally look like?**

Please see Service Area Agreement Guidance: [Service Area Agreement Guidance Document](#) and Service Area Agreement SAMPLE: [ECEAP-Service-Area-Agreement-Sample](#)

**18. In the application guidance it states that DCYF will alert all service area partners to slots being applied for by Jan. 8. Is this date correct?**

We will delay contact with service area partners by a week or two, due to the change in the Request for Application (RFA) due date. DCYF encourages all applicants to have conversations with neighboring organizations regarding your intent to apply for ECEAP and plan for collaboration in serving all eligible children and families.

**Current ECEAP Contractors**

**19. Can we convert School Day (SD) to Working Day (WD)?**

Conversion is specific from Part Day (PD) to SD, however you can apply for WD and give back SD if awarded the WD. Reminder: DCYF has not been allocated any new WD slots this year; however, some may become available through returns from other contractors.

**20. Are there additional funds for CNF this year; should we ask for more if we need it?**

Yes – ask for what you need and include in detail what the request is for (see *Allowable Spend Categories* on page 3 of the CNF Guidance Document: [ECEAP-Complex-Needs-Fund-Grant-Application-Guidance-FY-2024-25](#)).

**21. If we ask for additional ECLIPSE slots, do we need to identify where we are going to place them?**

There is no need to identify where ECLIPSE slots will be placed.

**22. We still have subcontractors who want B-3 slots. Any chance they might be available?**

We are not expecting new B-3 slots, but we still suggest requesting them to demonstrate need for future decisions.

**23. Can Complex Needs Funding be used to purchase a bus for a center where we do not have a bus and have children who are not attending due to no transportation? Can an alternate vehicle be used to transport children like a passenger van and can we use complex needs for that?**

The Contractor would have to clearly demonstrate the need for the vehicle in their application, and how it would support children with complex needs. CNF guidance states that you must make a good case that the majority of the students transported in the van have complex needs, noting that simply living in a rural location does not count as a complex need in and of itself.

**Unique Transportation**

Contractors may use funding to fill specialized transportation needs to safely transport children with complex needs to and from school. Examples of this may include:

- Modify or purchase an ADA accessible vehicle to transport a child with complex needs to and from school. If funds are used for this, cost allocation plans must be submitted to the state.
- Purchase an additional vehicle to shorten child transportation time due to the difficulties of extended travel.
- Transportation for a child with a unique classroom schedule.
- Transportation for a child experiencing homelessness and does not have an address.
- Transportation for a child who resides in a rural remote area where families are the primary source for transportation needs.

The funds may not be used for standard bus travel for a child. Other specialized transportation needs will be considered and requires a clear explanation in the grant application. However, these funds can include the salary of additional bus drivers needed to transport qualifying children.

Please see the Guidance Document for more information: [ECEAP-Complex-Needs-Fund-Grant-Application-Guidance-FY-2024-25.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#)