

Serving Safe Water

Slide #1 Welcome

Welcome to this course titled, “**Serving Safe Water.**”

This course is developed as part of the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (or DCYF) alignment process, to prepare providers and licensors in their understanding of the “why”, the “what” and the “how” of complying with the updated Foundational Quality Standards for Early Learning Programs (referred to in each course as the Foundational Quality Standards).

Slide #2 Helpful Hints

WA DCYF is pleased to present this e-Learning course! To help provide a positive learning experience for you, please take a moment to review the following “Helpful Hints” summary, detailing what you can expect from this course. A complete listing of Helpful Hints has been added to the Resources section of your learner’s screen for reference.

- If you would like to access and review the full course text, please visit the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can view, print, or download a full version of the course text that is narrated within each module. The full text will be included in each course and listed as the first resource in the Resources section of your course frame.
- The time to complete the course will depend on the course topic and the pace at which you advance through the slides.
- To help you get the most out of the course, settings are in place to prevent users from skipping ahead through the slides. You can advance through the course when the narration for each slide concludes by selecting the “Next” button, or, go back to review material already presented by selecting the “Previous” button.
- Web links and additional resources will be utilized in some of the courses to enhance your learning experience. We hope you will take time to explore them to further develop your knowledge about the topics being presented.

Slide #3 Introduction

This course is designed to introduce you to the updated Washington Administrative Code or WAC, as well as outline strategies and examples of WAC compliance. Updated WACs will be detailed in each course as a reference and a full listing of the WAC is included in the Resources section of your learner’s screen. You can print or download this resource at any time, either as a reference while you complete this course, or as a resource after the course is completed.

Slide #4 Learning Outcomes

This course will help early learning professionals understand how to meet, assess for, and demonstrate ongoing compliance with the Foundational Quality Standards.

Upon completion of this course, participants will:

- Understand why young children are more at-risk for exposure to contaminants in water
- Be familiar with the requirements for the appropriate uses of various water fixtures
- Know what steps to take and procedures to follow if the early learning program's water supply is not available or becomes contaminated

Slide #5 Guiding Principles

As we cover the material in this course, please keep in mind the following Guiding Principles. We will revisit these at the end of the course to “check in” with you and give you an opportunity to assess your understanding and application of the course content.

Guiding Principles

- Safe drinking water is vital to the healthy growth and development of young children.
- Water must be tested and monitored to ensure it is safe.
- Early learning programs must provide access to safe drinking water at all times.

Slide #6 Terms and Definitions

Take a moment to review and familiarize yourself with the following terms and definitions. For your reference, a listing of these terms has been added to the Resources section of your learner's screen. You can access the list at any time by visiting the Resources section of your learner's screen. You can download the file to keep as a future reference or print as a desk guide.

CDC stands for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Coliforms are a broad class of bacteria found in the environment, including both human and animal feces.

Early learning professionals are all early learning providers, child care licensing staff, and other professionals in the early learning field.

Early learning program space means the licensed indoor and outdoor space on the premises approved by the department for the purpose of providing licensed child care.

Early learning program staff refers to all persons who work, substitute, or volunteer in an early learning program during hours when children are or may be present, excluding licensees.

Early learning provider or provider refers to an early learning licensee or designee who works in an early learning program during hours when children are or may be

present. Designees include center directors, assistant directors, program supervisors, lead teachers, assistants, aides, and volunteers.

EPA is the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Impervious flooring is made from material that does not allow water to soak into it (waterproof).

Nitrate is a compound that is formed naturally when nitrogen combines with oxygen or ozone. Nitrogen is essential for all living things, but high levels of nitrate in drinking water can be dangerous to health, especially for infants and pregnant women.

PPM means parts per million.

Slide #7 Course Introduction

On their Healthy Water website [cdc.gov/healthywater](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or CDC [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), states the following: “Drinking water comes from a variety of sources including public water systems, private wells, or bottled water. It is important to know where drinking water comes from, how it’s been treated and if it’s safe to drink.” ¹

To learn more from each of these websites, select the link for healthy Water website and the Centers for Disease Control and prevention.

The quality of water available to children attending early learning programs is especially important because, according to the Environmental Protection Agency or EPA, “Young children are at particular risk for contaminants in drinking water because, pound for pound, they drink more water than adults (including water used to prepare formula), and because their immature body systems are less efficient at detoxification.” ² -Environmental Protection Agency

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/index.html>

² <https://www.epa.gov/childcare/resources-about-drinking-water-child-care-providers>

Slide #8 Course Introduction continued

This educational module examines how early learning professionals can demonstrate, and assess for, compliance with WAC 110-300-0235 Safe water sources, and WAC 110-300-0236 Safe drinking water.

These two Foundational Quality Standards are high- priority areas for DCYF due to the potential for harm to young children, and the risk of negative impact on their development, through exposure to unsafe water.

DCYF has included these two standards in the updated WAC because it is vital that ALL children who attend early learning programs have access to safe water!

Slide #9 WAC 110-300-0235

Let's explore the first two subsections of this WAC on Safe water sources.

WAC 110-300-0235 Safe water sources.

(1) Hot and cold running water shall be supplied to early learning program premises.

WAC 110-300-0235 Safe water sources.

(2) An early learning provider must use a Washington state certified water laboratory accredited by the department of ecology to analyze drinking water to test the program water supply for lead and copper within six months of the date this section becomes effective. All fixtures used to obtain water for preparing food or infant formula, drinking, or cooking must be tested prior to licensing and at least once every six years. Testing must be done pursuant to current environmental protection agency standards. A copy of the water testing results must be kept on the licensed premises. If the test results are at or above the current EPA action level, an early learning provider must immediately:

- (a) Close the early learning program to prevent children from using or consuming water, or supply bottled or packaged water to meet the requirements of this chapter;**
- (b) Consult with the department of health for technical assistance;**
- (c) Contact and advise the department of the water test results and steps taken to protect enrolled children;**
- (d) Notify all parents and guardians of the test results; and**
- (e) Notify the department once lead and copper levels are below the current EPA action level.**

These licensing standards begin by stressing the need for water to be supplied to an early learning program as an ongoing requirement for a program to remain operational. As we reviewed, the water supplied to an early learning program must be running, as well as hot and cold.

Slide #11 WAC 110-300-0235

There are numerous ways that children who attend early learning programs are exposed to water throughout the day.

Some examples of this exposure include:

- drinking water
- food preparation
- infant formula
- tooth brushing
- handwashing

Subsection (2) of this WAC requires that early learning programs have their drinking water analyzed to test the program's water supply for lead and copper, with specific guidelines on testing fixtures used to obtain water for preparing food or infant formula, drinking, or cooking, along with timelines of when that testing must take place.

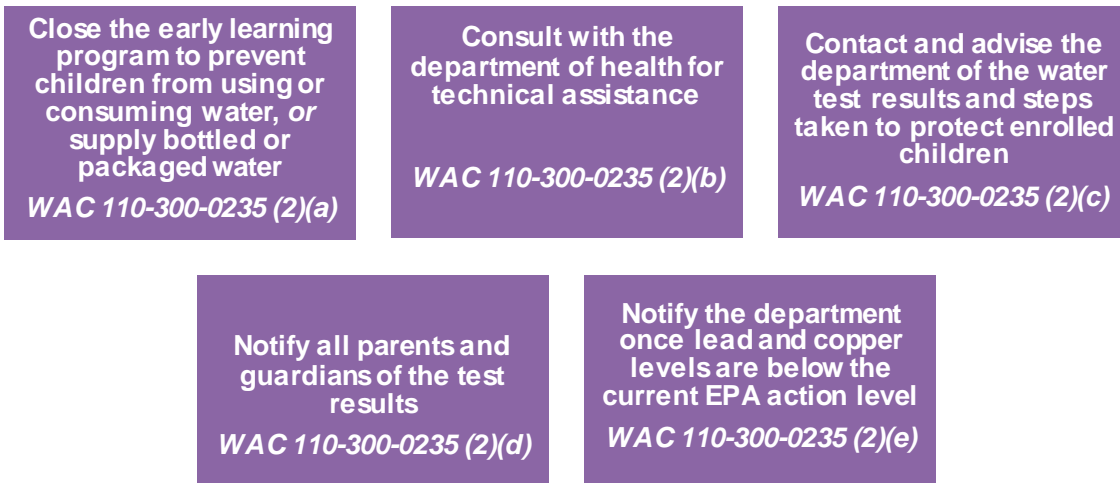
If you have spent time in an early learning program, you have likely seen children trying to drink water from a sensory table filled with water, an outdoor sprinkler, a spigot, and a myriad of other places. Exposure to these sources of water is often brief and temporary in nature, and not intended to be a source of drinking water. Because children may consume some water from these sources, it is important to ensure that this water comes from a safe and sanitary source. Early learning providers will need to determine what best practices they want to establish for their programs and may want to engage in practices such as filling sensory tables or other containers used for water play with water from a tested and approved source. Of course, Supervision is always key to keeping children safe.

Close supervision during water play activities can help to ensure that children are not ingesting water that comes from a source not approved for drinking, or that may have become contaminated by the children's hands and play equipment.

Slide #12 WAC 110-300-0235

WAC 110-300-0235 provides detailed requirements of the updated regulations for early learning programs to demonstrate compliance, including what actions must be taken to address any issues discovered during water testing.

This graphic illustrates the steps that must be taken if the water supply of an early learning program has been compromised or is unavailable.



This WAC also requires early learning providers to keep a copy of the water testing results on the licensed premises.

Slide #13 WAC 110-300-0235

Not all early learning programs get their water from a public utility source. The Environmental Law Institute estimates that approximately 15% of the population of the United States gets their water from private wells.³

Subsection (3) of this Foundational Quality Standard focuses on well water used by early learning programs. Well water is also addressed in Standard 5.2.6.2 of *Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition, National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs* (or *Caring for Our Children*) under “Testing of Drinking Water Not From Public System,” with a requirement for annual testing.

³ <https://www.eli.org/sites/default/files/eli-pubs/drinking-water-cc-final-posting-sept-4-2015.pdf>

Slide #14 WAC 110-300-0235 continued

WAC 110-300-0235 Safe water sources.

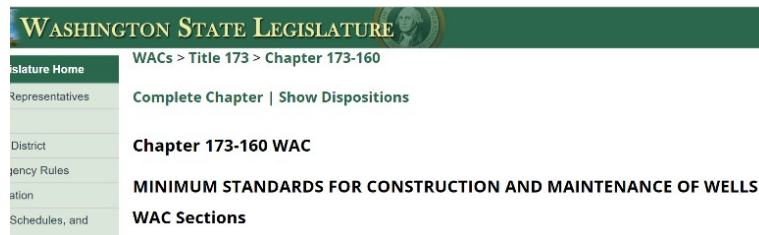
(3) If an early learning program space receives water from a private well, the well must comply with chapter [173-160 WAC](#), Minimum standards for construction and maintenance of wells.

(a) Well water must be tested at least once every twelve months for coliform bacteria and nitrates by a Washington state certified laboratory accredited by the department of ecology to analyze drinking water. To achieve desirable results the test must indicate:

(i) No presence of coliform bacteria; and

(ii) The presence of less than ten parts per million (ppm) for nitrates. If test results for nitrates are greater than five but less than ten ppm, the water must be retested within six months.

The WAC item references [173-160 WAC](#), on the minimum standards for construction and maintenance of wells. For specific details about these standards for wells, follow the link to the WAC number by selecting the icon provided here:



Slide #15 WAC 110-300-0235 continued

This Foundational Quality Standard continues with additional information about the steps that must be taken by an early learning program if well water tests positive for coliform bacteria or greater than ten ppm for nitrates.

Nitrate is a compound that is formed naturally when nitrogen combines with oxygen or ozone.

Nitrogen is essential for all living things, but high levels of nitrate in drinking water can be dangerous to health, especially for infants and pregnant women.

Coliforms are a broad class of bacteria found in the environment, including both human and animal feces. We will explore the WAC requirements relating to testing well water on the following slide.

Slide #16 WAC 110-300-0235

WAC 110-300-0235 Safe water sources.

(b) If well water tests positive for coliform bacteria, or greater than ten ppm for nitrates, the early learning provider must:

- (i) Immediately stop using the well water in the child care premises; and**
- (ii) Immediately inform the local health jurisdiction or the department of health and the department of the positive test results.**

(c) If directed by the department, an early learning provider must discontinue child care operations until repairs are made to the water system and water tests indicate desirable results pursuant to (b) of this subsection.

Slide #17 WAC 110-300-0235

Subsection (3)(d) of this WAC states early learning providers may keep a program operating if an alternate source of water is provided and the well is repaired and retested and meets water quality standards.

WAC 110-300-0235 Safe water sources.

(d) If the department determines that child care operations may continue while an unsafe water system is being repaired or installs treatment, an early learning provider must:

- (i) Provide an alternate source of water, approved by the department; and**
- (ii) Repair the well or install treatment as required and retest until the water meets the water quality standards pursuant to (b) of this subsection.**

Slide #18 WAC 110-300-0235

It is important that early learning programs understand what safe water is and how to find out if the water they are using in their early learning program is safe.

Early learning providers can search for state certified water laboratories by following the link provided to the [State of Washington Department of Ecology website](#). On the site, you can search for laboratories by name, by method, by city, etc. You can also download PDF versions of the following by selecting the following icons: [All Accredited Labs by Name](#), [Drinking Water by County](#), and [Drinking Water Labs with All Analyses](#).

If an early learning provider has questions about their drinking water lab results, they should contact their licensor for further guidance. If the licensor has additional questions about the lab results, he or she will consult with a DCYF health specialist for further clarification or guidance.

Slide #19 WAC 110-300-0235

Let's add to your toolbox! Select the link provided to use the menu of search options to find the lab closest to your area that accepts public well water samples.



wa.gov/ecy/laboratorysearch

Slide #20 WAC 110-300-0235

The final section of the Foundational Quality Standards on safe water sources instructs early learning professionals on the actions that must be taken if the water connection to the early learning program is interrupted for more than one hour or if the water source becomes contaminated.

Options range from providing bottled water to closing the program until repairs can be made. When contacting the department, the early learning provider is advised to contact their local licensing office and/or licensor.

Slide #21 WAC 110-300-0235

WAC 110-300-0235 Safe water sources.

(4) An early learning provider must immediately notify the department when the water connection to an early learning program space is interrupted for more than one hour, or the water source becomes contaminated:

(a) The department may require the early learning provider to temporarily close until the water connection is restored or the water source is no longer contaminated; or

(b) The early learning provider must obtain an alternative source of potable water such as bottled or packaged water. The amount of the alternative source of potable water must be sufficient to ensure compliance with the requirements of this chapter for safe drinking water, handwashing, sanitizing, dishwashing, and cooking.

Slide #22 Test your Learning!

Before we move on to the next Foundational Quality Standard, let's test your learning. Answer True or False to the following questions.

There is no need for an early learning provider to notify anyone if the early learning program is without running water for more than one hour.

- True
- False

Slide #23 Test your Learning!

When safe, clean water cannot be guaranteed, DCYF can require an early learning program to close until it is verified that the early learning program can provide safe, clean water.

- True
- False

Slide #24 WAC 110-300-0236

The second and final Foundational Quality Standard on safe water to be reviewed during this education module is WAC 110-300-0236 Safe drinking water.

This WAC was updated with provisions that include the following:

- Availability of water for children
- Prohibition on drinking water from a handwashing sink
- Offering of water throughout the day
- Cleaning of drinking equipment after each use
- Specifications around drinking fountains

Slide #25 WAC 110-300-0236

The language in Caring for Our Children, Standard 4.2.0.6: Availability of Drinking Water, states “Clean, sanitary drinking water should be readily available, in indoor and outdoor areas, throughout the day.”

This WAC supports that standard by requiring that an early learning program offer drinking water to children throughout the day, making drinking water readily available to children at all times. This WAC further requires that drinking water be offered in outdoor play areas, in each classroom for centers, and in the licensed space of a family home.

Here are some ways that early learning programs can offer drinking water to children in a manner that prevents contamination and supports the development and self-help skills of children enrolled in these programs:

- Use covered pitchers
- Use covered containers with a spigot that older children can self-serve or younger children can point to
- Offering individual, reusable water bottles for each child; these can be labeled with the child’s name and/or picture, encouraging name recognition and other literacy skills

This section of the WAC prohibits drinking water being provided from a handwashing sink, citing issues of using sinks for specific purposes (handwashing vs food preparation vs drinking) found in multiple chapters and sections of Caring for Our Children.

WAC 110-300-0236 Safe drinking water.

(1) An early learning program's drinking water must:

- (a) Be offered multiple times throughout the day and be readily available to children at all times;**
- (b) Be offered in outdoor play areas, in each classroom for centers, and in the licensed space for family homes;**
- (c) Be served in a manner that prevents contamination;**
- (d) Not be obtained from a handwashing sink used with toileting or diapering; and**
- (e) Be served fresh daily or more often as needed.**

Slide #27 WAC 110-300-0236

WAC 110-300-0236 requires early learning providers to clean and sanitize drinking fountains daily or more often, as needed.

WAC 110-300-0236 Safe drinking water.

(2) Drinking fountains at an early learning program must:

- (a) Not be attached to handwashing sinks or disabled;**
- (b) Not be located in bathrooms;**
- (c) Not be a "bubble type" fountain (the water flow must form an arch);**
- (d) Be cleaned and sanitized daily, or more often as needed; and**
- (e) Be located above water impervious flooring.**

This section of the WAC also contains these additional provisions for drinking fountains located in early learning programs:

- Are not allowed to be located in bathrooms, which are areas that often contain bacteria and contaminants
- Must have appropriate water flow and pressure to allow the water to form an arch
- Requires cleaning and sanitizing daily or as needed

Slide #28 WAC 110-300-0236

The requirements of this WAC item ensure early learning programs use drinking fountains that will limit children’s exposure to contaminants that could cause illness.

In addition, the surface under drinking fountains must be impervious, or waterproof, in order to help prevent additional health hazards from occurring.

Slide #29 WAC 110-300-0236

The EPA has created the *3Ts* program, which stands for *Training, Testing, and Taking Action*.

This program was created to assist schools, child care facilities, states, and water systems to implement a voluntary program for reducing lead in drinking water.

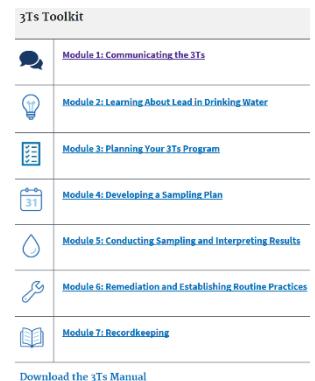
The specific goals of the program are:

- *Training* childcare facility officials to raise awareness of the potential occurrences, causes, and health effects of lead in drinking water and develop program plans
- *Testing* drinking water in childcare facilities to identify potential problems
- *Taking Action* to reduce lead in drinking water

Slide #30 WAC 110-300-0236

The EPA’s seven modules are listed here. You can navigate to the website by selecting the screenshot of the 3T’s Toolkit:

epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water-toolkit



Slide #31 WAC 110-300-0236

Each module contains resources that early learning providers can use to “spread the word” about the program to staff, families, community members, etc.

Slide #32 Test Your Learning!

As we finish this course, let's test your learning with a quiz question.

Select True or False.

Early learning providers must clean and sanitize drinking fountains daily or more often as needed.

- True
- False

Slide #33 Conclusion

Water is vital to the safe operation of an early learning program. Because of the potential impact on the safety, health, and development on Washington's children, these two Foundational Quality Standards on safe water are very important to DCYF and should be to all early learning professionals as well!

Slide #34 Guiding Principles

This concludes the content portion of this course! Thank you for your participation!

Before this course ends, please take a moment to reflect and set personal goals related to the following Guiding Principles and ways that each of the principles relate to early learning professionals.

Guiding Principles

- Safe drinking water is vital to the healthy growth and development of young children.
- Water must be tested and monitored to ensure it is safe.
- Early learning programs must provide access to safe drinking water at all times.

What take-a-ways do you have? How will you change your practices because of participation in this learning module?

Slide #35 Course Evaluation

Please take a moment to answer the following end-of-course evaluation questions by selecting the appropriate choice.

This course improved my understanding of the course content.

- True
- False

Slide #36 Course Evaluation continued

The information presented in this course was clearly connected to the session and Learning Outcomes.

- True
- False

Slide #37 Course Evaluation continued

There are opportunities for application of this course content in my role as an early learning professional.

- True
- False

Slide #38 Course Evaluation continued

I would recommend this course to others who work in the field.

- True
- False

Slide #39 End of Course

This concludes this course! If you have questions following this session, please contact your supervisor or licensor. We hope this course has been helpful in providing information about the WAC and how programs can meet the new standards with compliance.

Our goal is that all early learning professionals viewing this course have left with an increased understanding and knowledge of the updated WAC, and that you will be able to either assess programs for compliance or will be able to maintain and demonstrate compliance. Be sure to visit the Learning Management System to review and select additional learning modules that are part of this series.