

## **Weather, Gardens, and Water Safety**

### **Slide #1 Welcome**

Welcome to this course titled, ***“Weather, Gardens, and Water Safety.”***

This course is developed as part of the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (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 how to assess weather conditions for children's health and safety
- Be familiar with requirements for gardens in early learning program spaces
- Learn how to identify and reduce potential hazards related to bodies of water

### **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:**

- Garden spaces in licensed outdoor learning environments can enhance children's learning and development.
- Regular outdoor play is critical to children's health and development. Early learning providers can ensure optimal opportunities for outdoor play by assessing for conditions that may pose a health or safety risk to children.
- Early learning providers must take steps to reduce the risk of serious injury or illness related to bodies of water.

### **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.

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

**EPA** is the Environmental Protection Agency.

**National Weather Service** is an agency of the United States federal government that is tasked with providing weather forecasts, warnings of hazardous weather, and other weather-related products to organizations and the public for the purposes of protection, safety, and general information.

**RCW** means Revised Code of Washington.

**USDA** is the United States Department of Agriculture.

**WAC** means Washington Administrative Code.

**Slide #7 WAC 110-300-0147**

The many benefits of daily outdoor play experiences for children are well documented. Certain outdoor conditions, however, can place children at risk. The first WAC we will explore in this course addresses weather conditions and other outdoor hazards that may be present in outdoor play spaces. Let's begin by reviewing the WAC.

**WAC 110-300-0147 Weather conditions and outdoor hazards.**

**(1) An early learning provider must observe weather conditions and other possible hazards to take appropriate action for child health and safety. Conditions that pose a health or safety risk may include, but are not limited to:**

- (a) Heat in excess of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or pursuant to advice of the local authority;**
- (b) Cold less than 20 degrees Fahrenheit, or pursuant to advice of the local authority;**

**Slide #8 WAC 110-300-0147 continued**

**WAC 110-300-0147 Weather conditions and outdoor hazards.**

- (c) Lightning storm, tornado, hurricane, or flooding if there is immediate or likely danger;**
  - (d) Earthquake;**
  - (e) Air quality emergency ordered by a local or state authority on air quality or public health;**
  - (f) Lockdown notification ordered by a public safety authority; and**
  - (g) Other similar incidents.**
- (2) An early learning provider must dress children for weather conditions during outdoor play time.**

**Slide #9 WAC 110-300-0147 continued**

Now let's review some of the components of these requirements. An early learning provider is responsible for assessing weather conditions and other outdoor hazards, including assessing and monitoring air quality, and taking action as appropriate to keep children safe.

Children represent one "population at risk", meaning they are one of the sensitive groups who are more susceptible to weather extremes, heat index, and smoke alerts.

Subsection 1(a) addresses risks to children when outdoor temperatures reach 100 degrees Fahrenheit (F) or higher.

When assessing whether to play outdoors, it is important to understand that younger children have not yet fully developed the ability to regulate their body temperature. This inability to properly regulate body temperature places young children at a higher risk for illness or injury related to high temperatures. Extreme heat can make children sick in several ways, including dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat stroke.

**Slide #10 WAC 110-300-0147 continued**

Subsection 1(a) addresses risks from cold weather extremes, defined in this WAC as below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Frostbite, hypothermia, and other cold weather injuries such as dehydration, can occur quickly in children. While dehydration is most commonly thought of in relation to hot temperatures, it can also occur as the result of low temperatures.

**Slide #11 WAC 110-300-0147 continued**

This WAC specifies temperature limits that providers are required to follow, but it is also important to keep in mind that additional factors may impact overall weather conditions.

For example, wind chills effect the rate of heat loss, making an otherwise acceptable 26 degrees, feel colder. When children are playing outside during high and low temperature extremes, early learning providers should observe children for signs of heat or cold stress. If these signs are noted in children, early learning providers must take appropriate action, such as taking children indoors and beginning a warming or cooling down process. These are signs licensors can observe for, as well, when conducting site visits at early learning programs, to ensure compliance is being met with these WAC requirements.

One way early learning professionals can remain aware of weather extremes is to reference The National Weather Service or local weather information sources. Weather apps can also be installed on cell phones or other electronic devices, as well as setting up notifications for weather alerts. The National Weather Service website is: [weather.gov](http://weather.gov).

Early learning professionals can also refer to the Weather Guidelines for Children document found in the resources section of this learning module (and shown as a summary here) for an easy reference to safe temperatures and weather conditions for children. Iowa Department Public Health, Healthy Child Care

**Slide #12 WAC 110-300-0147 continued**

Early learning providers should give attention to children's physical activity during times of extreme weather. For example, early learning providers should modify programming during periods of high heat or poor air quality, offering activities that are not as strenuous or that children engage in for shorter periods of time. Similarly, in cold

temperatures, early learning professionals should promote increased physical activity during outdoor play times to take advantage of the body's ability to produce heat.

Additional resources for reducing heat exposure and other ideas for meeting this WAC with compliance can be reviewed by selecting the link below: [cdc.gov/disasters](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters).

**Slide #13 WAC 110-300-0147 continued**

WAC subsection 0147 1(a) goes on to require an early learning provider to ensure children are dressed appropriately for weather conditions, taking into consideration the temperature and the activities children will be engaged in.

Appropriate clothing helps children to regulate their body temperatures, helping them to cool down and warm up. When determining if children are dressed appropriately for the weather, early learning professionals will want to assess not only the outdoor temperature, but also the types and length of activity children will be engaged in.

For example, modifying programming during high heat with activities that are not as strenuous or activities that can be done in shorter periods of time. In colder weather, increase the physical activity to take advantage of the body's ability to produce heat and warm itself.<sup>1</sup>

**Slide #14 Test Your Learning!**

Before we move on, let's test your learning so far!

Choose which answer best completes the following multiple-choice question. According to WAC, temperature conditions that pose a health or safety risk for children are:

- High temperatures of 95 Degrees Fahrenheit and low temperatures of 20 Degrees Fahrenheit
- High temperatures of 100 Degrees Fahrenheit and low temperatures of 30 Degrees Fahrenheit
- High temperatures of 100 Degrees Fahrenheit and low temperatures of 20 Degrees Fahrenheit
- None of the Above

Additional Feedback: WAC 110-300-0147 Weather conditions and outdoor hazards states that conditions that pose a health or safety risk may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Heat in excess of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or pursuant to advice of the local authority;
- (b) Cold less than 20 degrees Fahrenheit, or pursuant to advice of the authority;

Let's continue to review the requirements from WAC 110-300-0147 Weather conditions and outdoor hazards. This WAC addresses additional outdoor hazards that pose potential or considerable risk to children.

**WAC 110-300-0147 Weather conditions and outdoor hazards.**

**(1) An early learning provider must observe weather conditions and other possible hazards to take appropriate action for child health and safety. Conditions that pose a health or safety risk may include, but are not limited to:**

- (e) Air quality emergency ordered by a local or state authority on air quality or public health;**
- (f) Lockdown notification ordered by a public safety authority; and**
- (g) Other similar incidents.**

**Slide #16 WAC 110-300-0147 continued**

Air quality changes due to pollution, smoke, or high levels of allergens are environmental factors that impact children's health. It is important for early learning providers to be conscientious of these conditions and the health risks they pose to children in care, in particular children with health issues such as asthma or other respiratory conditions. Licensors may find it helpful to make it a part of their routine to be aware of current weather and environmental conditions, so they can work in partnership with providers in keeping children healthy and safe.

For more information on air quality, you may visit this online resource:  
[airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.html>

**Slide #17 WAC 110-300-0147 continued**

WAC 0147 also addresses local hazards, such as lockdown notifications issued by public safety authorities, and other safety incidents.

As we presented earlier in this course, children are one of the “sensitive populations” who are more at risk for exposure to weather extremes.

The early learning provider’s plan for keeping children safe during any weather or local safety incident must be included in the provider’s Parent Handbook as well as detailed in their Emergency Preparedness Plan. This plan must also include how an early learning provider will meet the needs of at-risk children and children with health issues.

By reviewing early learning providers’ written policies prior to conducting site visits, licensors can be prepared for what to expect in the event of such incidents and will be ready to ask questions and provide technical assistance as needed.

**Slide #18 WAC 110-300-0148**

The next WAC we will be reviewing addresses safety in gardens located in outdoor early learning program space. There are a variety of gardens in early learning programs, from vegetable gardens to flower cutting gardens, and they present excellent play and learning experiences for children.

An early learning professional’s role is to ensure the following safety considerations are being met:

**WAC 110-300-0148 Gardens in outdoor early learning program space.**

**(1) A garden in an early learning program space must:**

- (a) Have safeguards in place to minimize risk of cross-contamination by animals;**
- (b) Use soil free from agricultural or industrial contaminants such as lead or arsenic if gardening directly in the ground;**
- (c) Use new soil that is labeled as organic and obtained from a gardening supply store or other retail store if gardening in raised beds; and**

**Slide #19 WAC 110-300-0148**

**WAC 110-300-0148 Gardens in outdoor early learning program space.**

**(d) Use water that comes from a private well approved by the local health jurisdiction or from a public water system. An early learning provider must make water for gardens inaccessible to children if the provider uses irrigation water.**

It should be noted, gardens that are not intended to be a part of an early learning program's curriculum and learning experiences will need to be made inaccessible to children in care. This applies to garden spaces that are not maintained according to these WAC requirements, or that are located outside of licensed child care space.

There are many healthful benefits of gardens as well as useful and practical learning experiences for children which can be realized through gardening. Gardens promote healthy eating habits which are important to be learned at a young age as well as creating for children an understanding of where food comes from, how it grows, and the opportunity to taste new healthy foods.

**Slide #20 WAC 110-300-0148 continued**

Section (2) of WAC 0148 contains additional guidance for early learning professionals relating to gardens located in outdoor early learning program space. These regulations include:

**WAC 110-300-0148 Gardens in outdoor early learning program space.**

**(2) Garden beds must be made of materials that will not leach chemicals into the soil including, but not limited to, wood treated with chromated copper arsenate, creosote or pentachlorophenol, reclaimed railroad ties, or tires.**

**(3) Any herbicide or pesticide must be applied pursuant to the product manufacturer's directions. The product must not be applied during program hours. Children must not apply the product, or have access to the garden during the manufacturer's prescribed waiting period following application.**

**Slide #21 WAC 110-300-0148 continued**

**WAC 110-300-0148 Gardens in outdoor early learning program space.**

**(4) Commonplace toxic plants or plants with poisonous leaves (for example: Tomato, potato, or rhubarb) may be grown in the garden. An early learning provider must actively supervise children who are able to access a garden where commonplace toxic plants or plants with poisonous leaves are growing.**



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With appropriate attention to garden container materials, engaging in active supervision, and taking additional safety precautions, early learning providers can help children to safely explore outdoor garden spaces.

Please refer to information on chromated copper arsenate as it relates to materials possibly used for garden containers. This document titled, CCA- Pressure Treated Wood, can be found in the resources tab in this learning module.

Let's consider some precautions and related guidance from this WAC on the following slide.

**Slide #22 WAC 110-300-0148 continued**

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (or EPA), contaminants such as lead, arsenic, mercury, and other heavy metals can harm a child's healthy growth and development. The EPA also states that these contaminants are commonly found in soil in residential settings.

While some soil contaminants occur in the soil naturally, the Washington State Department of Health notes: *"Soil in many areas of Washington State is contaminated with arsenic from smelter operations or from arsenical pesticides and herbicides."*

**Slide #23 WAC 110-300-0148 continued**

To protect children's health and safety from these and other contaminants in residential gardens, the United States Department of Agriculture (or USDA) recommends the following:

- Create barriers that keep animals away from gardens;
- Purchase commercially packaged soil;
- Use soil that is free from contaminants (for example: pesticides, fertilizers, vermiculite, and asbestos);
- Use non-toxic, non-leaching materials for raised-bed gardens (do not use pressure-treated wood, used tires, single use plastics, old railroad ties, etc.); and
- Select non-allergenic and non-toxic plants.

This guidance is incorporated into WAC 110-300-0148. To review the guidance again, please visit the Resources section of your learner's screen.

**Slide #24 WAC 110-300-0148 continued**

The Foundational Quality Standards support the health and safety of children and adults in early learning programs, while balancing children's learning and interests.

Gardens offer hands on learning opportunities, promote children's curiosity, allow children to explore life in nature, and provide children the opportunity to contribute and feel capable. Children are excited to learn where food comes from and how it grows. They are even more excited to taste new healthy foods if they were actively involved in the planting and

Using simple safeguards, early learning providers are able to offer enriching outdoor learning experiences with gardens.

The safeguards required in WAC include minimizing contamination by animals, using soil that is free from health hazards, and using approved sources for watering.

**Slide #25 WAC 110-300-0175**

Let's move on to WAC 110-300-0175 which covers water hazards and swimming pools. You will note reference to a Department of Health (DOH), water recreation facilities WAC in subsection (1) and later in subsection (2) (d). You can find that WAC by visiting the DOH website at [doh.wa.gov](http://doh.wa.gov) and search for the WAC numbers listed.

**WAC 110-300-0175 Water hazards and swimming pools.**

**To prevent injury or drowning and ensure the health and safety of children, an early learning provider must comply with the requirements described in this section.**

**(1) The following bodies of water must be inaccessible to children in care by using a physical barrier with a locking mechanism in compliance with WAC [246-260-031](#) (4):**

**Slide #26 WAC 110-300-0175 continued**

**WAC 110-300-0175 Water hazards and swimming pools.**

- (a) Swimming pools when not being used as part of the early learning program, hot tubs, spas and jet tubs;**
- (b) Ponds, lakes, storm retention ponds, ditches, fountains, fish ponds, landscape pools or similar bodies of water; and**
- (c) Uncovered wells, septic tanks, wastewater, wastewater tanks, below grade storage tanks, farm manure ponds or other similar hazards.**

**Slide #27 WAC 110-300-0175 continued**

DCYF recognizes that bodies of water can present serious hazards for children if not made inaccessible to children when not in use, or when not properly maintained. DCYF prioritized water safety when writing these standards. Follow this link to [WAC 246 260 031 \(4\)](#) for additional information regarding barriers and locking mechanisms.

**Slide #28 WAC 110-300-0175 continued**

Section (2) of this WAC addresses requirements for swimming pools when they are being used as part of an early learning program. It is important for all early learning professionals to understand that the supervision requirements when children are engaged in water play are more strict than other supervision requirements. These requirements include:

**WAC 110-300-0175 Water hazards and swimming pools.**

**(2) An early learning provider must comply with the following requirements when using a swimming pool as part of the early learning program:**

- (a) Comply with the supervision requirements of WAC 110-300-0350;**
- (b) Audible alarms must be on all doors, screens, and gates in licensed areas that lead to a swimming pool. The alarm must be sufficient to warn staff when children enter the outdoor area and could access the swimming pool;**
- (c) Swimming pools must be maintained according to manufacturer specifications;**

**WAC 110-300-0175 Water hazards and swimming pools.**

- (d) Swimming pools must be cleaned and sanitized according to manufacturer instructions, chapter 246-260 WAC, and department of health or local health jurisdiction guidelines;**
- (e) A swimming pool must not be used if the main drain cover is missing; and**
- (f) Children in diapers or toilet training must wear swim pants to lower the risk of contaminating the water.**

Although supervision around water will be addressed in another WAC course, please take the time to review WAC 110-300-0350 to familiarize yourself with this requirement.

**Slide #29 WAC 110-300-0175 continued**

The remaining sections of this WAC address requirements related to children's access to bodies of water located in or near an early learning program. These requirements include:

**WAC 110-300-0175 Water hazards and swimming pools.**

**(3) Filtered wading pools must be inaccessible to children when not in use. Wading pools that do not have a filtering system are not permitted in the early learning program space.**

**(4) For bodies of water not located in early learning program space, but that are in close proximity, a physical barrier on the property must make such bodies of water inaccessible to children in care.**

**(5) Five gallon buckets or other similar containers must not be used for infant or toddler water play.**

**(6) If an early learning provider uses water tables or similar containers, the tables or containers must be emptied and sanitized daily, or more often if necessary.**

**Slide #30 WAC 110-300-0175 continued**

Section (3) of WAC 0175 is important to note as it brings changes to how early learning programs use wading pools. One important change for early learning providers to be aware of is, when this WAC goes into effect, early learning programs will no longer be able to use wading pools that do not have a filtering system.

This means that the small, plastic wading pools that are commonly used for water play activities in family home early learning programs will no longer meet WAC requirements, as they do not have a filtering system.

The decision to include this standard is based on information in *Caring for Our Children*, 3rd Edition, in Standard 6.3.5.3: Portable Wading Pools. This standard notes that *“Portable wading pools should not be permitted.”* The rationale provided is that *“Small portable wading pools do not permit adequate control of sanitation and safety, and they promote transmission of infectious diseases.”*

**Slide #31 WAC 110-300-0175 continued**

While water play can be a fun experience for young children, it can also present health and safety risks for children. These risks are addressed in subsections (4) through (6) of this WAC. These subsections address bodies of water located close by an early learning program, requiring that providers have barriers in place to prevent children from accessing them; not allowing water play in large buckets or tubs, which pose a drowning hazard for infants and toddlers; and preventing the spread of illness and disease by ensuring water tables and similar containers are sanitized daily or as needed. With appropriate supervision, ensuring that bodies of water are inaccessible to children, and following sanitation guidelines, early learning providers can offer inviting water play experiences for the children in their care.

Sprinklers, hoses, and small individual water buckets are a safe alternative as a cooling or play activity, under close supervision.

### **Slide #32 Guiding Principals**

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:**

- Garden spaces in licensed outdoor learning environments can enhance children's learning and development.
- Regular outdoor play is critical to children's health and development. Early learning providers can ensure optimal opportunities for outdoor play by assessing for conditions that may pose a health or safety risk to children.
- Early learning providers can take steps to reduce the risk of serious injury or illness related to bodies of water.

### **Slide #33 Knowledge Check!**

Let's test your learning from this course!

True or False: Since wading pools aren't very deep and pose little drowning danger, they are permitted in early learning programs.

- True
- False

### **Slide #34 Knowledge Check!**

True or False: Water tables are not permitted in early learning programs.

- True
- False

### **Slide #35 Knowledge Check!**

Choose One: From the list of options provided, select the one answer that best completes this statement:

Some commonplace plants that are toxic or that have poisonous leaves which early learning providers should be aware of and actively supervise children who are playing or gardening where these plants are growing include:

- A. Strawberries and pumpkins
- B. Tomato, potato, or rhubarb
- C. Lettuce, marigolds, and squash
- D. None of these

Additional Feedback: WAC 110-300-0148 (4) Gardens in outdoor early learning program space says, "Commonplace toxic plants or plants with poisonous leaves (for example: Tomato, potato, or rhubarb) may be grown in the garden. An Early learning provider must actively supervise children who are able to access a garden where commonplace toxic plants or plants with poisonous leaves are growing.

### **Slide #36 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 #37 Course Evaluation continued**

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

- True
- False

### **Slide #38 Course Evaluation continued**

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

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- True
- False

**Slide #39 Course Evaluation continued**

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

- True
- False

**Slide #40 End of Course**

Weather, Gardens and Water Safety.

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 be able to maintain and demonstrate compliance.

Be sure to visit the Learning Management System to review and select additional modules that are part of this series.