


# Joint Select Committee on the Early Achievers Program

## Report to the Legislature

January 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:	
Senator Andy Billig, Co-Chair Representative Tom Dent, Co-Chair Senator John Braun Representative Bruce Chandler	Representative Timm Ormsby Representative Tana Senn Senator Lisa Wellman Senator Hans Zeiger



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	1
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	2
<b>Committee Membership</b> .....	3
<b>I. Background</b> .....	4
<b>II. Committee Meetings</b> .....	15
<b>III. Recommendations</b> .....	17
<b>APPENDIX A: Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Requirements</b> .....	23
<b>APPENDIX B: Overview of Early Learning Programs</b> .....	24

## Executive Summary

The 2015 Legislature established the Joint Select Committee on the Early Achievers Program (Committee) through the passage of Second Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1491, also known as the Early Start Act. The Committee was tasked with reviewing the demand and availability of licensed or certified child care family homes and centers, approved Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs (ECEAP), Head Start programs, and family, friend, and neighbor caregivers by geographic region, including rural and low-income neighborhoods. The authorizing legislation requires the Committee's review to include:

- The geographic distribution of these child care programs by type of program, programs that accept state subsidy, enrollment in the Early Achievers Program, and Early Achievers rating levels, and
- The demand and availability of these child care programs for major ethnic populations.

Between July 2018 and January 2019, the Committee convened five meetings over 18 hours during which members heard from a range of experts and stakeholders. Panelists included child care providers, families, academic experts, public agency representatives, and advocacy organizations. Panelists provided information to the Committee on topics that included program data and trends for Early Achievers and other early learning programs; the demand for and availability of child care by geographic area; child outcome data; professional development for early learning providers; trauma-informed child care; and funding for Early Achievers and other early learning programs.

The Committee is required to provide recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2018 regarding:

- The sufficiency of funding provided for the Early Achievers Program;
- The need for targeted funding for specific geographic regions or major ethnic populations; and
- Whether to modify the statutory deadlines for the purposes of the Early Achievers Program mandate.

The Committee adopted 28 recommendations that are contained in this report.

The Committee expires on December 1, 2019.

## Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank participants from the following agencies and organizations who contributed to the Committee's work.

**Caseload Forecast Council**

**Central Washington University**

**Child Care Aware of Washington**

**Department of Children, Youth, and Families**

**Early Learning Regional Coalitions**

**Education Research Data Center**

**Office of Financial Management**

**Olympic College**

**Representative Ruth Kagi, 32nd Legislative District**

**Service Employees International Union 925**

**State Board for Community and Technical Colleges**

**Trauma Informed Care Advisory Group**

**University of Washington, Cultivate Learning**

**Washington Childcare Centers Association**

**Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP**

**Washington State Council of Presidents**

**Washington State Institute for Public Policy**

**Western Washington University**

## Committee Membership

The Committee is comprised of four members of the Senate and four members of the House of Representatives. Members include the Chair and Ranking Minority member, or designees, of the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Ways & Means Committee, the House Early Learning & Human Services Committee, and the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee.

MEMBER OR DESIGNEE	COMMITTEE
Representative Bruce Chandler Representative Timm Ormsby	House Appropriations
Senator Andy Billig Senator John Braun	Senate Ways & Means
Representative Tom Dent Representative Tana Senn	House Early Learning & Human Services
Senator Lisa Wellman Senator Hans Zeiger	Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education

The House of Representatives Office of Program Research (OPR) and Senate Committee Services (SCS) provide staff support to the Committee. For more information contact:

- Dawn Eychaner, Research Analyst, OPR, 360-786-7135
- Maria Hovde, Fiscal Analyst, SCS, 360-786-7474
- Kelci Karl-Robinson, Fiscal Analyst, OPR, 360-786-7116
- Ailey Kato, Counsel, SCS, 360-786-7434

## I. Background

### Early Achievers Program

Early Achievers is Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early child care and education.<sup>1</sup> Formerly administered by the Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCFY) administers the program in partnership with Child Care Aware of Washington and the University of Washington. Child Care Aware provides coaching to participating providers and the University of Washington conducts the ratings of child care and early education facilities.

The quality of care is assigned a rating on a scale of 1-5, with Level 1 being the minimum requirements for licensing and Level 5 being the highest possible level of quality.<sup>2</sup> Participants are expected to actively engage and continually advance within the program.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 illustrates the point distributions for the five levels:<sup>4</sup>

Figure 1



<sup>1</sup> [RCW 43.216.085\(1\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> [RCW 43.216.085\(4\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> [RCW 43.216.085\(4\)](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Committee Meeting Documents](#), 7/18/2018, Overview of the Early Achievers Program (Non Staff).

## JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS

Early Achievers has seven objectives identified in RCW 43.216.085:

- Improve short-term and long-term educational outcomes for children as measured by assessments including, but not limited to, the Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills (WaKIDS);
- Give parents clear and easily accessible information about the quality of child care and early education programs;
- Support improvement in early learning and child care programs throughout the state;
- Increase the readiness of children for school;
- Close the disparities in access to quality care;
- Provide professional development and coaching opportunities to early child care and education providers; and
- Establish a common set of expectations and standards that define, measure, and improve the quality of early learning and child care settings.

The following timeline summarizes the legislative and funding history leading to the establishment of Early Achievers:

<b>2007</b>	The Legislature directed the Department of Early Learning (DEL) in collaboration with community and statewide partners to develop, implement, and pilot a voluntary quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) ( <a href="#">E2SSB 5828</a> and <a href="#">SHB 1128</a> ).
<b>2009</b>	The state operating budget directed DEL to contract with Thrive to pilot QRIS in various locations ( <a href="#">ESHB 1244</a> ).
<b>2011</b>	Washington received a federal Race to the Top grant (\$60 million over five years) to bring the voluntary QRIS, called Early Achievers, to scale among other goals.
<b>2013</b>	The Legislature required state preschool program providers to participate by fiscal year 2015 and established tiered subsidy rates for providers based on Early Achievers enrollment and ratings ( <a href="#">2SHB 1723</a> ).
<b>2014</b>	The federal Child Care and Development Block Grant was reauthorized in 2014. States are required to reserve and use a portion of this federal funding (9 percent by federal fiscal year 2020) for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care.

<b>2015</b>	The Early Start Act required certain providers serving non-school age children and receiving state subsidies to be enrolled in Early Achievers and meet certain rating deadlines ( <a href="#">2E2SHB 1491</a> ).
-------------	---

### Federal Race to the Top Grant

In 2011, Washington received a Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant for \$60 million over five years to build an early learning system.<sup>5</sup> The grant competition focused on improving early learning and development programs for young children by supporting states' efforts to:

- Increase the number and percentage of low-income and disadvantaged children in each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs;
- Design and implement an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services; and
- Ensure that any use of assessments conforms with the recommendations of the National Research Council's reports on early childhood.<sup>6</sup>

### Federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

The federal Child Care and Development Block Grant was reauthorized in 2014, resulting in significant changes to the CCDF, which helps fund the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and Seasonal Child Care programs.

State lead agencies are required to reserve and use a portion of their CCDF funding for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care.<sup>7</sup> CCDF rules encourage states to have a QRIS, but a QRIS is not strictly required.

States must submit a CCDF plan every three years that describe the state's activities funded by the CCDF grant and demonstrate the state's compliance with CCDF laws and rules. The plan for federal fiscal years 2019-2021 was due October 1, 2018. Section 7 of the 2019-21 plan addresses Washington's support for continuous quality improvement.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> [Department of Early Learning](#).

<sup>6</sup> [U.S. Department of Education](#).

<sup>7</sup> [Public Law 113-186 § 658G](#). See Appendix A of this report for language from the 2014 reauthorization.

<sup>8</sup> [Washington's 2019-21 CCDF Plan](#).

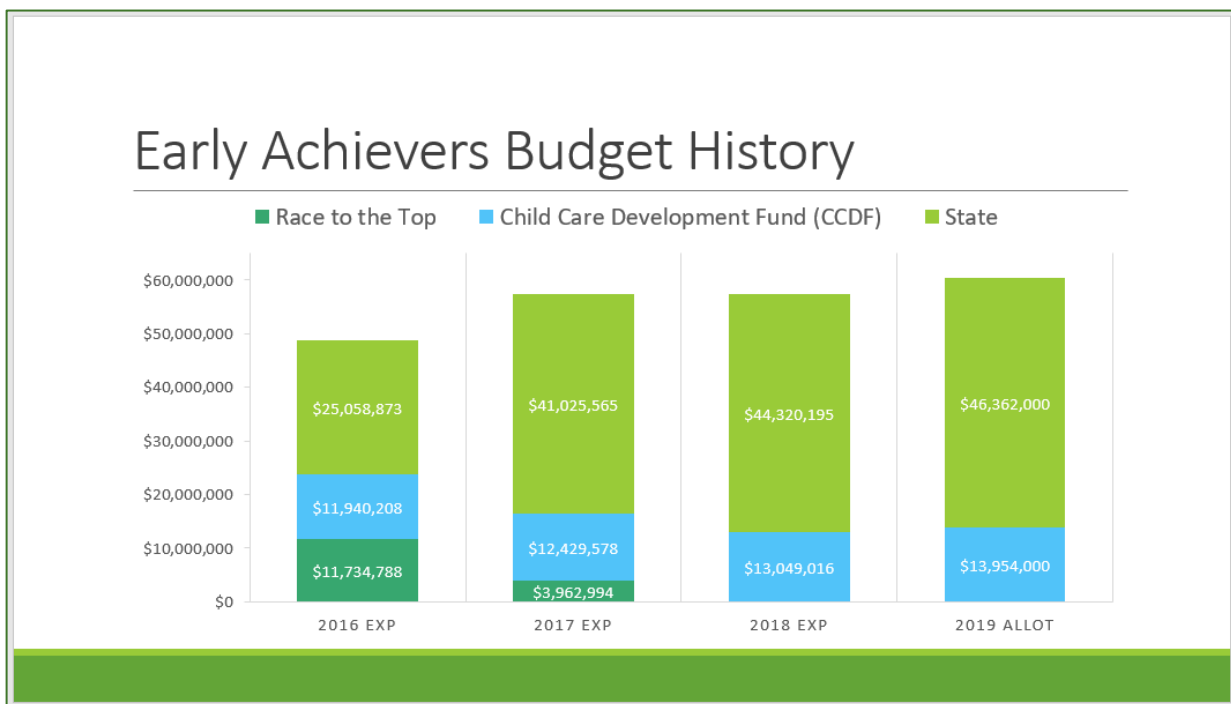


Early Achievers Funding History

Figure 2 displays the actual expenditures on Early Achievers activities in state fiscal year (FY) 2016 through FY 2018 and the allotments for FY 2019 by fund source: federal Race to the Top; federal CCDF; and state funds.<sup>9</sup>

For FY 2018, DEL spent a total of \$338.3 million. Of that amount, \$57.4 million was spent on Early Achievers, representing 16 percent of the total budget.

Figure 2



Early Start Act

The Early Start Act was enacted in 2015.<sup>10</sup> The Act made comprehensive changes to the Early Achievers program among other topics relating to improving the quality in the early care and education system.

<sup>9</sup> [Committee Meeting Documents](#), 7/18/2018, Overview of Child Care and Early Learning Programs, OPR and SCS, Budget.

<sup>10</sup> [2E2SHB 1491 \(2015\)](#).

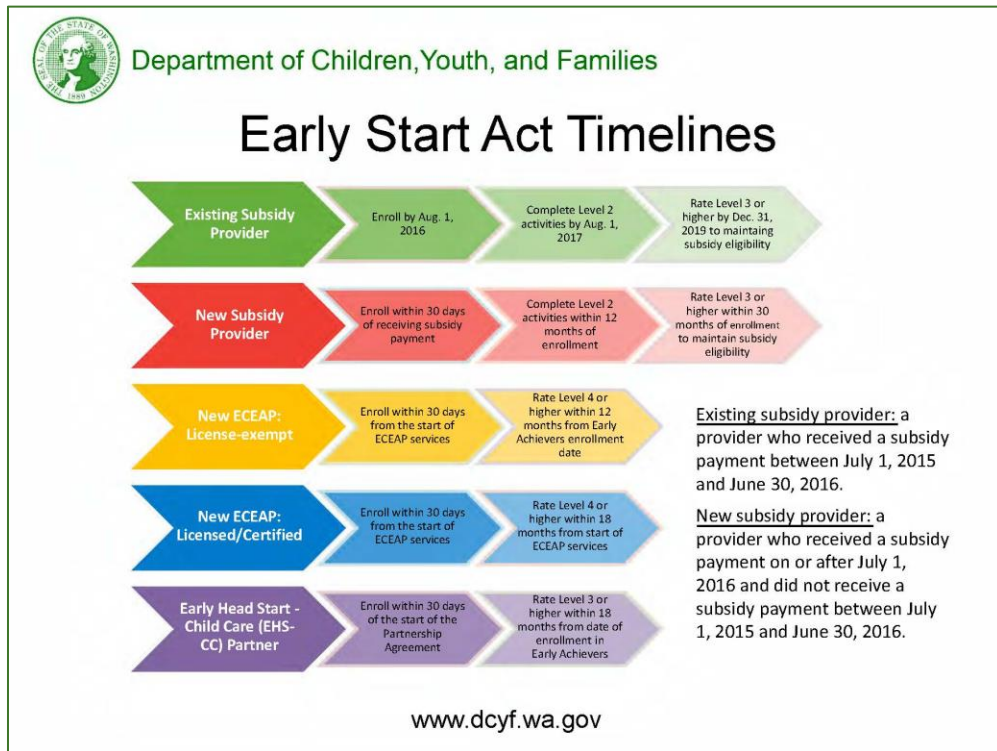
*Early Achievers Participation and Rating Deadlines*

The Early Start Act required participation in Early Achievers for all providers serving non-school-age children and accepting state subsidy payments according to the following timelines for existing providers:

WORKING CONNECTIONS CHILD CARE (WCCC)	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ECEAP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll by August 1, 2016</li> <li>• Complete Level 2 activities by August 1, 2017</li> <li>• Rate at a Level 3 or higher by December 31, 2019</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll by October 1, 2015</li> <li>• Rate at a Level 4 or higher by March 1, 2016</li> </ul>

Figure 3 illustrates rating timelines for different types of providers accepting state subsidy.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 3



<sup>11</sup> [Committee Meeting Documents](#), 7/18/2018, Overview of the Early Achievers Program (Non Staff).

### *Early Achievers Data Collection and Evaluation Components*

The Early Start Act directed the Education Research and Data Center to collect longitudinal, student-level data on all children attending ECEAP and WCCC.<sup>12</sup> The data must include certain characteristics such as daily program attendance, identification of classroom and teacher, Early Achievers program quality rating level, program hours and duration, and results from the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills.<sup>13</sup>

The Act required the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to examine the relationship between Early Achievers ratings and child outcomes. WSIPP's preliminary report to the Legislature is due December 31, 2019 with subsequent reports due in 2020, 2021, and 2022. The December 2022 report to the Legislature must include a cost-benefit of Early Achievers.

### *Early Achievers Review Subcommittee and Annual Report*

The Early Start Act directed the Early Learning Advisory Council to convene an Early Achievers Review Subcommittee.<sup>14</sup> The purpose of the Subcommittee is to provide feedback and guidance on strategies to improve the quality of instruction and environment for early learning and provide input and recommendations on the implementation and refinement of the Early Achievers program.

The review conducted by the Subcommittee must be included in an annual progress report published by DCYF.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> [RCW 43.216.655](#).

<sup>13</sup> [RCW 43.216.655](#) and [RCW 28A.655.080](#).

<sup>14</sup> [RCW 43.216.075](#).

<sup>15</sup> [RCW 43.216.089](#). Previous Early Start Act Annual Reports can be found [here](#).

## JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS

### Early Achievers Budget Detail

The budget for Early Achievers is split into a number of major expenditure categories. Figure 4 provides an overview of the 2018 budget and is followed by narrative explanations of each of the categories.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 4

<b>EARLY ACHIEVERS BUDGET OVERVIEW</b>			
<b>Fiscal Year 2018 Budget vs. Expenditures</b>			
	<b>Allotment</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND RATING READINESS</b>	\$4,657,606	\$2,157,605	\$2,500,001
<b>TRAINING</b>	\$1,082,596	\$1,053,329	\$29,267
<b>RATINGS</b>	\$4,350,898	\$4,728,074	(\$377,176)
<b>POST-RATING COACHING SUPPORT</b>	\$15,564,616	\$14,622,979	\$941,637
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	\$6,560,440	\$6,615,707	(\$55,267)
<b>TIERED REIMBURSEMENT</b>	\$7,012,361	\$8,063,122	(\$1,050,761)
<b>QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AWARDS</b>	\$5,966,426	\$4,497,500	\$1,468,926
<b>DEL STAFF AND SYSTEMS</b>	\$2,672,279	\$3,698,725	(\$1,026,446)
<b>PROGRAM EVALUATION</b>	\$2,452,941	\$1,546,367	\$906,574
<b>REDUCING BARRIERS</b>	\$2,378,000	\$2,120,266	\$257,734
<i>Needs-Based Grants</i>	\$1,500,000	\$1,624,744	(\$124,744)
<i>Substitute Pool</i>	\$818,000	\$492,918	\$325,082
<i>Agency Publications</i>	\$60,000	\$2,603	\$57,397
<b>OTHER</b>	\$8,196,205	\$8,265,536	(\$69,331)
<i>Administrative Costs of Child Care Aware Contract</i>	\$2,746,699	\$2,935,337	(\$188,638)
<i>Coach Training and Quality Institutes (UW Contract)</i>	\$3,027,000	\$3,057,455	(\$30,455)
<i>School Age Provider Development</i>	\$1,074,492	\$1,061,478	\$13,014
<i>Community Engagement</i>	\$250,000	\$484,821	(\$234,821)
<i>Information and Outreach</i>	\$617,728	\$265,782	\$351,946
<i>Culturally Relevant Services for Family, Friends and Neighbors</i>	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0
<i>Background Check Unit</i>	\$180,286	\$160,663	\$19,623
<i>Technical Assistance to DEL</i>	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$60,894,368</b>	<b>\$57,369,212</b>	<b>\$3,525,156</b>

<sup>16</sup> [Committee Meeting Documents](#), 10/18/2018, Early Achievers Funding and Child Care Rates, OPR and SCS Budget Detail.

### *Technical Assistance and Rating Readiness*

Child Care Aware provides coaching to help providers prepare for the Early Achievers rating process. This technical assistance includes support with applications, resources and materials related to quality standard areas, and information and support to help understand the assessment tools. In addition to technical assistance, Child Care Aware helps prepare providers for their initial rating.

### *Training*

The center director or primary provider is required to participate in six trainings in order to complete Level 2 in Early Achievers. In addition, the University of Washington (UW) offers training for coaches and convenes Early Achievers Institutes.

### *Ratings*

The UW is responsible for rating providers using two standardized assessments: the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Providers have the option to provide additional records, which UW uses to evaluate the other Quality Standards.

The Early Start Act provided DCYF with the authority to determine the rating-cycle for the Early Achievers program.<sup>17</sup> The first rating and subsequent ratings within the established rating cycle is free for Early Achievers program participants.

### *Post-Rating Coaching Support*

The Early Start Act added professional development and coaching opportunities as an objective to the Early Achievers program.<sup>18</sup> Child Care Aware provides customized support through an assigned coach to give providers the support and skills they need in order to continually improve.

### *Professional Development*

The Early Start Act directed DCYF to create a professional development pathway for Early Achievers program participants to obtain a high school diploma or equivalency or higher education credential in academic fields related to early care and education.<sup>19</sup> The pathway must be developed to address cultural and linguistic diversity and include opportunities for scholarships and grants with the costs associated with obtaining an educational degree.

---

<sup>17</sup> [RCW 43.216.085\(5\)](#).

<sup>18</sup> [RCW 43.216.085\(2\)\(f\)](#).

<sup>19</sup> [RCW 43.216.085\(8\)](#).

Scholarships are offered to individuals employed in a child care program that is participating in Early Achievers to pursue state certificates, associates degrees, and bachelor’s degrees in Early Childhood Education (ECE).

*Tiered Reimbursement*

DCYF must provide tiered subsidy rate enhancements subject to the availability of amounts appropriated by the Legislature.<sup>20</sup> The provider must meet the following requirements:

- Enroll in quality rating and improvement system Levels 2, 3, 4, or 5;
- Actively participate in the Early Achievers program;
- Continue to advance towards Level 5; and
- Complete Level 2 within 30 months or the reimbursement rate returns to the Level 1 rate.

The Early Start Act directed DCYF to implement tiered reimbursement for Early Achievers program participants in the Working Connections Child Care program rating at Levels 3, 4, or 5.<sup>21</sup>

Tiered reimbursement is caseload driven and budgeted at maintenance level. It is projected using Caseload Forecast Council estimates for number of providers at Levels 2 through 5 and the increase above base rates established by the Legislature (centers) or the collective bargaining agreement (family homes). Figure 5 shows the current increases to subsidy rates and reflects the 2017-19 collective bargaining agreement.

Figure 5

	Centers	Family Homes
<b>Level 2</b>	2%	2%
<b>Level 3</b>	4%	10%
<b>Level 4</b>	10%	15%
<b>Level 5</b>	15%	20%

*Quality Improvement Awards*

The Early Start Act provides that quality improvement awards must be reserved for Early Achievers participants offering programs to an enrollment population consisting of at least five percent of children receiving a state subsidy.<sup>22</sup>

These awards are caseload driven and budgeted at maintenance level. They are projected using Caseload Forecast Council estimates for number of providers at Levels 2 through 5 and the annual

<sup>20</sup> [RCW 43.216.710\(10\)](#).  
<sup>21</sup> [RCW 43.216.135\(7\)](#).  
<sup>22</sup> [RCW 43.216.085\(9\)](#).

amount established via the Early Start Act (for child care centers) or the collective bargaining agreement (for family home child care providers). Figure 6 shows the current award amounts and reflects the 2017-19 collective bargaining agreement.

Figure 6

	Centers	Family Homes
<b>Level 2</b>	\$0	\$1,000
<b>Level 3</b>	\$5,000	\$2,250
<b>Level 4</b>	\$7,500	\$2,500
<b>Level 5</b>	\$9,000	\$2,750

*Reducing Early Achievers Barriers*

The Early Start Act directed DCYF to implement a protocol to maximize and encourage participation for culturally diverse and low-income centers and family home child care providers.<sup>23</sup> DCYF must address barriers to participation through, at a minimum:

- Creation of a substitute pool;
- Development of needs-based grants to purchase curriculum, instructional materials, supplies, and equipment to improve program quality;
- Development of materials and assessments in the provider and family home languages; and
- Development of flexibility in technical assistance and coaching structures.

Amounts appropriated for the encouragement of culturally diverse and low-income center and family home child care provider participation must be appropriated separately from other funds and may not be used for any other purposes.<sup>24</sup> Funds appropriated for the protocol must be considered an ongoing program for purposes of future departmental budget requests.

The budget in this area includes funding for needs-based grants, a substitute pool, and agency publications.

*Other*

Other Early Achievers budget items include funding for DCYF staff and systems, program evaluation, administrative costs of the Child Care Aware contract, coach training and quality institutes, the school-age provider quality improvement pilot project, and other costs.

<sup>23</sup> [RCW 43.216.087](#).

<sup>24</sup> [RCW 43.216.087\(1\)\(a\)](#).

### Joint Select Committee on the Early Achievers Program

The Early Start Act established that the Committee review the demand and availability of licensed or certified child care family homes and centers; approved Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs; Head Start programs; and family, friend, and neighbor caregivers by geographic region, including rural and low-income neighborhoods. The review must specifically look at:

- The geographic distribution of these child care programs by type of program, programs that accept state subsidy, enrollment in the Early Achievers Program, and Early Achievers rating levels, and
- The demand and availability of these child care programs for major ethnic populations.

The Legislature directed the Committee to conduct its review between July 1, 2018 and December 1, 2018 and make recommendations on:

- The sufficiency of funding provided for the Early Achievers Program;
- The need for targeted funding for specific geographic regions or major ethnic populations; and
- Whether to modify the statutory deadlines for the purposes of the Early Achievers Program mandate.



## II. Committee Meetings

Between July 2018 and January 2019, the Committee met five times.

### July 18, 2018

At the first meeting, the Committee conducted administrative business, including adopting Committee procedures and electing Representative Tom Dent and Senator Andy Billig as its co-chairs. The Committee received a policy and budgetary overview of state and federally-funded child care and early learning programs as well as background on the statutory history of the Early Achievers Program.<sup>25</sup>

DCYF briefed the Committee on components of the Early Achievers Program, including progress on meeting statutory deadlines associated with the Program, rating processes and tools, and current uses of Early Achievers Program funding.

Finally, DCYF provided information on the geographic distribution of, demand for, and availability of child care subsidy programs across the state.<sup>26</sup>

### September 13, 2018

At the second meeting, the Committee heard from a panel of child care providers and other stakeholders. Panelists shared what is working well with the Early Achievers Program and what barriers they have experienced in meeting the Program's requirements. Panelists provided thoughts on whether changes are needed to rating levels and deadlines and discussed the adequacy of tiered reimbursement along with business impacts of Early Achievers participation. The Committee also heard from families about how they choose child care and how quality and costs impact those choices.

The Caseload Forecast Council and DCYF discussed the caseload trends for ECEAP, WCCC, and tiered reimbursement. DCYF described resources needed to meet the Early Achievers rating deadlines and the demand for the ECEAP and WCCC program.

DCYF provided the Committee with information about:

- national accreditation;
- provider scores within each level of Early Achievers;
- the impacts of tiered reimbursement on quality;
- the declining trend of child care providers compared to trends for other small businesses;
- demographics of Early Achievers coaches, data collectors, and participants; and

---

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix B of this report for an overview of early learning programs.

<sup>26</sup> See also [Early Start Act 2017 Annual Report](#), Chapter 9, "Supply of Subsidized Care."

## JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS

- data related to licensed providers not accepting subsidy as well as children ages birth to five who are served by the licensed child care system.

### October 18, 2018

At the third meeting, the Committee heard updates from the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) regarding data collection and reporting required in the Early Start Act. WSIPP provided a timeline for completing its longitudinal analysis examining relationships between Early Achievers program quality rating levels and outcomes for children.

DCYF discussed the results of an analysis looking at different subcomponents of the Early Achievers programs and overall rating levels and provider types. UW provided an overview of promising research and practices in other states regarding longitudinal data and child outcomes reporting.

DCYF updated the Committee on the work of the Trauma Informed Child Care Advisory Group and the progress of the Early Learning Professional Equivalencies Work Group. Child Care Aware, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Central Washington University, Western Washington University, and Olympic College provided brief overviews of different early learning degree programs and scholarships offered and the demand for them.

OPR and SCS staff provided a review of the Early Achievers budget and expenditures. Representatives from Child Care Aware, UW, DCYF, Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP, SEIU, and the Washington Child Care Centers Association discussed potential recommendations for the Committee to consider.

### November 1, 2018

At the fourth meeting of the Committee, OPR and SCS provided an overview of a draft report and the recommendations submitted by members. Committee members provided some initial comments and took a break to caucus. After the break, DCYF staff provided information related to the recommendations. Committee members discussed how to consolidate and revise the recommendations and potentially prioritizing the recommendations.

### January 10, 2019

At the fifth meeting of the Committee, OPR and SCS staff reviewed recommendations submitted by members. Committee members revised some of the recommendations and unanimously adopted the 28 recommendations found in this report.

All committee meeting documents can be found [here](#).

### III. Recommendations

	RECOMMENDATION	BACKGROUND
A.	<b>Increase all child care subsidy base rates to 75th percentile of market rate.</b>	The federal Administration of Children and Families advises states to set child care rates at the 75th percentile in order ensure equal access for families with subsidized child care. In order to reach the 75th percentile as published in the 2018 Child Care Market Rate Survey, current subsidy rates for child care centers would need to increase by 38 percent, on average, while subsidy rates for licensed family homes would need to increase by 21 percent, on average.
B.	<b>Direct DCYF to create an intermediate level that is a stepping stone between Level 3 and 4. A 3+ rating is a possible option.</b>	The Early Achievers rating system has a total of 100 possible points that participants can earn. To rate at a Level 3, participants must earn 30-69 points. To rate at a Level 4, participants must earn 70-90 points. To rate at a Level 5, participants must earn 91-100 points.
C.	<b>Direct DCYF to propose a co-pay and eligibility model that will mitigate the child care subsidy "benefits cliff" including consideration of regional copays.</b>	WCCC is a federally and state-funded program that offers subsidies to childcare providers serving families with an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). The state pays part of the cost of childcare when a parent is employed, self-employed, or meets the requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or WorkFirst programs. The family is responsible for making a copayment to the childcare provider. Currently, WCCC rules allow a consumer who reapplies for benefits to receive a second tier eligibility up to 220 percent of FPL. The copayment for this second tier is determined at 200 percent of FPL of countable household income (Chapter 110-15 WAC).
D.	<b>Provide adequate funding to increase needs-based grants, scholarships, and professional development to support providers in reaching the next rating level. Consider targeting specific geographic regions or major ethnic populations.</b>	An objective of the Early Achievers program is to provide professional development and coaching opportunities to early child care and education providers (RCW 43.216.085(2)(f)). Early Achievers participants have access to tiered reimbursement, quality improvement awards, scholarships, the substitute pool, and needs-based grants. Currently, tiered reimbursement and quality improvement awards are the only items in the Early Achievers budget funded in maintenance level.

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS**

<b>E.</b>	<b>Create a legislative and stakeholder work group to weigh the costs and benefits of child care regulations and Early Achievers requirements.</b>	DCYF conducted a Cost of Quality project to understand the costs of operating a child care center and family home child care and the related costs associated with Early Achievers.
<b>F.</b>	<b>Require providers to request to be rated at a Level 3 by December 2019.</b>	Existing child care providers serving non-school age children and accepting state subsidy payments must rate at a Level 3 or higher by December 31, 2019 (RCW 43.216.135(3)(c)).
<b>G.</b>	<b>Extend the deadline for new providers to rate at a Level 3 or higher within 36 months instead of 30 months of enrollment.</b>	Currently, a new child care provider must rate at a Level 3 or higher within 30 months of enrollment. If a provider does not meet this deadline, the provider must complete remedial activities and rate at a Level 3 or higher within 6 months of beginning remedial activities (RCW 43.216.135(4)(c)).
<b>H.</b>	<b>Support the work of the early learning professional equivalencies committee and the development of the proficiency review process.</b>	DCYF has convened an Early Learning Professional Equivalencies Committee to examine new rules related to provider education and experience requirements and how providers demonstrating similar knowledge and skills in certain areas may be designated as meeting the equivalent rule credential requirement.
<b>I.</b>	<b>Direct DCYF to be more responsive to providers to ensure more flexibility on the rating window and block out days.</b>	According to the 2017 Early Achievers Operating Guidelines, facilities will receive unannounced on-site evaluation visits during a 2-month window. Facilities will work with their community liaison to document block-out dates of when the facility is not available for evaluation visits. In general, programs are asked to list no more than four block-out dates per cohort. These block-out dates are in addition to days that the program is closed. Programs that report more than four block-out dates are more likely to have their data collection visit delayed, which could result in the program not receiving a rating in their desired cohort.
<b>J.</b>	<b>Direct DCYF to develop a more robust cross-accreditation process with multiple pathways, such as an alternate checklist, that recognizes high quality national accreditation organizations and eliminates non-critical and non-effective elements of Early Achievers</b>	The Early Start Act directed DCYF to accept national accreditation that meets certain requirements as a qualification for Early Achievers ratings (RCW 43.216.085(11)). DCYF must grant credit to accreditation bodies that can demonstrate that their standards meet or exceed Early Achievers standards. Currently, providers that have current accreditation through certain agencies receive an additional five points toward their final rating and an accreditation area of specialization on their rating certificate (National Association for the Education of Young

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS**

		Children; National Association for Family Child Care; American Montessori Society; National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs; and AdvancED).
<b>K.</b>	<b>Incentivize infant and toddler care by eliminating rating scale barriers, considering weighting Early Achievers points, and considering rates for providers who serve infants and toddlers.</b>	The Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R) is used in child care center classrooms serving children birth through 2 1/2 years. The Infant CLASS is the classroom assessment used for infants from birth through 18 months. Facilities that have infants and toddlers receiving subsidy payments may be eligible for additional technical assistance through infant-toddler consultation.
<b>L.</b>	<b>Direct DCYF to develop a plan to pay providers an enhanced rate for serving behaviorally challenging children, create a corresponding trauma-informed care designation, and award additional Early Achievers points to providers.</b>	EHB 2861 (2018) established the Trauma Informed Child Care Advisory group to develop a strategy for expanding training in trauma informed child care for early learning providers, among other objectives. The Advisory Group presented preliminary recommendations to the Joint Select Committee that included trauma-informed practices in Early Achievers.  An enhanced special needs rate is provided for children who need a higher level of care in the child care setting (WAC 110-15-0220). The child must have a verified physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral condition that requires a higher level of care needed in the child care center.
<b>M.</b>	<b>Allow full-time students pursuing an AA or BA to have access to WCCC.</b>	Currently, an applicant or consumer who meets certain requirements is limited to up to 36 months of WCCC benefits during the consumer's lifetime for participation in vocational education offered by a public or private technical college or school, community college, or tribal college and works a certain number of hours (WAC 110-15-0045).
<b>N.</b>	<b>Direct DCYF to propose options for the Legislature to consider to pay providers accepting child care subsidies, a set monthly rate rather than a daily rate.</b>	For licensed care, DCYF pays a full or half day rate for subsidy child care based on the age of the child, region and setting. Until an automated billing system is in place, a provider may bill for all absent days in a month as long as the child attends one day in the month.
<b>O.</b>	<b>Direct DCYF to remove barriers to a speedy approval for one-on-one behavioral support assistants.</b>	An enhanced special needs rate is provided for children who need a higher level of care in the child care setting (WAC 110-15-0220). The needs must be documented by a professional with a master's degree or a registered nurse. If a provider is requesting one-on-one supervision or direct care for the child with

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS

		special needs, the person providing the one-on-one care must be at least 18 years old; meet the requirements for being an assistant; and maintain daily records of one-on-one care provided, to include the name of the employee providing the care.
<b>P.</b>	<b>Increase flexibility of grant funds to allow for physical improvements of early learning facilities.</b>	The Early Start Act directed DCYF to implement a protocol to address barriers to Early Achievers participants and develop needs-based grants for providers at Level 2 to assist with purchasing curriculum development, instructional materials, supplies, and equipment to improve program quality. Priority for the needs-based grants must be given to culturally diverse and low-income providers (RCW 43.216.087).
<b>Q.</b>	<b>Prioritize re-ratings for Level 2 providers and prioritize re-ratings for Level 3 providers seeking to become ECEAP providers.</b>	University of Washington rates providers who request their initial rating, a renewal rating after three years from their initial rating, and re-ratings for those providers that would like to try to rate at a higher level rating.
<b>R.</b>	<b>Designate a rerate as a renewal.</b>	The Early Start Act gave DCYF the authority to determine the rating-cycle for Early Achievers (RCW 43.216.085(5)). According to the 2017 Early Achievers Operating Guidelines, participants must complete a new rating every three years in order to maintain their participation status and be eligible for Early Achievers supports and incentives.
<b>S.</b>	<b>Extend the 6-month re-rate deadline to 12 months for existing providers who did not rate at a Level 3 or higher in the initial rating by the December 31, 2019 deadline.</b>	If an existing child care provider rates below a Level 3 by December 31, 2019, the provider must complete remedial activities with DCYF, and rate at a Level 3 or higher no later than June 30, 2020 (RCW 43.216.135(3)(c)).
<b>T.</b>	<b>Continuously reduce the Early Achievers coaching caseload as funding allows, getting closer to the optimum level of 1:18, and foster other professional development opportunities such as peer-to-peer mentoring. Broaden the coach certificate program offered by the UW, so it is available statewide.</b>	<p>Child Care Aware (CCA) of Washington assigns a coach to each provider participating in Early Achievers to provide the customized support and skills providers need in order to continually improve. The current average caseload for coaches within the CCA regions varies between 15 and 25 providers per coach.</p> <p>The University of Washington offers a certificate in practice-based coaching for early learning providers. The first two quarters require in-person attendance for two days in Seattle plus online learning. The third quarter is an internship.</p>



**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS**

<b>U.</b>	<b>Require trauma-informed care training for raters and coaches.</b>	E2SHB 1713 (2017) directed DCYF to establish a program linking child care providers with evidence-based, trauma-informed, and best practice resources for infants and young children who present behavioral concerns or symptoms of trauma.
<b>V.</b>	<b>Provide consistent and robust post-rating feedback to providers to provide insight and direction for improvement.</b>	According to the 2017 Early Achievers Participants Operating Guidelines, grantee/contractors will receive access to each facility's Early Achievers Rating Report on their cohort rating release date. The Ratings Report lists overall facility rating and site-level ERS and CLASS assessment scores.
<b>W.</b>	<b>Direct DCYF to expand and develop additional pathways to become an ECEAP provider including rating scale adjustments, incentives, and front-end funding.</b>	Existing and new ECEAP providers must rate a Level 4 or 5 (RCW 43.216.515(4) and (5)). The Early Start Act directed DCYF to develop a pathway for licensed or certified child care centers and homes to administer ECEAP by December 1, 2015. The pathway must include an accommodation for these providers to rate at a Level 4 or 5 (RCW 43.216.515(8)).
<b>X.</b>	<b>Direct WSIPP to update the outcome evaluation of ECEAP published in 2014 by conducting an evaluation of the long-term outcomes after 2020 when the children in the analysis are expected to graduate from high school.</b>	In 2014, WSIPP conducted a retrospective evaluation of ECEAP. WSIPP found that ECEAP has a positive impact on third, fourth, and fifth grade test scores. ECEAP's impact on test scores is almost twice as large as the average effect WSIPP found when it reviewed evaluations of early childhood education programs for low-income children in other states and districts.
<b>Y.</b>	<b>Match Head Start data to other early learning data and K-12 OSPI data and improve the ability to work with and match WCCC data, which has recently become available.</b>	The Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) has matched certain early learning data (i.e., ECEAP, Teaching Strategies Gold, K-12, WaKIDS) but not Head Start data. The ERDC recently matched Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) data.
<b>Z.</b>	<b>Monitor DCYF's plan to move to a singular rating tool more rapidly than current plans and report back on Early Achievers point allocations and the reasoning behind such changes.</b>	Early Achievers' quality standards for learning environment and interactions are measured by the Environment Rating Scales (ERS), which focuses on the environment, and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which focuses on interactions. DCYF plans to retire the CLASS tools as part of the ratings process when it implements the ERS-3 tools in 2020.
<b>AA.</b>	<b>Direct DCYF to increase communication and outreach related to free online training for childcare workers/aides to develop their knowledge and effectiveness.</b>	According to the 2017 Early Achievers Operating Guidelines, Level 2 requires six core trainings offered free of charge to the Early Achievers contacts. Three of these trainings are online, three are in-person, and all provide STARS hours. According to DCYF, the department provides online training and professional

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS

		<p>learning opportunities through an online training platform hosted by DCYF; contracts provided to training organizations who currently maintain their own online learning systems; training reimbursement for other online courses up to \$250 annually; and scholarships for college coursework that can be completed online.</p>
<p><b>BB.</b></p>	<p><b>Direct DCYF to propose options for the Legislature to consider to increase the availability of full-day care.</b></p>	<p>Current law and ECEAP performance standards define part-day, full-day, and extended-day ECEAP programs (RCW 43.216.010). The number of budgeted slots for part day was 10,037 (FY 2018) and 10,387 (FY 2019); full day was 1,998 (FY 2018) and 2,598 (FY 2019); and extended day was 456 (FY 2018) and 506 (FY 2019).</p> <p>In the WCCC program, full-time care is authorized when the applicant is participating in 110 hours of activity or more each month, which can be full or half-day units. Part-time care is authorized for those participating less than 110 hours and is based on need (WAC 110-150-0190).</p>



## APPENDIX A: Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Requirements

Federal CCDF rules require states to use nine percent of funds for quality improvement by federal fiscal year 2020. One such quality improvement activity is the development, implementation, and enhancement of a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

### §98.53 Activities to improve the quality of child care

- (3) Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services to meet consumer education requirements at § 98.33, which may:
- (i) Support and assess the quality of child care providers in the State, Territory, or Tribe;
  - (ii) Build on licensing standards and other regulatory standards for such providers;
  - (iii) Be designed to improve the quality of different types of child care providers and services;
  - (iv) Describe the safety of child care facilities;
  - (v) Build the capacity of early childhood programs and communities to promote parents' and families' understanding of the early childhood system and the rating of the program in which the child is enrolled;
  - (vi) Provide, to the maximum extent practicable, financial incentives and other supports designed to expand the full diversity of child care options and help child care providers improve the quality of services; and
  - (vii) Accommodate a variety of distinctive approaches to early childhood education and care, including but not limited to, those practiced in faith-based settings, community-based settings, child centered settings, or similar settings that offer a distinctive approach to early childhood development.

# JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EARLY ACHIEVERS

## APPENDIX B

### OVERVIEW OF EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Description	Funding (2017-19 biennium, except where noted)	Number of Subsidy Providers and Children Served (Fiscal Year 2017)	Eligibility for Subsidy	Early Achievers Rating Deadlines	
<b>Licensed Child Care Centers</b>	Facilities licensed by DCYF regularly providing early childhood education and early learning services for a group of children for periods of less than 24 hours.	\$58.6 Million State \$239.7 Million Federal Co-Pays Private Pay	<b>Total (inc. school age):</b> 1,651 providers 46,286 children  <b>Early Achievers (under age 5):</b> 1,236 providers 25,120 children	<b>Working Connections Child Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family income at or below 200% FPL and a parent is employed, self-employed, or meets requirements for TANF or WorkFirst</li> <li>Serves children birth through 12 unless there is a verified special need</li> </ul> <b>Seasonal Child Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family income at or below 200% FPL, employed in agricultural work, and lives in certain counties (Adams, Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Okanogan, Skagit, Walla Walla, Whatcom, or Yakima)</li> <li>Serves children birth through 12 unless there is a verified special need</li> </ul>	<b>Existing Provider that Accepts Subsidy and Serves Non-School Age</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate Level 3 or higher by 12/31/2019</li> </ul> <b>New Provider that Accepts Subsidy and Serves Non-School Age</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enroll within 30 days of subsidy payment</li> <li>Complete Level 2 activities within 12 months of enrollment</li> <li>Rate Level 3 or higher within 30 months of enrollment</li> </ul> <b>School-Age Provider</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not participate in Early Achievers</li> <li>50 programs participated in quality pilot</li> </ul>
<b>Licensed Family Home Child Care Providers</b>	Programs licensed by DCYF regularly providing early childhood education and early learning services for not more than 12 children in the provider's home in the family living quarters.	\$31.1 Million State \$127.2 Million Federal Co-Pays Private Pay	<b>Total (inc. school age):</b> 2,499 providers 18,845 children  <b>Early Achievers (under age 5):</b> 2,350 providers 9,644 children	<b>Working Connections Child Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See above</li> </ul>	Does not participate in Early Achievers
<b>Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Providers</b>	FFN providers are not licensed. Some families qualify for help to pay for FFN child care and are called "in-home/relative providers." Care may be in the child's home or provider's home depending on the relationship to the child.	\$19.4 Million State \$79.2 Million Federal	<b>Total (inc. school age):</b> 9,295 subsidy providers 14,625 children	<b>Working Connections Child Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See above</li> </ul>	Does not participate in Early Achievers
<b>Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs (ECEAP)</b>	Voluntary preschool program serving children ages 3 and 4 who meet certain eligibility requirements. Provides comprehensive services (e.g. health and family support) in public and private settings. ECEAP becomes a statutory entitlement in the 2022-23 school year.	\$230.4 Million State May include community grants and contributions	<b>Total &amp; Early Achievers:</b> 368 sites 52 contractors 12,491 funded slots (will increase to 13,491 in FY 2019)	(1) Family income at or below 110% FPL (2) Child eligible for special education (3) May include certain percentage of children who are homeless or have specific developmental and environmental risk factors	<b>Existing ECEAP Providers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate at Level 4 or 5 by 3/1/2016</li> </ul> <b>New ECEAP Providers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enroll within 30 days from the start of services</li> <li>Rate Level 4 or 5 within 12 or 18 months of enrollment depending on licensed status</li> </ul>
<b>Head Start Programs</b>	Voluntary <b>Early Head Start</b> (serves pregnant woman and children who are not yet 3) and <b>Head Start</b> (serves children who are at least 3 and not in kindergarten) who meet certain eligibility requirements. Provides comprehensive services (e.g. health and family support) in a child care center, family home child care, home-based (i.e. home visits and group socialization), or an approved variation.	\$221.7 Million Federal (FFY 2017) \$55.4M Non-Federal Share (FFY 2017): Contractor must contribute 25% of federal grant amount	<b>Total:</b> 51 grantees 16,283 funded slots  <b>Center-based:</b> 361 centers 13,599 funded slots  <b>Early Achievers:</b> 262 centers	(1) Family income at or below 130% FPL or eligible for public assistance (2) Child is homeless (3) Child is in foster care (4) May include certain percentage of children who have developmental or environmental risk factors	Performance Standards state a program must participate if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>state accepts monitoring data;</li> <li>participation would not impact ability to comply with performance standards; and</li> <li>no compelling reason not to comply.</li> </ul>

Prepared by Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research