



## Renewal Rating Policy

**What:** Renewal Rating Policy

**Who:** Early Achievers participants who have an existing Early Achievers rating and have been rated for at least 30 months.

**When:** Six months before the rating anniversary date, the Renewal Rating option becomes available in the Request for Onsite Evaluation application in MERIT. Sites must request their first renewal rating on or before their existing anniversary date. This is to accommodate facilities/sites that were rated before the applicant cohort calendar was implemented. The date the first renewal rating is released will become the facility/site's updated rating anniversary date. All future renewal ratings must be requested so that the rating is released on or before the updated three-year rating anniversary.

**Why:**

- Early Achievers participants must complete a new rating every three years in order to participate in Early Achievers incentives such as scholarships, grants and quality improvement awards (if applicable).
- Sites must renew their rating every three years and continue to meet Early Start Act rating milestones in order to maintain eligibility for Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) funding and/or Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidies and tiered reimbursement.

**How:**

- Six months before the facility's rating anniversary, the Primary Contact or Site Contact/Manager will receive an email reminding them to request their onsite evaluation to renew their rating by completing a Request for On-Site Evaluation application in MERIT.
- The Primary Contact or Site Contact/Manager can submit the Early Achievers Request for On-Site Evaluation in MERIT. They will receive an auto-email confirming their request with an attached PDF of the data they entered in MERIT.
  - For the first renewal rating, sites may request their rating six months before their anniversary, up to their anniversary date. All future renewal ratings will need to be requested so that the rating posts on or before the rating anniversary date.
- Once the request has been confirmed by the Child Care Aware Regional Coordinator or Grantee/Contractor, the Primary Contact or Site Contact/Manager will receive a second auto-email that confirms their request and includes the dates of their assessment window. The email will also include a PDF attachment of the data they entered into MERIT.
- The request will also be sent to the Childcare Quality & Early Learning (CQEL) program at the University of Washington. Once they receive this information, the Community Liaison will contact the site to discuss the on-site data collection activities.
- After data collection has been completed and reviewed for accuracy, the provider will receive their renewal rating in the WELS and MERIT systems. Providers have 30 days after the rating is released to submit an appeal if they feel their rating is incorrect.
- Providers should refer to the Early Achievers Participant Operating Guidelines for detailed information on the data collection, rating and appeal processes.



## Early Achievers Renewal Rating Frequently Asked Questions and Definitions

The Early Start Act (ESA) gives the Department of Early Learning (DEL) the authority to determine the rating cycle for participants in the Early Achievers program. DEL has determined that participants in Early Achievers should have their rating renewed every three years. The Renewal Rating Policy outlines the process providers follow to complete their renewal rating. Below are key definitions related to the renewal rating process and frequently asked questions.

### Definitions:

Early Start Act (ESA): The Early Start Act (ESA) is a comprehensive early learning bill passed by the Legislature in July of 2015. Some of the key elements of the Early Start Act (ESA) are:

- 12 month authorizations for Working Connections Child Care Subsidies (WCCC)
- Enrollment and rating milestones for providers receiving state subsidy
- Enrollment and rating milestones for facilities that provide Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) services
- Moving the Department of Early Learning to a single set of licensing standards that govern child care licensing and ECEAP using the Early Achievers quality framework.

Early Achievers: Early Achievers is Washington State's quality framework. This system of standards and supports help early learning providers make continuous quality improvements in their early learning settings. Early Achievers participants receive tailored pre-rating coaching to help them implement the Early Achievers Quality Standards and prepare for a facility rating. After the facility is rated, participants receive customized coaching support to help them set goals and continue to make improvements to their early learning services so that children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

### Frequently Asked Questions

- How do I request a renewal rating?
  - The Primary or Secondary QRIS contact completes the Request for On-Site Evaluation application in MERIT, when the provider is within six months of their three year rating anniversary date.
- What happens if I access the Request for On-Site Evaluation application in MERIT sooner than six months from my three year rating anniversary date?
  - You will see the option to request either a Free or Paid Re-Rate. Please wait to request your renewal rating until you are within six months of your three year rating anniversary date.
- When I request a Free or Paid Re-Rate I can choose which areas I want to be rated in (ERS, CLASS and/or Quality Standards Checklist). Why don't I see these options when I request a renewal rating?
  - Renewal ratings are comprehensive rating: they include new ERS and CLASS assessments and new Quality Standards Checklist data (including new staff and professional development data).
- I am an ECEAP program and/or receive state subsidy for non-school age children. What will happen if I do not complete my renewal rating?



- Providers who do not complete their renewal rating according to the Renewal Rating Policy will be at risk of losing their contracted ECEAP slots and/or state subsidy.
- In addition, providers will not be eligible to receive Quality Improvement awards and tiered subsidy reimbursements.
- What if my renewal rating does not meet the required level for providers receiving state subsidy (Level 3) or ECEAP programs (Level 4)?
  - Providers who do not meet their required rating level must engage in remedial activities, according to the Remedial Activities Policy.
  - Providers will be eligible for one Free Re-Rate, according to the Early Achievers Re-Rate Policy.
- Who can I contact if I have questions about the renewal rating process?
  - For sites on the HS/ECEAP pathway, contact your Head Start Grantee or ECEAP Contractor.
  - For sites on the licensed pathway, contact your local Child Care Aware agency.
- Who can I contact if I need technical assistance in MERIT, or if have additional questions about the rating renewal process?
  - You can send an e-mail with your specific questions to: [QRIS@del.wa.gov](mailto:QRIS@del.wa.gov).