



Early Achievers Participant Program Description Guidelines

By participating in Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system, child care and early learning programs are demonstrating their commitment to high-quality early learning. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is supporting this accomplishment by including customized program descriptions on Child Care Check. Child Care Check is an online tool that provides helpful information to parents, families and others about licensed or certified child care and early learning programs. The following information provides guidance to help create and submit a program description.

Purpose

Early Achievers program participants may submit a brief description of their program, contingent upon review and acceptance of DEL*. These guidelines are intended to help to create a program description.

What information is already available?

Information on Child Care Check is collected by DEL and includes:

- Current licensing status and licensing history (including valid complaint findings)
- How many children and the age ranges of the children the provider may care for
- The name and contact information for the licensor
- Background check status for the most recent three years
- Early Achievers Participation status
- A personalized program description, provided by an Early Achievers program
- When available, a program's Early Achievers rating and what that rating means

Program descriptions should be focused on information not already provided in Child Care Check.

Sample template

As a support to this process, DEL created a template to guide the creation of a program description. A program may highlight many different features that they offer, in any order that makes sense to them*. A program may choose to write their description with less information than demonstrated in the template, or focus on only one area within the program. A program is not required to follow the format of the sample template. Please note: The description is entered into MERIT and is limited 1000 characters.

Our child care, (or use your program name) is committed to (describe the values of your program). Our focus is on (provide a description of your program's vision or goals; what can a parent expect to see that will support their child's healthy development? How are you meeting the needs of all children in your care?).

Our program (can you share information on the type of curriculum or activities offered that contribute to the social, emotional, physical and educational needs of children? Do you offer culturally relevant activities? Can you tell parents and families how you integrate these activities in an effort to honor the diversity of children in your care?). At (insert your program name), you

will find (describe how your program is unique, include any special qualities of your program; can you tell parents and families about the environment of your child care and the qualities of your staff? In what ways do you include parents and families?).

We believe (describe the philosophy of your program. How do you communicate with parents and families? Is there an experience or believe that you would like to highlight about your participation in Early Achievers?). You can find out more information about our program by (can parents and families schedule a time to visit your child care? Do you have a dedicated web site that parents and families can visit [note: this will be displayed as a url without a hyperlink]?)

What information will not be published in a program description on Child Care Check?

DEL will review each program description once it has been submitted. A program description will either be accepted and published to Child Care Check, or not accepted and returned to the program for further review*. A program description is not eligible to be published if it contains any of the following:

- Profanity
- References or allegations of child abuse/neglect
- A reference to any other name, business, product or person other than your program name (the only exception may be naming an earned accreditation, provided that this is able to be verified)
- False statements
- A web address not specifically dedicated to the program

Submission Instructions

Instructions

Once a child care or early learning program is registered to participate in Early Achievers they are eligible to create and submit a brief description of their program in Child Care Check. When a program is ready, they should follow these steps:

- Early Achievers primary or secondary contact logs into MERIT
- Navigate to the Facility/Site tab
- Click on the “Early Achievers” link
- Under “Program Description” click on the “Add/Edit” link
- Enter a program description in the open text box, which can accommodate up to 1000 characters of text. MERIT will display a character countdown
- Review the program description thoroughly before submitting. Check for spelling or grammatical errors. Once the description is submitted and accepted, it can be edited at a later date
- Click the “Submit for Review” button

Process

Once submitted, DEL will review the program description. This will occur within 15 business days of submission. If the description is accepted, it will be automatically uploaded to Child Care Check where it will be displayed, and an automated notification will be sent from MERIT to the Early Achievers primary or secondary contact confirming the status. If the description is not accepted, DEL staff will contact the program to provide feedback.

If a program description is not accepted, the following steps can be taken:

Step 1: Review the feedback from DEL

Step 2: Update the program description

Step 3: Resubmit the program description following the process outlined above

Questions?

For questions about this process, please contact QRIS at gris@del.wa.gov.

*Disclaimer: The Department of Early Learning reserves the right to not accept or post a program description if it does not meet the guidelines outlined in this document. Further, if a program withdraws from Early Achievers, the program description associated with the program will be removed.