

Early Achievers launched in July of 2012, adding new processes and requirements at all levels. A culture of learning, assessing, and using data to inform decisions among all of the partners leading the work has helped us continually improve. Currently, DEL has responded to suggestions from constituents regarding how to improve the process to engage more child care providers to achieve high levels of quality. **Below are some of the changes that have resulted from this iterative work.**

Enhanced to Level 2 Supports

- Creation of “**Rating Readiness Consultants**” to support programs to prepare for the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and CLASS observational assessments to build confidence in providers, encourage providers to move forward toward rating, and ensure each provider receives the highest possible rating.
- **Needs based grants** of up to \$500 to family home child care providers to make changes to their environment in order to improve scores on the ERS.
- **Quality improvement awards** of \$750 are available to family home providers who rate a Level 2, in addition to existing awards for providers who rate at Levels 3-5.
- A **Pre-Assessment** is offered to providers before rating to ensure that providers are ready to rate before moving through the process.
- **Coaching** is available to all rated providers, including those rated a Level 2.

Improved Cultural Competency

- Technical Assistants and Coaches **reflect community diversity** in staff composition and culturally competent practices. Of the 78 coaches and Technical Assistants, 35 (34%) speak other languages in addition to English including Spanish, Somali, Russian, Vietnamese, Swahili, Tagalog, Hindi, and Arabic.
- **Regional flexibility** has been increased to allow for tailored services for unique populations, such as specific communities or language groups. Regions with high language diversity have the highest percentage of bilingual Early Achievers staff, including Central (10 out of 12 staff bilingual in Spanish) and King (9 out of 26 staff bilingual in one or more of the above languages).
- 12 **bilingual Data Collectors** who speak Somali, Spanish, Korean, Cantonese, as well as English.

Increased Support for Quality Improvements

- Based on feedback from the field, the Haring Center at UW is providing training to 50 Early Achievers coaches on supporting **children with special needs**.

- **Infant/Toddler consultation** is fully integrated with Early Achievers and available to participants to improve the quality of infant/toddler classrooms.
- **Increased training** and capacity is provided for coaches on the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS).
- **Scholarships** have been expanded to more Early Achievers participants.
- **Early Achievers Institutes** were created to provide additional support on the Early Achievers Standards to participants, with sessions ranging from improving instructional support to incorporating developmental screenings. Begun in 2013, the Institutes have been held 6 times across the state (in English and Spanish) and have been attended by approximately 1,500 participants. Four additional Institutes are planned for 2015.

Incentives for Participation and Advancement

- One **Rerate** has been made available free to most providers that do not reach a Level 3; all providers can pay for a rerating at any time.
- **Data** is available to support Technical Assistance and Coaching and to assess ongoing progress.
- Programs that rate highly on specific areas of Early Achievers will be awarded **Areas of Specialization**, recognizing their strengths on the DEL website and in the Child Care Aware family referral materials. Areas of Specialization include Child Outcomes, Interactions and Environment, Curriculum and Staff Supports (ERS/CLASS), Professionalism (Professional Development), and Family Engagement and Partnership.
- All providers enrolled in Early Achievers receive a 2% subsidy increase, and **tiered reimbursement** subsidy payments are available for programs achieving levels 3, 4, & 5 at 4%, 10%, & 15%.
- More specific data provided on ERS is being used by coaches to **partner with child care participants** to develop quality improvement plans.

Implementation Efficiencies

- UW has established rating cohorts to give **more information and predictability to providers** about when their rating will occur, and allow for efficiencies in scheduling the ratings.
- **MERIT has been streamlined** with a new education verification process that allows early learning professionals to have their credentials verified more quickly and consistently.
- **New data is available** to inform policy decisions, including:
 - State, regional, and local data on participation
 - Workforce, professional development and training data
 - Performance data demonstrating where providers are strong and need additional supports