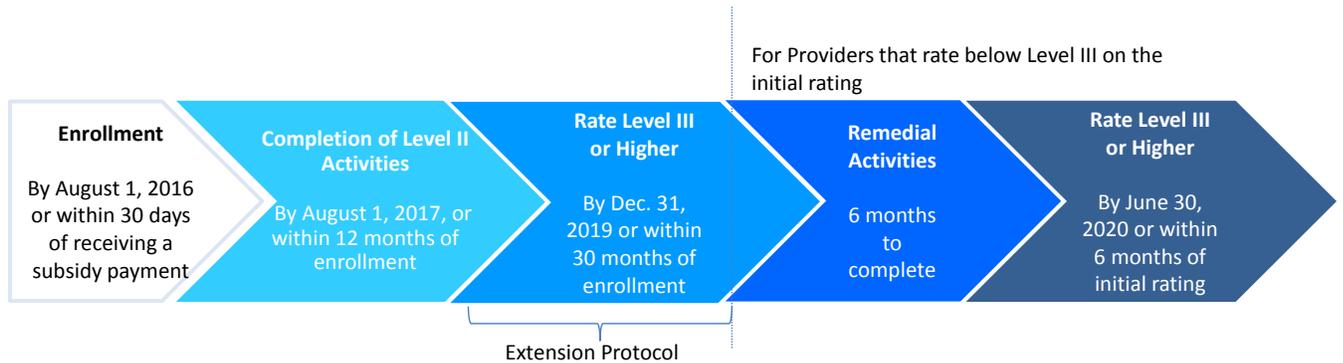


Draft Extension Protocol for Early Achievers

Overview

The Early Start Act requires all licensed early learning providers that accept children on subsidy and ECEAP providers to participate in Early Achievers and attain a quality rating level of III or higher according to the timeline below. Providers that are unable to meet these requirements will not be allowed to accept WCCC subsidy payments. ESA also requires the development of a protocol for allowing a one-time, no longer than 6-month extension to the 30 month rating requirement for “exceptional circumstances.”

Timeline for Licensed Child Care Participation in Early Achievers



Criteria for Extension Eligibility

Early learning providers that wish to request an extension to the rating deadline must meet the following criteria:

- Be in full compliance with all licensing requirements and ECEAP requirements, if applicable
- Have met all prior Early Achievers requirements, including enrollment date and completion of Level II activities
- Must meet minimum participation requirements¹ in rating preparation activities, such as training and technical assistance
- Have experienced exceptional circumstances that can be verified

Definition of “Exceptional Circumstances”

Extension requests will only be granted if an early learning provider can demonstrate an “exceptional circumstance” that warrants additional time prior to rating. These exceptional circumstances include:

- Leadership changes onsite
- High staff turnover in a Child Care Center or ECEAP program--more than 30% of lead staff have changed within the past 6 months (this is limited to staff who work with children in the birth to 5 years age range)
- Staff turnover in Family Home Child Care-- family child care assistant or lead staff have changed within the past 3 months
- Extended illness of either the Director, Family Home Child Care provider, or a Lead Teacher
- Under enrollment in program (meaning there are not enough children attending program for data collection to occur)

¹ To be defined by DEL and CCA of WA

- Natural disaster, or accidental damage to the facility that requires professional repair
- Death or other tragedy that has a significant impact on the program staff or families
- Other exceptional circumstances, reviewed case by case. In these situations, the facility must provide documentation that demonstrates a need for an extension. This documentation will be reviewed by an Exception/Extension protocol panel to determine if the circumstances warrant an extension.

Process for Requesting an Extension

Requests for a rating extension will be considered for up to 6 months. Providers must request an extension in writing with the following information:

- Reason for requesting extension
- Proposed extension period (up to 6 months)
- Summary of Early Achievers participation and quality improvement activities
- Supporting documentation to verify the request (e.g. Doctors' letters, termination letters, etc.)

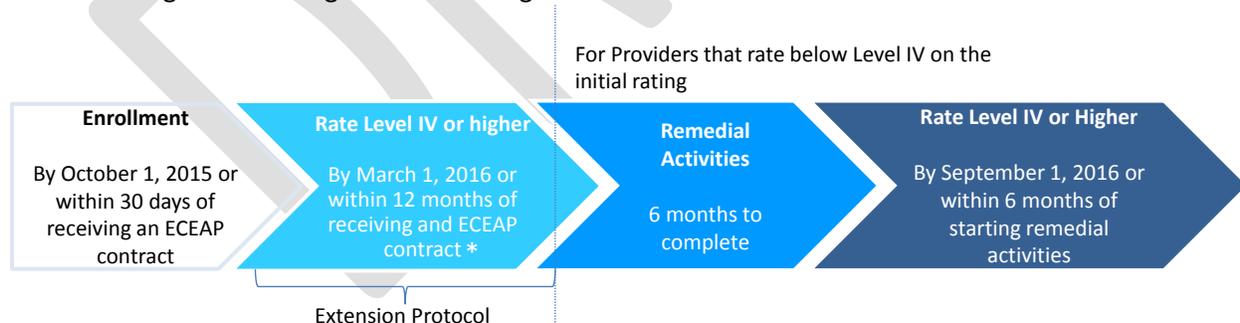
All extension requests will be reviewed by DEL. Those that meet the defined criteria will be approved. Any requests for an extension that do not meet the defined categories for eligibility will be submitted to an Extension/Exception protocol panel for review. This panel will have a DEL staff member, CCA of WA staff member and Early Achievers Review Subcommittee member. They will review the evidence and determine if the program qualifies for an extension.

Requests for extension can be emailed to the QRIS inbox at qris@del.wa.gov, or mailed US Post to QRIS Extension Request, c/o DEL--Early Achievers, PO Box 40970, Olympia, WA 98504-0970.

Once requests are reviewed, programs will be notified by an email from the QRIS inbox stating if their request for extension was granted or denied as well as information about any next steps.

ECEAP Contractors

ESA also mandates timelines for ECEAP contractors (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) to achieve a quality rating of level IV or higher. ECEAP pathway contractors are required to achieve a Level IV or higher according to the following timeline:



*Licensed or certified child care centers and homes that administer ECEAP and participate in Early Achievers on the licensed pathway shall rate a level IV or higher within eighteen months of the start date of their ECEAP contract.

ECEAP providers may request a one-time, 6-month extension to rating if there are exceptional circumstances that warrant an extension. ECEAP providers will follow the same protocol as licensed

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child care facilities, and can submit their request for an extension to the QRIS inbox at qris@del.wa.gov, or mailed US Post to QRIS Extension Request, c/o DEL--Early Achievers, PO Box 40970, Olympia, WA 98504-0970.

Once requests are reviewed, programs will be notified by an email from the QRIS inbox stating if their request for extension was granted or denied as well as information about any next steps.

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