

**STATE-APPROVED TRAINER AND TRAINING  
QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM GUIDE**



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## OVERVIEW

The integrity and quality of training leads to improved practice of early care & education and school age professionals. High quality professional development is part of a strong foundation for high quality care and learning of children. The purpose of the training and trainer quality assurance program is to promote and continue high quality professional development opportunities around the state. Our goal is a consistent process for training review, trainer feedback, and continuous improvement. Feedback to continually improve this process is important. We encourage and invite our State's Observers, the Trainer Advisory Board, Organization Trainer Mentors, State-Approved Trainers, and Early Learning Professionals to participate in program refinement and implementation through feedback and evaluation. We are committed to ensuring that all training is grounded in the State's Core Competencies and Early Learning Guidelines as well as current research and best practice for both child development as well as teaching adults.

### WORKFORCE NEED

Licensed early learning providers are required to complete annual continuing education training (STARS) by Washington Administration Code (WAC – Licensed early Learning) for Family Child Care WAC 170-296A-1800; Centers 170-295- 1070; School Age WAC 170-297-1775 and WAC 170-297-1800. This requirement is met through:

- Attending a State-approved training provided by a State-Approved Trainer
- Attending a State-approved conference or special event
- Completing a college ECE course
- Submitting a Continuing Education Proposal for review to be approved to meet the requirement for state-approved training.

State-Approved Trainers complete the Department of Early Learning's (DEL) state approved trainer process in order to offer continuing education (STARS) hours to meet this WAC requirement.

In order to assure highly qualified trainers throughout the regions of our state, DEL must provide a program to approve new trainers, ensures quality and support for existing state-approved trainers and training.

High-quality adult learning transfers to improved practice of early learning professionals in order to provide quality care and learning to young children.

## DEFINITIONS

**Department of Early Learning (DEL):** Governmental body responsible for Washington’s early learning programs and services

**State-Approved Trainer:** Individuals vetted and trained by the DEL to provide quality training to Washington’s early learning professionals

**Trainer Advisory Board (TAB):** Provides input and informs the continual development of DEL’s professional development system focusing on the state approval process and ongoing quality assurance for trainers and training

**Organization Trainer Mentor (OTM):** Offers guidance as a trainer mentor and observer to applicants within their organization going through the trainer approval process

**Trainer Observer:** Contracted professional who provides individual coaching and feedback to trainers through the observation and evaluation process

**Trainer Observation Rubric:** Tool used to evaluate the quality of in-person, online, and self-paced/correspondence training as part of the trainer application and quality assurance processes

## HIGH QUALITY CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR EARLY LEARNING PROFESSIONALS

The Department of Early Learning is committed to Early Learning and School-age Professionals having access to high quality continuing education experiences. Several publications have been developed using quality standards to guide trainers and early learning professionals in this process of developing, accessing, and participating in high quality continuing education. The following publications are resources all trainers and observers must be familiar with in order to ensure the professional development system is aligned with best practice for adult learning and early care and learning.

## **TRAINER ASSURANCES**

Quality adult education in Washington State depends on the knowledge, skills and professionalism of trainers.

- Training shall be coherent, cumulative, and comprehensive and integrate with the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education and/or School-Age Professionals and incorporate assessment of learning.
- Training is reflective of community needs, values, and goals of the participants.
- Training is identified by core knowledge areas, content specific with clear learning objectives so participants can identify training opportunities that align with their needs and interests.
- Training is delivered in a way that knowledge and competencies can be applied in the participant's work, including all early learning professionals.
- Training facilitates the learning of concepts and skills grounded in current research and practice.
- Adults learn best when new information validates and builds on their prior knowledge and experience.
- Adults are motivated to learn if they are active participants in the learning process and viewed as a partner with the trainer in the learning experience.
- Adults benefit from training designed to contribute to their self-esteem and growth, personally and professionally.
- Training provides opportunities for participants to increase their ability to implement new skills within the context of individual differences and values, such as, cultural perspectives and learning styles.
- Training is free of prejudice and stereotyping.
- Training acknowledges that learners have varying abilities. Training provides information for individualizing, making accommodations, and accessing resources in a suitable adult learning environment.

## **TRAINER COMPETENCIES**

Excellent Washington State Trainer preparation focuses on four areas: professionalism, facilitation, instructional design, and assessment.

### **Professionalism**

Professionalism for trainers includes the creation of a safe and warm environment, demonstrating respect for individual needs, and cultural sensitivity.

Washington State-Approved Trainers, as representatives of Department of Early Learning (DEL) and an extension of the Department's Quality Practice and Professional Growth Division are required to maintain confidentiality, encourage participant contributions to learning, accommodate for participant needs, respect differences, and generally represent the field favorably by conducting themselves in a professional and respectful manner.

### **Facilitation**

Facilitation of training is the creation of an appropriate and comfortable room arrangement, effective communication skills, creation of group agreements, and facilitation of group activities, focusing training, and managing unforeseen situations. Activities apply to participants' work directly and includes reflective interaction.

Trainers should create a comfortable environment for adults to increase access to learning without distraction; this includes an enthusiastic, focused, interactive, and engaging presentation. The environment should reflect respect for participants from the trainer and fellow participants as well as the comfort of the physical environment.

### **Instructional Design**

Instructional design is the inclusion of Washington State's Core Competencies and other supporting documents, methods of interactions and learning styles, use of hooks and goals, instructions and demonstrations, appropriate use of support materials, and technology and an effective training summary and closing.

### **Assessment**

Assessment of adult learning includes the use of appropriate prior learning, formative, and summative assessments that align with the stated training outcomes. Trainers should be able to assess where their participant knowledge is at the beginning of training, check for understanding during, and assure that learning objectives are met at the end of the training through the summary, questions, and activities.

## **STATE-APPROVED TRAINER RESOURCES**

### **TRAINER COMPETENCIES**

The trainer competencies provide detail with measurable and observable skills necessary for trainers to provide quality professional development.

### **RELATIONSHIP BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCIES**

These Competencies focus on professional relationships as the primary focus in professional development and growth. It describes the knowledge and skills that professionals must have to facilitate adult professional development within a reflective framework.

### **CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE GUIDELINES**

This outlines the essential information for cultural responsiveness of professional development in Washington State by providing a lens for professional development creation, delivery, and evaluation. These guidelines reflect the importance and commitment to build on adult learning principles based on the diverse strengths of early learning professionals that are rooted in their unique culture.

### **CORE COMPETENCIES**

All training is tied to the Washington State Core Competencies. It is a resource that defines what childcare professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality care for children. The Core Competencies establish a set of standards for childcare and serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by professionals in all early care and education settings.

### **EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

This statewide resource is for everyone who loves, cares for, and educates young children. The guidelines provide essential information to support and enhance children's development and learning by describing children's behavior and skills from birth through third grade.

## **STATE-APPROVED TRAINER SUPPORT AWARDS**

Each year, state-approved trainers are asked to complete fifteen hours of continuing education related to adult learning, early care and education, or other training related to the trainer's areas of specialty. All state-approved trainers have access to reimbursement for professional development and training materials through the MERIT applications tab. The maximum reimbursement amount is \$200 and reimbursements are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Funding is limited for each fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

## **PRE-SERVICE TRAINER MODULES**

The state-approved trainer modules (<http://deltraining.com/>) provide guidance and instruction on many topics that are helpful for trainers. These 8 modules include information for designing and facilitating training, writing learning objectives using Washington's core competencies, assessing learning, and cultural competencies. Trainers are asked to complete these modules prior to submitting their applications and have up to six months after approval to complete. Trainers may have other education or experience that would meet this requirement and may submit with their application for review.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Ensure high quality professional development opportunities
- Lead professionals in statewide organization and evaluation of quality assurance through TAB, partner agencies, and trainer and observer feedback
- Monitor and evaluate the quality and integrity of State-Approved training being offered
- Support trainers in their professional development through reflective feedback
- Monitor and evaluate the quality and integrity of State-Approved trainers through observation assignments
- Monitor and evaluate quality assurance program to ensure expectations and responsibilities are met and program needs are identified and addressed
- Provide administrative and policy support to trainers, TAB members, partnering agencies and OTM's, and observers as needed

### **STATE-APPROVED TRAINER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide high quality professional development opportunities for early learning and school-age professionals
- Participate in an interactive, reflective process for ongoing learning and quality improvement
- Approach the Trainer Feedback process with openness and honesty
- Engage in open conversation around the Trainer Feedback process
- Be open to new ideas and skills, personally and professionally
- Trainings available to the public must be entered into MERIT at least three weeks before the start date
- Complete all rosters within 30 days of the training session completion date.

## **OBSERVER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Observe trainings to provide meaningful feedback using the Trainer Feedback Rubric (in-person, online, or distance/correspondence)
- Guide the process for an interactive, reflective ongoing learning and quality improvement experience
- Support and encourage trainers by offering honest feedback that is timely and relevant through a variety of methods (phone, email, etc.)
- Provide additional resources and follow-up, as needed
- Respect the confidentiality of the information that is shared during the quality support process

## **TRAINER ADVISORY BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

- When assigned, observe trainings to provide meaningful feedback using the Trainer Feedback Rubric (in-person, online, or distance/correspondence)
- Review PDU template when assigned by DEL and provide meaningful feedback
- Recommend approval or denial of applicant's trainer application status
- Attend 4 meetings a year in-person with DEL and teleconference meetings
- Give advice on the agenda for each Trainer Advisory Board meeting
- Participate in smaller, single-issue focused workgroups to advance the work plan
- Work to advance our objectives and lead by example through recommending solutions and addressing issues
- Communicate with the other members of the Trainer Advisory Board about emerging issues and matters of interest between meetings

## **ORGANIZATION TRAINER MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Works directly with trainer applicants, forming a mentoring relationship to assist applicants in applying best practices and delivering high quality instruction to adult learners
- Offer mentoring and ongoing observations as the applicant teaches classes for their organization
- Guides the trainer applicant through the application process
- Schedules a time to observe the applicant teaching adults; the mentor completes the rubric, adding comments for DEL staff to understand the assigned scores in each area
- Corresponds with DEL on behalf of the trainer during the application process, sending the required paperwork to [training@del.wa.gov](mailto:training@del.wa.gov) in one email

## TRAINER ADVISORY BOARD

The role of the Trainer Advisory Board is to advise DEL on trainer and training quality assurance policies and practices. This includes observations of trainer applicants and current state-approved trainers, making recommendations for new applicant trainer approval, as well as support through relationship-based professional development for trainers. The board consists of professionals in higher education, community-based training, state agencies, and other professional organizations.

### MEMBERSHIP

Sponsored by the Department of Early Learning, known as Sponsoring State Agency from here on, a minimum of 12 individuals and a maximum of 20 individuals will serve on this board. This body will have representatives that are State-Approved Trainers and Organization Trainer Mentors with a vast background, experience, and expertise. Board membership shall be a two-year term unless otherwise stated as permanent members.

### SCOPE

The Trainer Advisory Board will be a sustainable body that will give recommendations for the Trainer and Training Quality Assurance Program. The Trainer Advisory Board will focus on serving children, families, and the early childhood workforce. By using Washington's Core Competencies, the Trainer Advisory Board will make recommendations on the needs of the trainers, training quality standards and development of early learning professionals across the state.

The scope of the Trainer Advisory Board includes the following items:

1. **Standards:** The Board will base decisions and recommendations on criteria for best practice through Washington's Core Competencies, other national standards, research, and data.
2. **Coaching:** Through observations, training, support, and communication, the Board will provide coaching to existing and applying state-approved trainers.
3. **Quality Assurance:** The Board will update, refine, and support implementation of the quality assurance processes for trainers and training
4. **Data and reporting:** The Board will collect and share data for decision-making, to better understand needs of the workforce, and to determine how well the agency is meeting those needs.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

- A trainer advisory board member must be a state-approved trainer.
- The application is filled out and submitted to DEL for approval.
- The trainer must submit a current resume and Core Competency demonstration form to [training@del.wa.gov](mailto:training@del.wa.gov).
- The current Trainer Advisory Board members and DEL reviews the applications. In selecting members for open seats, the following are considered:
  - Interest/expertise in the work of the Trainer Advisory Board
  - Involvement with the community through trainings and other associations
  - Diversity: racial/ethnic and geographic
  - Current priorities/projects/work plan of the Trainer Advisory Board
  - Skills & Strengths
  - Affiliated with statewide networks/associations
  - Commitment to producing positive outcomes for adult educators, children, and families
  - Be able to know and understand how to define the outcomes for early learning professionals across a variety of settings

Once approved, DEL sends a Welcome Packet and the new board member is added to the contact, availability, and area lists.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

The Trainer Advisory Board commits to:

- Focusing on serving children, families and the early childhood workforce
- Prioritizing the development of a diverse, highly qualified trainer pool
- Recognizing Washington's Core Competencies based on national standards, and focusing on research and data to guide the process and discussions
- Open and transparent communication and decision-making while engaging members of the board
- Evaluate trainer and training quality assurance and recommend changes as needed
- Participate in the trainer approval and observation process.
- Support State-Approved Trainers throughout the state with relationship-based professional development through observations, feedback, and professional development planning
- Making commitments to carry out the Trainer Advisory Board's Work Plan and to share the goals and actions with others
- Recruitment of additional TAB members and trainers across the state

## ORGANIZATION TRAINER MENTOR

The organization trainer mentor (OTM) process provides community mentorship and support for organizational representatives interested in completing the state-trainer approval process. To participate, an organization must make a commitment by signing a quality-assurance agreement to use and uphold the quality-assurance process that has been established for the trainer approval process.

### SELECTION PROCESS

- An organization trainer mentor must be a state-approved trainer.
- The application is filled out and submitted to DEL for approval.
- The mentor must submit a signed Quality Assurance Agreement to DEL at [training@del.wa.gov](mailto:training@del.wa.gov).
- The mentor agrees to mentor and support other organizational trainers by using the Washington State Quality Assurance Process, including the Professional Development Observation Rubric and Trainer Competencies.

### EXPECTATIONS

The Organization Trainer Mentor commits to:

- Focusing on serving children, families and the early childhood workforce
- Prioritizing the development of a diverse trainer pool
- Recognizing national standards, Washington's Core Competencies, and research to guide the trainer approval process and discussions
- Open and transparent communication and decision-making while engaging members of DEL
- To evaluate the Trainer Approval Process and recommend changes as needed
- Train and coach State-Approved Trainers throughout the state through observations

## TRAINER APPROVAL

The Washington State Trainer Approval Process uses an observation method of approval. The purpose of the Trainer Approval Process is to promote quality training opportunities around the state, establish a consistent process for reviewing all trainers, and to ensure that all trainings are grounded in the state's Core Competencies and Early Learning Guidelines. It is the integrity and quality of trainings that sets the

foundation for early care and education and child and youth development (school-aged care) professionals.

There are several methods for trainer approval:

- Specialist trainer as a community based trainer
- Specialist trainer with an Organization
- K-12/ESD Trainer
- Higher Ed Trainer

### **SPECIALIST TRAINER**

- Completes Specialist Application in MERIT
- Must submit education application to verify education in MERIT which includes copies official transcripts
- Submit a letter of recommendation that is written on an official letterhead and dated within the last six months to [training@del.wa.gov](mailto:training@del.wa.gov)
- Communication with a Trainer Advisory Board member will be set up to schedule an observation
- Once observation is completed, TAB returns rubric and gives recommendation on the application status
- DEL reviews all of the documentation and approves, or denies, the applicant based on the Core Competencies that were filled out and the feedback from the TAB or OTM.

### **SPECIALIST TRAINER (WITH AN ORGANIZATION)**

- An organization trainer mentor must be a state-approved trainer.
- The mentor agrees to mentor and support other organizational trainers by using the Washington State Quality Assurance Process, including the Professional Development Observation Rubric and Trainer Competencies.
- The mentor is trained by DEL to use the scoring instrument and signs the quality assurance agreement.
- The mentor helps other organizational trainers complete the Trainer Approval Process and observes them teaching a class; the mentor lists the class in MERIT under her/his own trainer tab or Conference/Special Event application. The mentor observes the applicant in lieu of a member of the Trainer Advisory Board.
- The mentor submits all completed forms and supporting documentation to DEL at [training@del.wa.gov](mailto:training@del.wa.gov) on behalf of the applicant, including the mentor's approval

recommendation (written on the observation rubric) and the Trainer Approval Board Review form.

- The applicant must also complete a trainer application in MERIT
- The application must also complete an education verification application including a copy of official transcripts.
- Once DEL receives all of the documentation and the applicant's education is verified, the mentee trainer will be granted approval at the appropriate level as indicated by their rubric score and core competency demonstration scores.

### **HIGHER EDUCATION AND K-12/ESD TRAINERS**

- Completes Higher Education or K-12/ESD Trainer Application in MERIT
- Submits Employment Verification form to [training@del.wa.gov](mailto:training@del.wa.gov)
- DEL approves application

### **TRAINER COMPETENCY LEVELS**

The core competencies describe the knowledge and skills that early learning professionals should acquire. By understanding and applying the core competencies, trainers are better able to plan, organize and deliver high quality training for adults. All training is grounded in the core competencies and trainers match their learning objectives to the competencies.

Each of the five levels of competency encompasses a more advanced stage of academic preparation and experience that is more varied:

- **Level 1:** This level sets the foundation for early care and education and includes the basic knowledge and skills expected of a professional in the early care and education field.
- **Level 2:** Practitioners at this level have acquired knowledge and skills comparable to a Child Development Associate credential or a Washington State Stackable ECE Certificate (Initial, Short, or State ECE Certificate).
- **Level 3:** Practitioners at this level has knowledge and skills equivalent with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- **Level 4:** Practitioners at this level have knowledge and skills equivalent with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- **Level 5:** Practitioners at this level have knowledge and skills equivalent with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.

DEL approves trainers based on their proficiency in the eight core competency areas. This allows us to emphasize each trainer's competencies and knowledge, making it possible to find a stronger match between those who need training and each trainer's knowledge and skills.

### **APPROVED TRAINER STATUS**

- Applications are approved for three-year cycles. Submit your renewal application before the expiration of your current application.
- New state-approved trainers will receive a DEL welcome packet, which includes details on the approval process and the responsibilities of a state-approved trainer. Once applicants are approved, information is entered into MERIT and the trainers will gain access to the State-Approved Trainer tab.
- Trainings must be entered three weeks prior to the start date of the training session into MERIT for each training you deliver.
- The training roster must be completed within 30 days of the completion of the training.
- DEL will not review and approve each training; DEL will monitor training sessions in MERIT.

### **TRAINER CONTINUING EDUCATION**

It is expected that all trainers will complete at least 15 hours of continuing education each year during their approval period. Trainings need to be related to the Core Competencies that the trainer teaches on or adult learning theory, leadership practices, or relationship-based professional development. Training can also be achieved through education. Education must be submitted via an education application in MERIT and verified by the MERIT Education Team.

### **TRAINER SANCTIONS**

If policies and procedures are not being followed, trainer sanction may have taken place.

DEL reserves the right to implement the trainer sanctions process when trainers consistently do not meet the Trainer Standards and Responsibilities or engages in fraudulent/illegal activity. Additionally, if a trainer is disqualified from providing childcare or has their license revoked or denied, the trainer will not be allowed to be a state-approved trainer.

Examples of when trainer sanctions may apply include, but are not limited to:

- A trainer does not abide by the quality assurance agreement listed in the state-approved trainer application
- A trainer is convicted of a crime against a person

- A trainer fraudulently keeps STARS scholarships or participants' payments

Possible sanctions include:

- An on-site monitoring review and placement on probationary status where the trainer works under the guidance of a state-approved trainer mentor
- 6-month revocation of state-approved trainer status
- 1-year revocation of state-approved trainer status
- Permanent revocation of state-approved trainer status

## TRAINER FEEDBACK PROCESS

The Trainer Feedback Process includes observation of current and potential state-approved trainers. Observations may be requested for any of the methods of delivery. This includes in-person training, online learning, and self-paced/correspondence learning for adult learners. Follow-up observations will happen throughout the year. Observations will be based on:

- Random selection,
- Trainer concerns,
- To observe DEL Training content being taught.

In addition to having quality trainers, we ensure that the content taught is of high quality, aligns with Washington's Core Competencies, and follows current practices. The process includes working with current or potential state-approved trainers as assigned by DEL, completing an observation, completing supporting documents for both the trainer and DEL, and engaging in supporting, reflective conversations with current and potential state-approved trainers. The Trainer Feedback Process is designed to support trainers and provide resources for continued success and growth.

Additional information may be requested such as completed workbooks or assessments, handouts, and trainer evaluations.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

### **Professional Conduct**

As representatives of DEL, Trainer Observers and State-Approved Trainers will ensure professional conduct while maintaining confidentiality of all interactions related to this work. Observers will perform the work objectively and disclose any potential conflict of interest regarding the assignment given.

### **Providing Feedback**

Trainer Observers will reference the RBPD (Relationship-Based Professional Development) Guidelines when providing feedback to the trainers with emphasis on relationship building through mentorship and support. Feedback will be given in such a way as to offer guidance and encouragement towards a reflective cycle of inquiry and use an evidence-based adult-learning process of goal setting, observation, assessment, action planning, reflection and feedback.

### **Dispute Resolution**

The observer or trainer must communicate with DEL if any situations of conflict or resistance arise. These will be dealt with in a timely and professional manner on a case-by-case basis to ensure concerns and needs are met.

### **Communication to DEL**

All communication will be done in a timely and confidential manner. Observers will communicate any concerns with DEL before contacting the trainer. Trainers with concerns should also contact DEL directly.

## **OBSERVATION DOCUMENTS**

### **Introduction emails**

- 1) DEL will send an introduction email explaining a trainer has been identified to be observed through random selection and what the next steps will be to expect.
- 2) Observers will send an email to the trainer introducing the observation process and what to expect with the upcoming observation. This will be a standard document used by all observers for consistent messaging and communication to all trainers

### **Observation Rubric Summary**

This form is a general overview of the rubric used during the observation. It includes the structure of indicators with less detail than the rubric. It is sent with the introduction email to summarize for the trainer the indicators that are used in the observation.

### **Observation Rubric (for Observer use)**

- a) In-Person
- b) Online
- c) Self-paced/correspondence
- d) Written PDU (for new trainer applicants only)

This tool is used during the observations to track the quality indicators observed. The rubric is completed by the observer and returned to DEL. This internal documentation is used to gather feedback for the trainer that will be added to the observation summary form.

### **Observation Feedback Report (for use with Trainer)**

This will be shared and discussed with the trainer to provide meaningful feedback based on the Observation Rubric. This can be done in person, by phone, or by email at a mutually agreed upon time after the training. The trainer will have a chance to respond to the comments in the summary.

### **Trainer Ongoing Professional Development Plan**

Trainers are invited to reflect on their personal professional development and growth and set SMART goals.

### **Trainer Concern Letter**

This letter is used as a consistent message to use when there is a concern about a training or trainer during an observation to the extent it would not be recommended for continuing education credit. It outlines the steps for trainer to make necessary improvements.

**Any changes to documents or the process will be communicated to the field and all parties must incorporate the use of revised documents as determined by the DEL.**

## **OBSERVATION PROCESS**

### **Before Observation**

1. Selection
  - a. All trainings – in-person, online, or self-paced/correspondence – are subject to observation as determined by random selection.

Acceptance of Assignments – Observers may accept an assignment based on their availability within five business days of request sent by DEL.

## 2. Trainer Communication

Upon assignment, trainers will receive clear communication regarding the observation process:

- a. Welcome letter from DEL describing the observation process
- b. Welcome letter from the observer with reflective questions
- c. Quality Assurance Program Guide describing the process and what to expect
  - i. Observation Rubric Summary prior to the observation so they know what is being reviewed
  - ii. Trainer-Observer Agreement
  - iii. Training Design Template

## 3. Timeline

- a. Trainers will be contacted a minimum of 10 business days prior to the observation to be informed they have been selected by random selection.
- b. Observer will contact the trainer at least one week prior to the scheduled observation to discuss learning objectives, logistics, and other relevant details.

## **During/Completing Observation**

### 4. Observation:

- a. The training observation components are based on trainer competencies and include:
  - i. Professionalism
  - ii. Facilitation – Adult Learning Practices
  - iii. Instructional Design
  - iv. Assessment
- b. Observation durations will be assigned by DEL Contract Manager or their designee on a training-by-training basis and typically will occur for approximately 2 hours.
- c. Trainings will be observed using the Trainer Observation Rubric for the setting of the training – in-person, online, or self-paced/correspondence. Observers write in examples of the quality indicators they observe, making note of exemplary, adequate, and/or minimal meeting of each section of the Rubric. If a trainer or training significantly fails to meet the quality indicators, DEL may initiate the Professional Development Plan process to work with the trainer on making the necessary improvements.

- d. If the Trainer Observation Rubric cannot be completed through observation, an interview must be conducted with the trainer to complete the Rubric. The rubric is a record of the actions the observer has been able to gather through observation or an interview with the trainer; the rubric references teaching methods, planning, handouts, and visuals used for the training.

### **After the observation**

5. Observer/Trainer Relationship:
  - a. The observer will be available to provide individualized support for trainers. This may occur by phone, email, or in-person as mutually agreed upon by the trainer and training observer.
  - b. Trainers will receive written feedback from the observer on the Trainer Feedback Observation Summary Report.
  - c. The On-going Professional Development Plan is always sent with the written feedback. Trainers are invited to participate in a Professional Development Plan based on the feedback from the observer. This can take place with the observer or independently.
  - d. All documentation by the observer will be shared with DEL.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Trainers are all invited to participate in the Professional Development Plan (PDP). Active participation is valuable in assuring high quality training around our state. This is an opportunity to be reflective with your observer and use the feedback to set goals for yourself for continuous growth and development. This process is a unique opportunity for individualized support and collaboration. Within the observer and trainer relationship, the PDP allows for goal-setting, open conversation, and is an additional resource for the trainer.

The On-going Professional Development Plan form can be used to document this process. The plan allows you to work through determining SMART – Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-specific – goals. You can talk about the PDP with your observer or complete it on your own.

There may also be circumstances where DEL implements a professional development plan. If a trainer observer finds a training is not meeting our quality standards for training, the trainer observer may work with the trainer on a professional development plan.

During this process, the training or trainer may not be available to the public for continuing education (STARS) hours and be temporarily removed from MERIT. This will give the trainer the opportunity to

resubmit the training for re-evaluation after making adjustments and improvements based on feedback from the trainer observer and/or from DEL.

Steps to be taken when a training does not meet quality standards:

**Step 1:** The observer will contact DEL to discuss their concerns with the trainer or training.

**Step 2:** The concerns will be communicated to the trainer.

- Based on the trainer's communication preference, DEL and the trainer observer will communicate the concerns either in person, by phone, or by email.
- The trainer will have the opportunity to discuss in detail the areas of the training that are in need of improvement.
- The concerns will be shared in writing using the Training Concern Letter.

**Step 3:** The trainer will complete an On-going PDP Form with the observer, document the needs for improvements, and the strategies to meet those needs.

**Step 4:** The trainer will be given the opportunity to make changes to the training based on the observer feedback. The trainer will then demonstrate the trainer competencies and resubmit for evaluation.

- If upon the second evaluation the training still does not meet DEL's quality standards the training will no longer be eligible for STARS hours.

**Step 5:** (as needed) DEL may evaluate at least one additional training by the trainer in question. If a second training does not meet DEL's quality standards then current trainer sanctions may be applied.

## TRAINING REVIEW QUALITY ASSURANCE

### CONTINUING EDUCATION PROPOSALS

Each year, state-approved trainers are asked to complete 15 hours of continuing education related to adult learning, early care and education, or other training related to the trainer's areas of specialty. STARS hours will fulfill the annual 15 hours of continuing education requirement for trainers. However, statewide and national conferences also count towards these continuing education hours.

DEL will offer professional development opportunities focused on teaching adult learnings for trainers at statewide conferences and through Trainer Basics courses. Trainers can also take classes focused on their area of specialty of certification. The DEL Trainer Online Modules will count for the first year of continuing education requirements.

For trainings that are not already worth STARS hours, a Continuing Education Proposal application is submitted to request that the credit be considered as STARS hours. This application is used for out-of-state trainings, from a non-state approved trainer or for a college class that is not within a college's Early Childhood Education Department. Supporting documentation will need to be verified and sent in to [training@del.wa.gov](mailto:training@del.wa.gov). When the hours are approved, it will be applied to your MERIT account. If you are submitting college coursework to meet your STARS requirement, please submit an education application.

### **CONFERENCE/SPECIAL EVENT**

A Conference/Special Event application is designed to support organizations, practitioners, or individuals to give STARS hours for a pre-approved training. Conference/Special Event applications can be used up to four times per year by individuals or organizations that may or may not be state-approved trainers. This application is for those that are not providing frequent training. If you plan on providing training more than four times a year, please complete a State-Approved Trainer application.

Conference/Special Event applications must be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the event to ensure that the event can be reviewed for quality and the relation to Washington's Core Competencies.

### **MERIT TRAINING REVIEW**

To ensure that the State-Approved Trainers are entering trainings in MERIT correctly and offering trainings that follow Washington's Core Competencies, the Professional Development team at DEL will review training in MERIT. DEL will monitor the trainings that are entered into MERIT to assess the quality being offered. The Professional Development team at DEL will use the MERIT Trainer Check-In Rubric to ensure:

- All fields in MERIT trainings are entered correctly
- Quality learning objectives are aligned with core competencies
- Training description matches the agenda provided
- Assessment of learning is included in objectives and/or agenda
- Agenda reflects best practice for adult learners

Additional information may be requested, such as completed assessments, copies of handouts, and trainer evaluations. Feedback will be given to the trainer when necessary to support trainer or training quality.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM EVALUATION**

DEL seeks to ensure that the training program provided in Washington is one of quality and has a variety of classes being offered. DEL will evaluate the quality assurance program annually to learn how it is meeting the needs of professionals and trainers in Washington. Evaluation will identify strengths to lift up and gaps that need to be addressed. Data will provide information about trainer capacity and training delivery.

### **TRAINER APPROVAL EVALUATION**

DEL will review the trainer approval process annually. Throughout the year DEL will track the number of applicants and information about their location, language, and diversity to ensure we are serving the needs of professionals in the entire state. The evaluation will also review trainer levels and competencies to ensure content is varied in topics and levels.

DEL will also identify ways to improve the trainer approval process through anecdotal testimony and monitoring process flow and application completion rates.

### **TRAINER FEEDBACK EVALUATION – DATA COLLECTION**

On a monthly basis, the following will be collected for analysis:

- 1) Trainers Observed
  - a) Name
  - b) Length of time as a trainer
  - c) Highest level of education
- 2) Training Observed
  - a) Title
  - b) Core Competency
  - c) Delivery method
  - d) Length
- 3) Observation

- a) Observer
- b) Accumulation of scores
- c) Observation form and results

On a quarterly basis, evaluation summaries will be collected from observers to:

- Determine efficacy
- Identify the strengths in trainers
- Identify any needs or gaps to be addressed
- Identify any patterns in our state
- Evaluate the process

### **TRAINING REVIEW EVALUATION**

Training reviews will be assessed to determine how well state-approved trainers are following the guidelines set by DEL. If there should be significant gaps trainers continually miss, complete incorrectly, or do not demonstrate, DEL will provide training to support trainers and updates if needed to simplify the use of MERIT

Training review evaluations will help the Department of Early Learning to know strengths as well as gaps to be addressed. These evaluations will provide information about:

- Competencies being taught
- Locations of trainings being held
- Targeted audience
- Number of training hours being offered
- Information about active and inactive trainers
- Insights to professional needs in the field
- Insights to changes or enhancements to MERIT

This Quality Assurance Program Guide outlines how the Professional Development Team promotes, develops, and ensures high quality professional development opportunities for professionals serving children, youth, and families. Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of trainers and training are critical components to a successful quality assurance program.