

Early Achievers Policy Updates March 2017

Change to ERS Item Related to Books and Pictures

Beginning March 16, 2017, Early Achievers will exclude the specific item that addresses books in the ERS tool. Data collectors will mark the item as not applicable during the onsite evaluation. This change will not impact overall scores for participants.

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) believes that the value of having access to a wide variety of reading materials that reflect the experiences and cultures of children and their families outweighs any benefits that may stem from the use of these indicators in the rating process.

“We believe that it is the role of parents, in partnership with their early learning providers, to decide which books in the early learning environment best meets the needs of their children,” said DEL Director, Ross Hunter.

DEL recognizes that access to books plays a crucial role in early learning and development. To help families and early learning professionals provide a rich assortment of books, DEL is partnering with libraries across the state. Our goal is to provide expert tips on selecting books for an early learning environment as well as additional resources and events for children, families and early learning providers. Together, we are working to ensure that every child in Washington has the opportunity to develop a love of language and reading.

The Early Achievers Review Subcommittee is Now Recruiting

The Early Achievers Review Subcommittee (EARS) is currently accepting applications from parents and providers. For more information, please visit del.wa.gov/earlyachievers

Level 2 Applications and Initial Licenses: Policy Update

Early Achievers Participants who are currently on an initial license can now have their Level 2 applications approved. This change will allow new providers to continue accepting subsidy while they work with their licensor toward a non-expiring license. Providers must have a non-expiring license in good standing to apply for an onsite evaluation.

Simplified Process to Achieve Level 3 Rating

All participating providers who request their onsite evaluation after April 1, 2017 and have their data collection begin on or after July 16, 2017 can achieve a Level 3 rating by meeting the minimum threshold scores in the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). A change in the distribution of Quality Standard points will allow providers to earn the 30 points necessary to achieve Level 3 by reaching threshold in the ERS and CLASS without opting in to any other Quality Standards. Participants that want to work toward a higher point level will continue to have the opportunity to opt-in to the Early Achievers Quality Standards.

These changes will simplify the rating process and ensure that the Early Achievers Quality Standards are linked to positive child outcomes. Based on the results of the University of Washington's validation study, the Department of Early Learning (DEL) is eliminating three standards, reducing the points for two standards and moving these points to the ERS. This means providers can focus on the two foundations of quality: adult-child interactions measured by CLASS, and their learning environment measured by the ERS. Beginning July 16th, the Quality Standard points will be redistributed as follows:

Quality Standards	Current Points	Beginning July 16, 2017	Rationale
<u>Child Outcomes:</u> Daily individual child experience of quality – language–LENA	1	No longer measured	We were not able to make a strong case for positive child outcomes.
<u>Child Outcomes:</u> Daily individual child experience of quality - engagement	1	No longer measured	We were not able to finalize an engagement measure that linked to positive child outcomes.
<u>Curriculum & Staff Supports:</u> Show Evidence of Program Curriculum Philosophy	1	No longer measured	This standard is in the proposed WAC. We are eliminating the duplication.
<u>Curriculum & Staff Supports:</u> Demonstrate alignment with WA Early Learning Guidelines	2	Reduced to 1 point	We have shortened the Curricular Alignment Tool and have simplified ways to demonstrate this evidence so we are adjusting the value.
<u>Curriculum & Staff Supports:</u> Lead Teaching Staff or FCC Owner trained in Program Curriculum Philosophy	2	Reduced to 1 point	We are adjusting the points to reflect the impact on the overall rating outcome.
Environment Rating Scale (ERS)	15	Increased to 20 points	The Early Achievers validation study showed connections with the ERS and positive outcomes for children.

Early Achievers supports a continuous quality improvement journey for providers. Once rated, participants will work with their coach to develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Participants can choose to incorporate new practices by adding these standards to their QIP, even if their rating only included the ERS and CLASS components.

With these changes there will be a new version of the Interactive Rating Readiness Tool (IRRT) available for providers to use. For cohorts 5 and 6 the previous versions of the IRRT will also be accepted. This means that providers having data collection between July 16, and November 15, 2017 can use either version.

Shortened Alignment Tools Now Available

DEL and the data collection team at the University of Washington are excited to announce an updated WaKIDS Alignment Tool and Curricular Alignment Tool (CAT). The new versions are streamlined to simplify the alignment process and are available on the DEL website at del.wa.gov/EarlyAchieversProviderResources.

Data collectors will start accepting the new tools on March 16, 2017. Data collectors will continue to accept the older versions of the alignment tools through July 1, 2017.

Participants who have completed the older version of the WaKIDS or CAT tool who are preparing for their renewal rating will not need to complete new alignment tools.

Early Achievers Web Update

DEL is excited to unveil a refreshed look to the Early Achievers web pages at: www.del.wa.gov/earlyachievers. The pages have a new look and provide access to:

- additional information and resources for families
- improved navigation and easier access for providers
- a new page of resources for early learning professionals and those who support them

The new web pages also feature a page with an expanded selection of translated materials for providers and you can translate all DEL web pages into multiple languages using the *Google translate* button at the top of each page.

Please contact the QRIS inbox at QRIS@del.wa.gov with questions, or call toll-free 1-866-922-7629.