



Early Achievers Summer Update

We listened to your feedback and have worked with the legislature to implement some exciting improvements to Early Achievers starting in July of 2019.

These improvements include:

- Adding a Level 3+ rating
- Delivering your Quality Improvement (QI) Award sooner
- Increased time to complete remedial activities
- Resetting the rating cycle upon re-rate
- Retiring the Level 2 trainings
- Updating professional development points prior to rating
- Using Needs Based Grants to make improvements to your environment
- Providing 24 months for sites offering ECEAP services to reach Level 4
- Increasing tiered reimbursement rates

Details on how each of these updates will support your program are below.

Adding a Rating Level Between 3 and 4

Providers who earn an Early Achievers rating between 50-69 points and have met the threshold in ERS and CLASS will now receive a 3+ rating. Any rated provider who has already achieved 50 points and has met the ERS and CLASS threshold will automatically earn a 3+ rating.

Get Your QI Award Sooner!

As of July 1, 2019, Quality Improvement (QI) awards will be distributed approximately 60 days after a rating release/anniversary date. This means that your facility, if eligible, will get the QI award a month earlier than it would have previously received it!

More Time for Remedial Activities

Early Achievers participants who do not reach their Early Start Act rating milestone now have twelve months to complete remedial activities and submit their request for re-rating. This means that sites with a December 31, 2019 rating milestone now have until December 31, 2020 to complete remedial activities and submit their request for on-site evaluation.

Re-rate Resets the Rating Cycle

As of July 1, 2019, any provider that submits their request for a re-rate will have their rating cycle reset at the time of their request.

For example, if your early learning program rated at a Level 2 in 2015 and you requested a re-rate in 2016, your new rating cycle would be in 2019 rather than in 2018 when your initial rating cycle began.



Retiring the Level 2 Trainings and an Early Look at the ERS-3 Tools

Next summer, Early Achievers will launch a new Level 2 activity—a baseline assessment using the ERS-3 tools. To support this change we are offering a year of transition and offering sites an early look at the ERS-3 through a baseline assessment to help you prepare for your initial rating. Between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020 new participants and those working on Level 2 will have two options:

Option 1: Show me the Data!

Participants that select this option will indicate they would like a baseline assessment from UW Cultivate Learning when they submit their Application for Level 2. The baseline assessment is an on-site review that offers programs valuable information and reliable data about their strengths and opportunities to help identify quality improvement goals. Existing participants and newly enrolled providers no longer need to complete the Level 2 trainings and can submit their Application for Level 2 after July 1, 2019 with anywhere from zero to six trainings complete. They must check the box for the optional baseline assessment on the updated Application for Level 2.

Option 2: Thanks, but no thanks. We will skip the baseline and stick with our coach.

Participants that select this option will work with their coach to prepare for their initial on-site evaluation. However, these sites no longer need to complete the Level 2 trainings, and can submit their Application for Level 2 after July 1, 2019 with anywhere from zero to six trainings complete.

Make the Most of Your Professional Development Points

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is working to ensure that your Early Achievers professional development points reflect the most current staff information. If you have requested an on-site evaluation, please encourage all staff to have their degrees and certificates verified in MERIT by the first day of the month that data collection begins in your scheduled cohort.

For example, if your early learning program is in cohort 6, the data collection window is September 16 – November 15 and your updates would need to be in MERIT by September 1 to be included in your program's professional development calculation.

Needs-Based Grants

Coming in September 2019, providers will see more flexibility in the kinds of items Needs-Based Grant funds can be spent on, and some Level 3 providers may also be eligible for Needs-Based Grant funds. At that time applications must be submitted through the [Provider Portal](#) as paper applications will no longer be accepted, except for translated Spanish and Somali applications.

ECEAP Rating Timeline

Early learning programs serving ECEAP now have 24 months to rate at a Level 4 in Early Achievers. This means that sites with a December 31, 2019 milestone now have until December 31, 2021 to submit their request for an on-site evaluation.

Tiered Reimbursement Increase

Effective July 1, 2019, DCYF will increase the tiered reimbursement amounts for Licensed Family Homes and Licensed Centers. The new tiered reimbursement rates are:

	Tiered Reimbursement for Licensed Family Homes	Tiered Reimbursement for Licensed Centers
Early Achievers Level 2	2%	2%
Early Achievers Level 3	12%	8%
Early Achievers Level 4	17%	15%
Early Achievers Level 5	20%	20%

Rating Milestone Update for Existing Subsidy Providers

Of the 2,088 existing subsidy providers participating in Early Achievers, 92% have already been rated or requested a rating! If you are an existing subsidy provider and have not yet submitted your request for on-site evaluation, now is the time! Existing subsidy providers must request to rate or rate at a Level 3 or higher by December 31, 2019. DCYF defines existing subsidy providers as those who received a subsidy payment between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

