Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

ECEAP Staff Qualifications in MERIT
For ECEAP Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Family Support Staff

Overview

All Staff qualifications must be recorded in DCYF's electronic workforce registry, MERIT. If your records are already in the electronic workforce registry, MERIT, and DCYF has determined you have fully met qualifications, please read the FAQ section below.

How to record your ECEAP Staff Qualifications in MERIT

1. Create a MERIT Account and Obtain a STARS ID

- If you are new to MERIT, register here

2. Gather Your Information

- Employment info: Name of ECEAP sites you've worked for, ECEAP job start and end dates.
- College info: Names of colleges attended, your major and minor, and years degrees received.
- Certificates: title, issuer and date for any certificates, credentials or workshop hours that count either toward your Professional Development Achievement Award or your ECEAP staff qualifications.

3. Go to Your MERIT Account

- Go to MERIT

NEED HELP?
- Visit the MERIT information page for support
- Contact MERIT for additional help: merit@dcyf.wa.gov

4. Complete an ECEAP Staff Qualifications Application in MERIT

- Click the My Education tab.
  - If you don't have this tab, return to Step 1 and obtain a STARS ID.
- Under "What would you like to do?" select "Enter my education and qualify for an award."
- For "I am an ECEAP lead teacher, ECEAP assistant teacher and/or ECEAP family support staff" select **YES** (if true).
- Click the blue GO button.
- You are now on Step 1 – My Role. Follow all directions on this page, then click Next.
- Proceed through Steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 following the directions on each page from top to bottom.
- You can track the status of your application on the MERIT My Education page.

5. Email Your Documentation

- After you click "Submit" on Step 5, you will receive an email with detailed instructions for submitting documentation.
- Please email the copies of your official transcript(s) and certificates to education.verification@centralia.edu
- This is required for verifying your ECEAP qualifications.

Lead Teacher Qualifications

Lead Teacher Role

The lead teacher is directly responsible for the overall care and planning for the classroom and individual children, including the learning environment and other staff and volunteers. The lead teacher must be present during ECEAP hours. The lead teacher must demonstrate competency to:

- Observe and assess children's development
- Analyze and plan classroom curriculum based on individual children's developmental needs.
- Design the learning environment to:
  - o Reflect the culture of children, families, and community
  - o Meet individual and group needs
- Implement and supervise developmentally appropriate learning activities
- Build positive relationships with children, families and staff
- Plan guidance strategies for children
- Engage families as partners in their child's education

ECEAP Lead Teachers Must Have One of the Following

- An associate or higher degree in ECE; or
- DCYF Equivalent (click here for more information).

Assistant Teacher Qualifications

Assistant Teacher Role

An assistant teacher demonstrates competency to implement program activities under the direction of a lead teacher. An assistant teacher must be present during all ECEAP class hours, whenever there are more than 10 children present or when needed to ensure a safe learning environment.

ECEAP Assistant Teachers Must Have One of the Following

- Washington State ECE Initial Certificate or higher; or
- DCYF Equivalent (click here for more information).

Family Support Staff Qualifications

Direct support staff, leads and managers must meet the following qualifications.

Family Support Staff Role

An ECEAP family support staff provides comprehensive and integrated family support services to enrolled families. Contractors must ensure that family support staff maintain flexible hours to provide services when parents are available.

A family support staff demonstrates competency to:

- Build relationships with families that are positive, strengths-based and goal-directed
- Recognize influences of diversity and culture while accepting all types of family groupings
- Understand family and relationship development cycles and work with families as systems
- Identify and assess family strengths and goals and coach families toward meeting goals
- Engage families in program activities

- Link families to community resources and cultivate community partnerships
- Increase the family's knowledge of parenting, school participation and leadership

ECEAP Family Support Staff Must Have <u>One</u> of the Following:

- An associate or higher degree in adult education, human development, human services, family support, social work, ECE, child development, psychology or related field.
- An associate or higher degree with the equivalent of 30 college quarter credits in related fields:
  - o Related fields include adult education, human development, human services, family support, social work, ECE, child development, psychology or related field directly related to your job responsibilities.
  - o Credits may be included in the degree or in addition to the degree.
  - o Credits are counted according to the ECEAP Family Support credit evaluation listed below.
- A current Child Development Associate (CDA) Home Visitor credential awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition.
- A Washington State ECE Short Certificate of Specialization in Home Visiting.
- A DCYF-approved credential from one of the following comprehensive and competency-based Family/Social Service training program that increases knowledge and skills in providing direct services to families:
  - o A Family Support Core Certificate from Edmonds Community College.
  - o A Family Support Studies Certificate from Edmonds Community College.
  - o A National Family Service Credential from the University of Connecticut.
  - o A Human Services Case Management and Administration Certificate from Washington State University with a case management focus.
  - o A credential from a comprehensive and competency-based Family/Social Service program not mentioned above (subject to DCYF approval).

Degrees

Associate degree means any "two-year" degree from an accredited institution of higher education of 90 quarter credits or more, including degrees designated as AA, AAS, AAS-T, ATA or AD.

Bachelor's degree means any "four-year" degree from an accredited institution of higher education, including degrees designated as BA, BS, BSc, B.Ed., BSW, etc.

Master's degree means any advanced degree designated as MA, MS, M.Ed., MSW, etc.

When there is not an ECE major on the transcript or diploma, the verification team will review course descriptions to determine credits that are aligned with the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals.

- Click here for more information on the Core Competencies.
- Use this guide for Evaluating Early Childhood Coursework
- Count only credits that are:
  - o 100 level or above
  - o From an accredited institution of higher education
  - o Round partial credits up to the nearest whole credit

Please note that college credits are reflected as quarterly college credits. Comparable semester credits will equate to 1 semester credit = 1.5 quarter credits.

Related Degrees

When staff submits education and their degree is not a DCYF recognized ECE degree, it may be recognized by DCYF as a **related degree** for the purpose of meetings qualification requirements.

In order for an applicant to meet the ECE related degree requirement, one of the following must be met:
1. Elementary Education with **one** of the following endorsements:
    1. Early Childhood Education
    2. Early Childhood Special Education
    3. P-3
    4. P-3 Special Education
2. Human Development, Child Development, Child and Family Studies and Children's Studies must include the following to be considered related:
    - One course covering curriculum **and**
    - One class covering guidance/behavior; **or** a practicum class in ECE
3. An Associate, Bachelor's or Advanced Degree from an accredited institution with one of the following Montessori credentials:
    - MACTE accredited Teacher Credential in Infant/Toddler (I/T)
    - MACTE accredited Teacher Credential in ECE
    - Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) diploma in Assistants to Infancy (A to I) – covers birth – 3 years of age
    - Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) diploma in Primary – covers 3 – 6 years of age.

In addition to these foundational degrees, a person may have completed a degree that includes college coursework that teaches to and assesses for the Core Competency Areas and have a related degree if they:
4. Hold an Associate's, Bachelor's or Advanced Degree from an **accredited** institution recognized by the US Department of Education AND:
    1. Have a **minimum** of 30 college credits in ECE or related coursework.
    2. Demonstrate completed course work and *a minimum of two college credits* in **each** of the following Core Competency Areas pertaining to children birth to 8:
        1. Child Growth and Development
        2. Curriculum and Learning Environment
        3. Ongoing Measure of Child Progress [Observation, assessment, and documentation]
        4. Families and Community Partnerships
        5. Health, Safety, and Nutrition
        6. Interactions
        7. Program Planning and Development
        8. Professional Development and Leadership

DCYF Equivalents for ECEAP Qualifications

There are options, known as equivalents, for meeting the standards for staff qualifications. Equivalent options for ECEAP standards include related degrees, aligned credits and alternative credentials. Click here to learn more.

Lead and Assistant Teacher Aligned Credits

When **ECEAP lead teacher or assistant teachers** submits education, it may be recognized by DCYF as **aligned credits** for the purpose of meetings qualification requirements. College coursework that teaches to and assesses for one or more of the Core Competency Areas will be accepted as work completed in the field of ECE.

For Lead Teachers, click here to learn more (see section 4).

For Assistant Teachers, 12 college credits with:
- 5 credits in Curriculum and Learning, Family/Community, or Interactions
- 2 credits in Health, Safety and Nutrition
- 5 credits in any ECE Competency area

Family Support Staff Credits

When **ECEAP Family Support Staff** submits education and it is necessary to count credits in order to determine qualifications, use the course table below to determine which credits will be counted. When transcripts are evaluated, the evaluators will review course descriptions to determine credits for non-ECE courses.

Portion of Credit to Count	Courses
100%	**ECE or ECED** prefixes or equivalents
100%	**EDUC& 115 Child Development**
100%	**EDUC& 150 Child, Family Community Relationships**
100%	**Birth to age 8** - Non-ECE courses described in a college catalog as specifically and only about children within the birth to age 8 range (i.e. 0-5, 3-5, 3-8)
100%	**ECE/School Age Credit** – Coursework aligned with Washington's Early Care and Education Core Competencies that overlaps birth to age 8 and elementary education. This does not include coursework that covers School Age only.
100%	**Practicums** - Education practicums/student teaching in preschool, kindergarten, first, second or third grade, up to a maximum of six credits allowed
100%	**Cultural diversity** - Non-ECE cultural diversity courses such as Working with Culturally Diverse Families, Multicultural Education, Social Work with Diverse Populations.
100%	**Child Abuse and Neglect**
100%	**Montessori -** MACTE-accredited or AMI coursework for Preschool and Elementary I credentials. If college credit is not provided for this coursework, calculate college credit at the rate of 10 class/seminar hours or 30 practicum hours per college quarter credit
100%	**Adult Education**
100%	**Child Development**
100%	**Communication With Families**
100%	**Counseling**
100%	**Family Support**
100%	**Family Systems/Marriage And Family Life/Sociology Of The Family,** other related non-ECE courses informing work with families

100%	**Human Development/Lifespan Development/Developmental Psychology**
100%	**Human Services or equivalent**
100%	**Mental Health**
100%	**Psychology**
100%	**Social Work**
100%	**Interpersonal Communication/Small Group Communication/Intercultural Communication/Communication and Conflict**, other non-ECE courses specific to communication with families
50%	Cooperative preschool parent education, up to a maximum of six credits allowed
50%	Languages applicable to families in WA: ASL, Spanish, Russian (not Latin, etc.), up to a maximum of six credits allowed
50%	**Developmental Domains -** Courses about a specific developmental domain, covering more than ages 0-8 such as Social and Cognitive Development, Language Development
20%	**Health -** Non-ECE health courses related to the ECE classroom such as Community Health
2 credits	**Nutrition**
2 credits	**Ethics** course with Philosophy prefix (not business or medical ethics)

Frequently Asked Questions

What education qualifies me for a Professional Development Achievement Award?

Please see:
- Education Awards
  https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/About_Education_Awards.pdf
- Apply for a Statewide Vendor Number
  https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/licensed-provider/vendor-number
- Professional Development Policy
  https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/PDPolicyManual.pdf

Do you accept endorsements on teaching certificates from other states?
Yes, we accept equivalent endorsements.

What if I've already entered my education into MERIT?
- Please follow the steps above to complete the new Staff Qualifications parts of MERIT.
- This will go quickly because your education will display as previously entered.

What if I am both an ECEAP Teacher and Family Support Staff?
You must enter employment on separate lines for each of these roles and submit a separate staff qualifications application for each position that is required. Click here for instructions.

What if MERIT says I'm already "fully qualified" for my ECEAP role?
- If DCYF staff previously reviewed your staff qualifications and determined you are fully qualified, you will see "fully qualified" next to the role on Step 1 of your MERIT Staff Qualifications application.
- You will still want to add any education not yet in MERIT, so you receive your full Professional Development Achievement Award.
- You may also want to add more ECEAP or child care job titles and employment.
- To do this, open the My Education tab and follow instructions.

Which documents should I gather?

- Gather all documentation that demonstrates you are qualified for your ECEAP position, based on the option you selected on the Staff Qualifications application. For example, if you checked "An associate or higher degree in ECE," you will gather transcripts that show your final degree award.
- Gather any additional documentation that backs up your Professional Development Achievement Award described on Step 3 of your application, such as diplomas, certificates and credentials.
- Do not include anything extra. For example, do not gather workshop certificates.
- Do not resubmit documentation that was previously verified through MERIT. This will be displayed in your MERIT record.

What if I have college credit or degrees earned outside of the US?

For more information, see Completing the Education Application for International Education

How do I prepare my documentation?

- Have all official college or university transcript(s) mailed to you at your home.
- Copy the front and back sides of the official transcript(s) and all other documents.
- Write your STARS ID on the top of the copied official transcript(s) and certificates or diplomas and also on the outside of the envelope (next to your name).

How do I send my documentation?

- Email copies of your official transcript(s) and certificates to education.verification@centralia.edu.

How do I check the status of my MERIT ECEAP Staff Qualification application?

In MERIT, click on the My Education tab and look at the column titled ECEAP Staff Qualification Status. Here is what each status means:

- **Fully Qualified**: Your application has been reviewed. You are fully qualified for this ECEAP role.
- **PDP Completed**: Your employer end dated your PDP. The next step is to complete a new application and click Submit. Send in new education showing completion of PDP, to be reviewed.
- **On PDP**: You're on a Professional Development Plan (PDP) for this ECEAP role, with a deadline to attain the required qualifications.
- **PDP Dates Needed**: Your employer needs to enter in the start and proposed end date of your PDP. Contact your employer to create your PDP and enter dates into MERIT.
- **Need to Submit**: This ECEAP role requires a staff qualification review through MERIT. The next step is to complete the application and click Submit.
- **Pending**: We've received your application and are processing it. Double-check that you sent in the correct documentation.
- **Blank**: This job does not require ECEAP Staff Qualifications review.

For more frequently asked questions, visit here.