



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

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August 22, 2019

**TO:** The Honorable Jay Inslee  
Governor of Washington

**FROM:** Ross Hunter, Secretary

**SUBJECT:** Education Requirements and Equivalencies for Early Learning Professionals

On August 1, 2019, the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) implemented new licensing regulations for licensed child care providers. Research shows that a well-trained and diverse early learning workforce improves outcomes for children. The new Washington Administrative Code 110-300-0100 establishes education requirements for early learning providers that includes an “equivalency” option to recognize the experience of existing educators, and to sustain a diverse early childhood workforce. The rule allows providers until August 1, 2024 to come into compliance, meaning providers will have ample time to complete the education requirement.

As part of the process for establishing the recognized equivalents, DCYF received recommendations from an external Equivalencies Workgroup to develop a list of alternative credentials and for how early learning providers can demonstrate their competency. The workgroup concluded in the spring of 2019.

After reviewing the workgroup’s recommendations, DCYF determined it would pursue a model that allows providers to fulfill the licensing requirements for education through the ECE Short Certificate<sup>1</sup> with the following options:

- **Demonstration of Competency:** DCYF will design a process for existing licensed providers to demonstrate competency in licensing standards.
  - Experience: DCYF administered option to recognize existing providers who need an ECE Initial Certificate or ECE Short Certificate and have seven (7) years of experience by August 2024, completed training requirements, and good licensing standing (*see attached process document*).
  
- **Alternate Credential:** This option will be available to all current and future providers.

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the Washington State ECE Stackable Certificates can be found here:  
[https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/Stackable\\_Certificates.pdf](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/Stackable_Certificates.pdf)

- DCYF will implement the recommended chart of equivalents, located on page 37 of the [Foundational Quality Standards Guide](#).
- In addition to these existing equivalents, DCYF is partnering with the Imagine Institute, Child Care Aware of Washington and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges to develop and offer a community-based training series. More information on this option will be available as it is developed, and DCYF will need to pursue funding before this is made available. Funding would support:
  - Delivery of a community based training series.
  - Partnership with the community college system to establish a consistent process for prior learning assessment.
  - Establish a hand-off for providers choosing to enroll in community college after completing the training series.

This equivalency process will honor the work that many providers have already completed, and meet the diverse needs of the early learning workforce. Due to feasibility, cost and ensuring a provider base that represents the knowledge and skills necessary to reach child outcomes, DCYF decided to *not* implement the following workgroup recommendations:

- Expanding on state-approved training to meet staff qualifications.
- Designing a peer-review process or advisory board.
- An application process that leads to peer-review or other observation and assessment.



Ross Hunter  
Secretary

Attachments (2)

1. Experience-Based Competency Demonstration Process
2. Equivalencies Workgroup Report

## Experience-Based Competency Demonstration

The experience-based competency demonstration option is available to early learning providers for all roles which have education requirements listed as an ECE Initial Certificate or ECE Short Certificate<sup>1</sup> under [WAC 110-300-0100](#)<sup>2</sup>. This allows an early learning provider who has experience in licensed care to meet these requirements when criteria below are met.

### **Providers are eligible for an experience-based competency demonstration if the provider has:**

1. Seven (7) years in a licensed facility (by August 1, 2024<sup>3</sup>), as listed in MERIT
  - a. The level of approval will be measured by the lowest-held position of the applicant over the 7-year period.
  - b. DCYF will review applications quarterly.
2. Completed all training requirements each year:
  - a. 10 in-service (STARS) hours each year. This includes years of prior experience through current date in-service requirements as outlined in WAC [0105](#), [0106](#), [0107](#).
  - b. Maintained compliance with all renewable health and safety training (Safe Sleep, CPR, Bloodborne Pathogens, First Aid, Food Handlers).
3. Employed currently at a facility that is in good licensing standing and no current enforcement action<sup>4</sup>.

### **Completing the Application**

DCYF will create an online form in MERIT where providers will indicate their desired option for meeting the education requirements.

The online form will allow providers to indicate their chosen pathway by selecting one of the following options:

1. I meet the eligibility requirements for experience-based competency demonstration, and want to meet education requirement with my experience.
2. I am going to college to complete my required education within 5 years.
3. I am going to do the community based training series.
4. I believe the education I have will qualify me, and I will get my education verified.

When a provider chooses an experience-based competency demonstration, DCYF will begin reviewing their history for all eligibility criteria, and results of the DCYF review will be released quarterly.

More information will be posted here as it is available: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-profdev/early-learning-provider>

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the Washington State ECE Stackable Certificates can be found here: [https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/Stackable\\_Certificates.pdf](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/Stackable_Certificates.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> DCYF will recognize an approved experience-based competency demonstration to meet the requirement for “equivalency” as defined by WAC [110-300-0005](#) for roles requiring an ECE Initial Certificate or ECE Short certificate.

<sup>3</sup> Family home licensees and center lead teachers have an additional 2 years to meet the next requirement of a short certificate. These roles will have an additional two years (2026) to complete the short certificate or equivalent.

<sup>4</sup> Enforcement Action as defined in WAC [110-300-005](#).



# EQUIVALENCY WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT



Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

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The recommendations contained in this report were made by a workgroup of external stakeholders convened by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). These recommendations do not constitute official agency policy nor is this document intended as an official report by DCYF to the Legislature.

## Executive Summary

### Background

Between 2015 and 2018, representatives of child care centers, family home child cares, Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance programs, families, and child care licensors negotiated aligned licensing standards that are now codified as Chapter 110-300 Washington Administrative Code (WAC). During the Negotiated Rulemaking (NRM) phase of this Standards Alignment process, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF, formerly Department of Early Learning) established staff qualifications for licensed early learning providers. Licensed providers must meet these qualifications via the designated state stackable certificate or a DCYF-approved “equivalent.”

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*“Equivalency” as defined by WAC 110-300-0005:*

*When referring to staff qualifications means an individual is allowed to meet the requirements of this chapter through a department recognized alternative credential, or demonstration of competency, that indicates similar knowledge as the named credential.*

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DCYF took a community-driven approach to identify the approved equivalencies through the formation of an Equivalencies Workgroup (workgroup) whose membership included NRM participants and other community and agency representatives. The workgroup developed a list of alternative credentials and made recommendations regarding the means by which providers will be able to demonstrate their competency to indicate similar knowledge as the named credential.<sup>1</sup>

### Workgroup Recommendations

The workgroup determined what would be included in the list of department recognized alternative credentials, producing the Chart of Equivalent. The workgroup recommends that the agency adopt the Chart of Equivalent for its alternative credential determinations. This chart (see page 8) lists the related degrees and equivalent credentials that are accepted for each role and requirement. This chart should be updated as more programs are identified as equivalent credentials.

The workgroup further recommends that DCYF adopt a process for demonstrating competency that indicates similar knowledge as the named credential, and named this process “proficiency review.” A proficiency review will provide the opportunity for a candidate to meet credential requirements by demonstrating their competence to a certified evaluator. This process should include the following:

- Qualified community reviewers to evaluate a professional’s demonstrated knowledge and skills and recommend DCYF recognition for equivalent preparation.
- Provider guidance and technical assistance to support peer learning and assistance through the proficiency review application.
- Professional development plans to help educators map their interests and goals.
- Leverage systems and partnerships to support existing relationships which will contribute toward reliable observations between the applicant and the observer.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 17 for a complete list of Equivalency Workgroup members.

- Data collection and program evaluation to measure the effectiveness of various credentialing options in evaluating staff qualifications.

## Moving Forward

DCYF will use the recommendations from the Equivalency Workgroup to develop the proficiency review process and will begin outreach to providers about the accepted alternative credentials (Chart of Equivalents). Timing of implementation and the scale of this work which the agency will be able to accomplish are dependent on future state budget decisions.

## Background

The Early Start Act required the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF, formerly Department of Early Learning) to align child care licensing standards with Early Achievers and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) performance standards.

DCYF aligned the standards through a negotiated rulemaking process which included representation from providers, parents, and other stakeholders. During Negotiated Rulemaking (NRM), the agency determined that providers may meet staff qualifications via the state Early Childhood Education stackable certificate or a department-approved “equivalent.” Following NRM, DCYF formed a workgroup of NRM participants and other community and agency representatives to help explore what could be approved as a state equivalent.

The concept of equivalency is designed to meet the needs of the diverse early learning workforce in Washington and includes alternate credentials and an option for demonstration competency (proficiency review). The equivalency process upholds high-quality standards for early learning programs by ensuring a diverse and highly qualified workforce with strong pathways for recruitment and retention.

The proficiency review process provides a way to recognize the knowledge and skills of current and new educators through an equity lens. This includes a process to recognize the skills of providers who have developed their competency through other training methods or years of experience working with young children. The proficiency review is a way of assessing and recording learning that embraces native language and identifies quality early learning in all cultural contexts.

With the passage of the Early Start Act, the legislature signaled its intent that “the early care and education system should strive to address the needs of Washington’s culturally and linguistically diverse populations” and “that parental choice and provider diversity are guiding principles for early learning programs.”<sup>2</sup>

All options to meet equivalency are grounded in the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals, which align with national standards in early learning. Using competencies to inform qualifications establishes an inclusive framework for assessing and recognizing knowledge and skills.

## Workgroup Goal, Purpose and Participation

The workgroup was guided by the definition of Equivalency in the Foundational Quality Standards, the state’s comprehensive child care and early learning administrative regulations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Early Start Act Section 1(1)

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 110-300, Washington Administrative Code

*“Equivalency” as defined by WAC 110-300-0005:*

*When referring to staff qualifications means an individual is allowed to meet the requirements of this chapter through a department recognized alternative credential, or demonstration of competency, that indicates similar knowledge as the named credential.*

The workgroup was charged with identifying the following:

1. The other certificates or degrees that may count as an equivalent.
  - a. This addresses the department recognized alternative credential.
2. The process for someone meeting the named stackable certificate by demonstrating their knowledge and skill.
  - a. This addresses the demonstration of competency, indicating similar knowledge and skill.

The workgroup was comprised of individuals throughout our state from various agencies and early learning professional roles who met in person and via webinar over a nine-month period.

There were 35 members in the workgroup which included representation from child care centers, family child care homes, higher education faculty, state agencies, and associations such as Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Washington Childcare Centers Association (WCCA), and the Washington State Family Child Care Association (WSFCCA). A complete list of workgroup members can be found at the end of this report.

### Guidelines for Recommendations

The workgroup established the following guidelines for determining recommendations:

- Recognize an individual’s existing knowledge and skills.
- Honor the various ways people learn and demonstrate their skills.
- Recognize the needs of both the existing workforce and new workforce.
- Use innovative options to implement the DCYF Guidelines for Culturally Responsive Professional Development.
- Support retention and recruitment of a qualified and diverse early childhood educator workforce.
- Ground requirements in Core Competencies and align with Early Childhood Education (ECE) course outcomes in the state’s stackable certificates.

### Early Learning Staff Qualifications

Role qualifications for licensed early learning professionals are defined in the Foundational Quality Standards. The Foundational Quality Standards include options for meeting the qualifications, which include completing the name stackable certificate for that role or an equivalent.



Credit requirements for the stackable certificate<sup>4</sup> are outlined in the graphic below:



### General Staff Qualifications

Below are the education requirements for licensed provider roles identified in the Foundational Quality Standards. Educators need to meet the minimum hiring requirement in order to be employed, and will then have the time allotted to meet the “education requirement” from the date of hire or promotion.

Family Homes	Minimum Age Allowed	Minimum Hiring Requirement	Educational Requirement	Time Allowed From Date of Hire or Promotion
Family Home Owner	18	High School Diploma	Initial Certificate (12 Credits)	5 Years
			Short Certificate (20 Credits)	2 Years from Completing Initial Certificate
Family Home Lead Teacher	18	High School Diploma	Initial Certificate (12 Credits)	5 Years
Family Home Assistant Teacher	18	High School Diploma	Initial Certificate (12 Credits)	5 Years
Family Home Aide	14	High School Diploma OR Enrolled	High School Diploma OR Enrolled	N/A
Family Home Volunteer	14	None Required	None	N/A

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the stackable certificates and courses included, visit [https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/Stackable\\_Certificates.pdf](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/Stackable_Certificates.pdf)

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Centers	Minimum Age Allowed	Minimum Hiring Requirement	Educational Requirement	Time Allowed From Date of Hire or Promotion
Center Director	18	10 ECE Credits (12 or fewer children) 25 ECE credits (13-24 children) 45 ECE credits (25 or more children)	State Certificate (47 Credits)	5 Years
Center Assistant Director	18	Same as Center Director	State Certificate (47 Credits)	5 Years
Center Program Supervisor	18	Same as Center Director	State Certificate (47 Credits)	5 Years
Center Lead Teacher	18	High School Diploma	Initial Certificate (12 Credits)	5 Years
			Short Certificate (20 Credits)	2 Additional Years (7 Total)
Center Assistant Teacher	18	High School Diploma	Initial Certificate (12 Credits)	5 Years
Center Aide	14	High School Diploma OR Enrolled	High School Diploma OR Enrolled	N/A
Center Volunteer	14	None Required	None	N/A

**Department-Recognized Alternate Credential**

The equivalency process provides a means for professionals to meet qualifications through a “department-recognized alternate credential.”

The following is a part of DCYF’s existing education verification process:

- DCYF maintains a related degree list that is based on current degrees available in Washington.
- Degrees with 30 or more credits in ECE that related degrees align with the state’s Core Competencies are considered ECE related degrees (also required by WAC).
- DCYF maintains a related degree list that is based on current degrees available in Washington.
- Other associate or bachelor’s degrees will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine alignment with competencies, and may still be considered related.

### ECE Degree Majors

- Associate's degree in ECE or related<sup>5</sup>
- Bachelor's degree in ECE or related

### Related Degree Majors Include<sup>6</sup>

- A valid Washington State Teaching Certificate with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education (Pre-K-Grade 3) or Early Childhood Special Education
- Human development with a specialization in ECE
- Children's studies/childhood education with a specialization in ECE
- Elementary education with one of the following endorsements:
  - Early childhood education
  - Early childhood special education
  - P-3
  - P-3 special education

## New Degrees and Credentials

When a new degree option in the early learning field is developed, Washington colleges communicate the new academic program with DCYF. The degree program is vetted through the education verification process and DCYF professional development policies to determine if it will count as a related degree or credential. This includes but is not limited to the program being a DCYF-recognized accredited program, meets standards for adult learning, and is aligned with the state's ECE Core Competencies.

If an individual has completed a degree that is not considered a related degree, it will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the degree submitted is coming up frequently, DCYF will consider if it should be added to the Chart of Equivalent.

## Alternate Credentials

### Workgroup Recommendations

The workgroup recommends that the existing education verification process be paired with a proficiency review when a provider does not have enough credits to be considered an ECE related degree.

The following chart includes the alternate credentials as they relate to each role named in the Foundational Quality Standards.

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<sup>5</sup> Related refers to the coursework of a degree being aligned with the state's ECE Core Competencies

<sup>6</sup> This list will evolve to include other degree majors as they develop and meet the requirements of alignment with the state's ECE competencies. A more thorough list of all colleges can be found on the ECE Career Planning Portal at <https://ececareers.del.wa.gov/>

Chart of Equivalents		
Role	Staff Qualification	Related Credentials <sup>7</sup>
Center Director; or Assistant Director; or Program Supervisor	WA ECE State Certificate (47 Credits)	One of the Following: 1. Associate degree in ECE or related 2. Bachelor’s degree in ECE or related 3. A valid Washington State Teaching Certificate with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education (Prenatal-Grade 3) or Early Childhood Special Education 4. One year ECE certificate with a minimum of 45 aligned credits or related 5. Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) accredited teacher credential in infant/toddler 6. MACTE accredited teacher credential in ECE 7. Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) diploma in assistants to infancy (B-3) 8. AMI diploma in primary (age 3-6) 9. An American Montessori Society (AMS) teacher credential in infant/toddler 10. AMS teacher credential in ECE 11. A current CDA + 35 aligned college credits* 12. 47 aligned college credits*
Center Lead; Family Home Licensee	WA ECE Short Certificate (20 Credits)	Options Above OR One of the Following: 1. 20 aligned college credits* 2. A current CDA + 8 aligned college credits*
Center Assistant; Family Home Assistant	WA ECE Initial Certificate (12 Credits)	Options Above OR One of the Following: 1. Military Modules 2. A current CDA 3. 12 aligned college credits*
Aides	HS Diploma or Equivalent; or Enrolled	Options Above OR One of the Following: 1. GED 2. A current CDA 3. Initial Certificate

## Proficiency Review (Competency Demonstration)

The workgroup adopted the phrase “proficiency review” to describe the process of providers demonstrating the competencies required to fulfill their role qualifications.

The workgroup recommends the following guiding principles for implementation of the proficiency review process.

### Guiding Principles of Proficiency Review

- Be grounded in the state’s ECE Core Competencies and aligned with ECE course outcomes.
- Lead with an equity lens.
- Hold the workforce and children served in mind.
- Be accessible with many ways to demonstrate knowledge and skill, recognizing the diversity of our workforce and the value in diversity in pathways.

<sup>7</sup> All college coursework must align with WA ECE Competencies and be verified in the workforce registry (MERIT), which is a current process.

- Include supports for providers to prepare and be successful.
- Recognize previously learned skills and abilities.
- Have a consistent, reliable, and objective review process.
- Be transparent with individualized feedback.
- Leverage current system programs and initiatives (ex: Early Achievers and state-approved training).
- Result in documented professional growth and accomplishment.

The workgroup recommends that in order for a process to be successful, DCYF needs to have:

- **Budget:** Sufficient state budget providing enough funding for development, communication including multiple languages, sustainability, and not put expenses on the provider to complete a proficiency review process. Without funding, DCYF would need to implement a model with a focus on the chart of equivalents, and a much more scaled implementation of recognizing existing knowledge and skill. The model described in the recommendations below is well beyond what DCYF can do without additional funding, especially at the desired implementation timeline.
- **Support Resources:** Tools that provide guidance and support successful navigation and completion, including process navigation, technology and system support with Managed Education Registry Information Tool (MERIT) or related systems, technical assistance, and foreign degree processing fees.

### Implementation Recommendations for Proficiency Review

During the exploration phase, the workgroup reviewed a potential process from beginning to end, considering various roles, partnerships, and methods of recognizing and documenting similar knowledge and skills in providers to meet staff qualifications in licensing WAC.

The workgroup recommends a proficiency review process that includes the following:

- **Qualified Community Reviewers**
  - The community is supported to have a role in being an observer/evaluator (e.g., trainers and coaches).
- **Provider Guidance and Technical Assistance**
  - Applicants are supported with opportunities to meet with peers to understand and work through the process.
- **Professional Development Plans**
  - Professional development plans will help teachers map their interests and goals for the next steps for professional growth.
- **Leverage Systems and Partnerships**
  - Existing relationships are leveraged to ensure consistent and reliable observations between the applicant and the observer (when using an observation model) or new relationships are developed.
- **Program Evaluation**
  - Data is collected to support an evaluation of the proficiency review process and the various credentialing options available. Evaluation is completed by DCYF three, five, and 10 years after the implementation of the rule.

### Qualified Community Reviewers

The recommended proficiency review process begins with having diverse, capable, and qualified individuals, called “reviewers.” Reviewers are identified as community members and professional peers that have demonstrated an ability to recognize present and developing skills of early childhood educators through a variety of methods (i.e., observation, documentation, video). An identified reviewer can articulate how those skills align with similar knowledge and skills of the named stackable certificates.

#### *Qualities of a Reviewer*

The following are commendations for the qualities and characteristics of a reviewer.

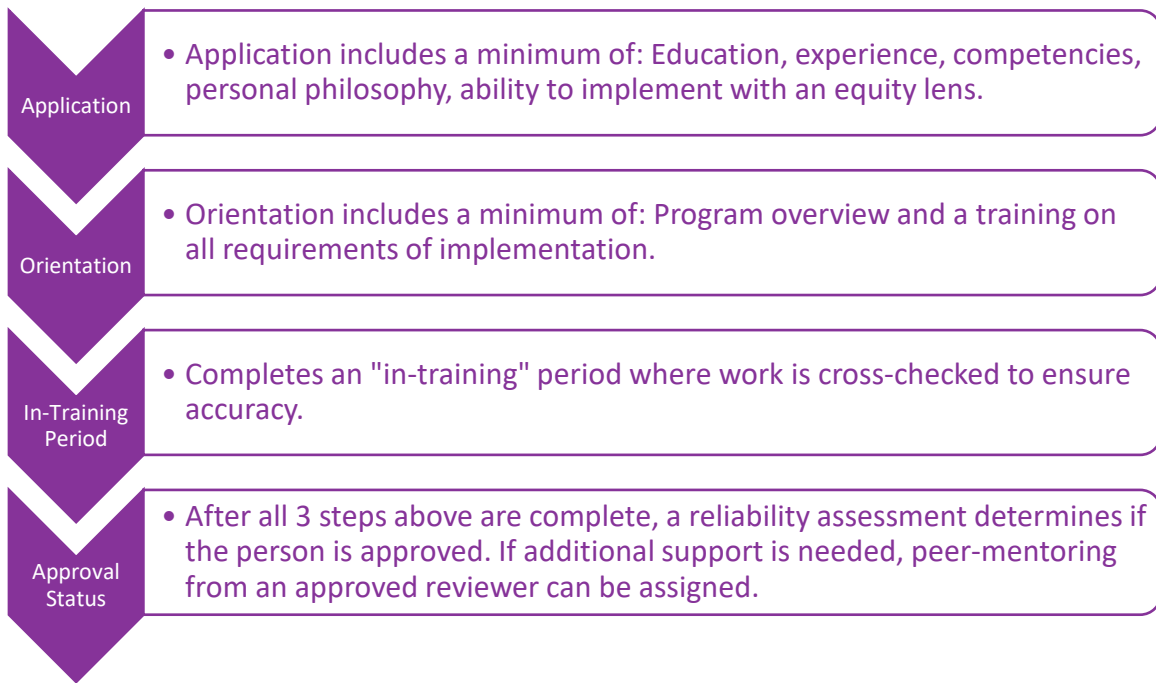
- Knowledge of ECE skills; knowledge exceeding the stackable certificate skills
- Culturally responsive
- Understands competencies and levels
- Consistent
- Reliable
- Reflective of the workforce
- Trained and practiced in recognizing bias
- Objective
- Ability to identify developing skills and ask meaningful questions to understand the skills of the provider without guiding the provider
- Objective documentation
- Know various roles and philosophies; skilled in specialized theory and practice where needed

#### *Qualifications for a Reviewer*

The reviewer will:

- Demonstrate competencies of the early learning profession.
- Document observations and provide feedback clearly and objectively.
- Be able to “pull” information from candidates successfully through interactions and interviews without coaching to an answer and observing competency in a variety of ways.

To become a reviewer, all applicants will complete a process for ensuring qualifications are met. The workgroup recommends the following process:



*Community Reviewer Approval*

Community Reviewers must apply and be approved based on the qualifications outlined above. Once all prerequisites are completed, a community reviewer will go through reliability assessment.

**Yes** — Community Reviewer reliability is complete:

1. Community Reviewer meets the required competencies; and
2. Understands and agrees to ongoing quality assurance process.

**Not Yet** — Community Reviewer did not pass reliability:

1. Community Reviewer receives coaching or mentoring from a qualified/approved reviewer who has completed their in-training period.
2. Community Reviewer completes ongoing professional development, spends more time learning.
3. Community Reviewer may go through the onboarding training and reliability again when ready.

*Process for DCYF*

DCYF will manage the process for proficiency review implementation which includes the following:

- Application process for both the Community Reviewers and providers in the field.
- Manage a review board.
  - Board will be reflective of the workforce. DCYF will consider updating existing structures/review committees such as the Trainer Approval Board.
  - Implement a Double-Blind review process for submitted artifacts.
  - Reviewers will recommend approval.

- Establish a process for appeals.
  - Will allow DCYF to process appeals from providers.
  - Gathers feedback on interactions between provider and reviewer.

The scalability of implementation is dependent on state budget availability.

#### Provider Guidance and Technical Assistance

The workgroup recommends localized and personalized supports for career planning and navigating the proficiency review process, including supporting providers of multiple languages. Technology and documentation should be as simple as possible to navigate and complete.

Recommendations include:

- Community supports to inform providers about their options, including printed materials, web-based resources, and in-person professional development planning sessions.
- A MERIT application that is simple and accessible for users to complete the proficiency review or to become a community reviewer.
- Professional networks for Community Reviewers that offer opportunities for guided reflection and connection to new learning.
- A method for feedback from both the applicants and community reviewers to inform the continuous quality improvement of the proficiency review process.

#### Professional Development Plans

Providers who are working toward meeting their role requirement create professional development plans to identify their career goals and monitor their progress in conjunction with the WAC timeline for their role.

The workgroup's recommendations include:

- Professional development plans allow people to choose the next steps based on immediate need.
- Record professional development progress in MERIT, including the ability to monitor an individual's goals and progress toward that goal. Progress is framed in a way that highlights accomplishments while showing the timeline to meet current role requirements.
- Providers are guided to professional development options in MERIT based on what the provider still needs according to their professional record and current role qualification.
- Data entered in MERIT allows for DCYF to use data to plan for professional development needs and accomplishments.
- DCYF can monitor workforce data and track proficiency review program information for continuous quality improvement.
- The Career Planning Portal provides guidance for choosing a pathway that best suits an individual's needs that may include a certificate or alternate credential completion, proficiency review, timeline planning, and course planning and selection.
- DCYF continues to seek resources (funding) to support the statewide, high-quality implementation of the proficiency review process at the onset and as the proficiency review program evolves.
- Support materials will be created to help the community identify their own pathway and understand how state-approved training can be selected to support meeting staff qualifications.



## Leverage Systems and Partnerships

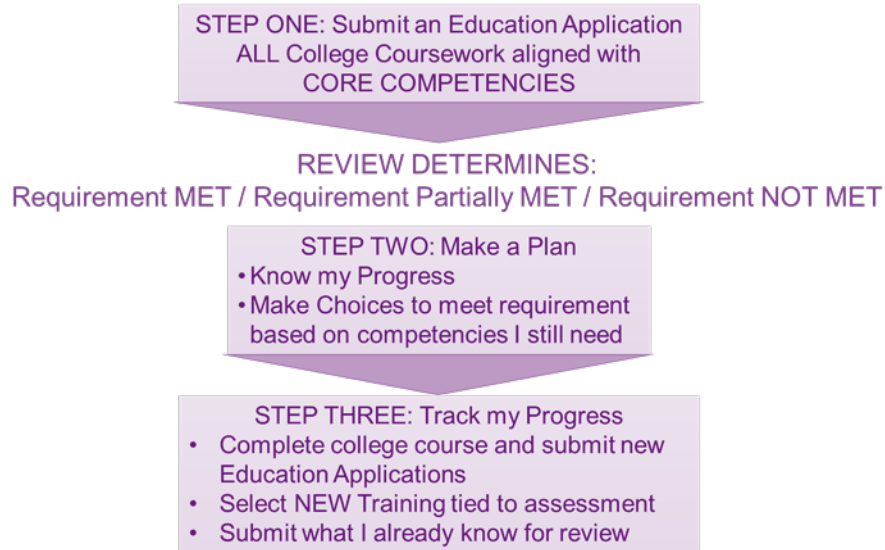
DCYF has made connections where possible to align recommendations from the workgroup with established systems to leverage provider time and state funding.

The workgroup recommends:

- **Leverage State-Approved Trainings<sup>8</sup>**
  - *Individual State-Approved Trainings:* Individual trainings include state-approved training. The recommendations below describe how to enhance current policy to create an option that includes embedded assessment.
    - The workgroup recommends:
      - A provider can complete an enhanced state-approved training that includes an embedded assessment and provides documentation that the provider has met the competencies covered in the training. Current DCYF policy for state-approved training does not require an embedded, official assessment for completion.
      - Completion can build over time in a person’s professional record, or documentation can be submitted as part of a proficiency review.
      - An approved community reviewer can provide this enhanced state-approved training.
      - Individual trainings with embedded assessment can build to meet the required knowledge and skills to meet role qualifications if selected appropriately for the role. This option is best for those that meet the majority of role competencies.
  - *Packaged State-Approved Trainings:* Packaged trainings allow a provider to sign up for a package of state-approved training and complete all learning in a way that has an embedded assessment. Upon successful completion, staff qualifications for a specific role may be met.
    - The workgroup recommends:
      - Community-based training can be bundled and offered by a community reviewer (this is STARS hours).
      - The packaged training includes an assessment of learning and the “packaged training” can be added as an alternate credential apply to DCYF to be recognized to be listed on the Chart of Equivalents to meet role requirement (table above).
- **Relationship-Based Professional Development (RBPD)** can be incorporated as part of the proficiency review process at the provider’s request so that the work completed with an RBPD professional can be recognized (ex: Early Achievers Coach).
- **Leverage MERIT.** The workgroup recommends leveraging functionality in MERIT to support provider application process and understanding of how to meet licensing role MERIT requirements.

<sup>8</sup> When “state-approved training” is noted, this includes training offered by a state-approved trainer (state-approved trainers offer STARS hours).

## Process for Meeting Requirement



### Recording Proficiency Review Status

MERIT is Washington’s workforce registry and where proficiency review would be recorded to display status for meeting staff qualifications. The workgroup discussed system enhancements in MERIT to make this process easy to record and track.

Recommendations include:

- A clear indicator for licensors, directors or hiring managers, and educators when a qualification is in progress or has been met that does not require deep understanding or analysis of educational qualifications.
- A dashboard view in MERIT so users can:
  - See an overview of their own progress
  - See an overview of their staff’s progress
  - Make informed decisions about professional development next steps (training and/or college)
  - Receive intuitive suggestions to meet staff qualifications based on competency area needs and the role the provider is currently working in (see professional development plan recommendation for more information)
- Data is collected to inform reports produced by DCYF related to the success and continuous quality improvement, this includes but not limited to the availability of community reviewers, demographics of community reviewers. and providers choosing proficiency review.
- Ability to connect provider data and employment information (current and historical) to determine the connection to workforce retention, qualifications, and Early Achievers ratings or child outcomes.

## Program Evaluation

The goal of the equivalency program evaluation is to understand the relative impacts of all credentialing options, including the standard pathway and of both methods of demonstrating equivalent preparation: 1) alternate credentials and 2) proficiency review.

Data will be collected as the program commences, and an equivalency program evaluation shall be completed by DCYF at the following intervals:

- Fall 2022 (year three), Fall 2024 (year five), Fall 2029 (year 10).
- The evaluation must include:
  - Impact on retention of a diverse and qualified workforce.
  - Workforce preparation and impact on program quality and child outcomes.
- To the extent possible:
  - Child care supply in rural and diverse communities.
  - Workforce recruitment.

## Other Considerations

In addition to these recommendations, it was important to the workgroup to ensure workforce supports for skill development, recruitment strategies, and retention. Items below are system recommendations for DCYF, higher education partners, legislature, and others who support the early childhood workforce.

- **Scholarships:** Funding for scholarships to ensure access to the stackable certificates and increase availability to the workforce not employed in an Early Achievers facility.
- **Training Reimbursement:** Funding for training reimbursement is available for individuals completing state-approved training as a method of building competencies and leading toward a proficiency review.
- **Stackable Certificate Delivery:** Colleges provide responsive scheduling with many and varied options for college class availability and increase access to additional college supports such as Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST) and credit for prior learning.
- **Technology Support:** Including access to computer labs and technical assistance with computer skills and navigation.
- **Roll-Out:** As funding is available or expanded, prioritizing the expansion of the proficiency review process on availability of stackable certificates or other educational programs, the linguistic diversity of providers in the community, and concentration of early learning programs in regions/areas.
- **Interconnected Policies:** ECEAP and Early Achievers policies allow for the recognition of the recommendations of the workgroup, including alternate credentials and proficiency review.
- **College Partnerships and Credit Bearing Education:** DCYF, community and technical colleges, and stakeholders should explore mechanisms for providers to potentially earn college course credits through competency demonstration or state-approved trainings with the embedded assessment provided by an approved community reviewer.

## Definitions

1. *Core Competencies for Early Care and Education*: Washington's standards of knowledge and skills that define what early learning professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality care for children. They serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by professionals in all early care and education settings.
2. *Culturally Responsive*: The ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people of your own culture as well as those from other cultures.
3. *Culturally Responsive Guidelines*: Culturally Responsive Guidelines provide a lens for professional development creation, delivery, and evaluation. These guidelines reflect the importance and commitment to building on adult learning principles based on the diverse strengths of early learning professionals that are rooted in their unique culture.
4. *Early Childhood Education (ECE) Initial Certificate*: (12 quarter credits) Washington's Initial Certificate in Early Childhood Education serves as the point of entry for a career in early learning and covers foundational content for early learning professionals.
5. *Early Childhood Education (ECE) Short Certificate*: (Initial Certificate plus 8 quarter credits) Washington's Short Certificate in Early Childhood Education offers areas of specialization, building on the State's Initial Certificate.
6. *Early Childhood Education (ECE) State Certificate*: (Short Certificate plus 27 quarter credits) Washington's State Certificate in Early Childhood Education is the benchmark for Level 2 Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals and prepares for the next step, an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education.
7. *Education Appeal*: Initiated by the education verification applicant, the appeal form documents an official request for a secondary review of a processed education application when an error may have occurred in the education verification process.
8. *Education Application*: An electronic application is available in MERIT to request verification of education information and recording of outcome in MERIT.
9. *Education Verification*: The steps included in the process of evaluating an education application.
10. *Implicit Biases*: The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
11. *In-Service*: Ongoing State-Approved Training (STARS hours) that happens after someone is employed. A minimum of 10 hours are completed each year for early childhood educators in licensed settings.
12. *Managed Education and Registry Tool (MERIT)*: Washington's workforce registry that tracks provider background checks, training records, education information, and qualification data.
13. *Pre-Service*: Training that is completed before someone is employed or soon after becoming employed. Pre-service is grounded in health and safety topics and does not count as in-service.
14. *Racial Equity*: When social, economic, and political opportunities cannot be predicted based upon a person's race.
15. *Relationship-Based Professional Development (RBPD)*: Professional development that uses professional relationships as a primary method to support professional growth and development for adult learners. RBPD implements a reflective cycle of inquiry and uses an evidence-based adult-learning process of goal setting, observation, assessment, action planning, reflection, and feedback.

16. *Relationship-Based Professional Development (RBPD) 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.
17. *State-Approved Trainer*: Individuals vetted and trained by DCYF to provide quality training to Washington's early learning professionals.
18. *STARS Hours*: Training hours delivered by a DCYF state-approved trainer, or DCYF approved training, for licensed providers that are required by the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).
19. *STARS ID*: A unique identification number assigned to all users within Washington's workforce registry, MERIT.
20. *Trainer Advisory Board (TAB)*: Informs the continual development of DCYF's state approval process and ongoing quality assurance for trainers and training.
21. *Trainer Assurances*: A set of assurances which state-approved trainers abide by for quality adult education.
22. *Trainer Competencies*: Describes the knowledge and skills of a state-approved trainer that are measurable and observable for trainers to provide quality professional development.

## Workgroup Members

DCYF thanks all of the participants of the workgroup for their dedication and commitment not only to developing these recommendations but also to early learning professionals, children, and families. The challenge set forth by this group was met with a sincere passion for quality and equity and we appreciate the opportunity to listen, learn, and guide in this process.

This workgroup first met in May 2018 and continued with in-person meetings and webinars through January 2019. The workgroup produced the recommendations in this report to inform DCYF to establish implementation plans. Implementation of the recommendations to serve statewide is dependent on additional state funding.

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Amber Millard	Lobbyist; Washington Childcare Centers Association
Carol Gibbs	Family Home Provider
Carolyn Solitaire	Parent
Cate Bridenstine	Imagine Institute
Claudette Lindquist	Heritage University
Colleen Condon	Center Provider
Ginger Still	Center Provider; Washington Childcare Centers Association
Hilary Prentice	Center Provider, Pacific Northwest Montessori Association
Holly Lindsey	Family Home Provider
Jenn Thompson	Center Provider; Washington Childcare Centers Association
Jessica Roach	Children's Alliance
Julie Schroath	Center Provider; Washington Childcare Centers Association
Karen Minnick	Community College – Centralia College
Katy Warren	Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP
Kim Lyman	ECEAP Contractor
Krissy Kim	Community College – Pierce College
Marie Keller	Imagine Institute
Michele Butler	Center Provider
Nick Gillon	Professional Educators Standards Board
Nicole Sohn	Center Provider
Rachel Acheson	Center Provider
Sally Holloway	Community College – Whatcom Community College
Samantha Stevens	Child Care Aware Regional Professional Development Coordinator
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