



EDUCATION VERIFICATION PROGRAM MANUAL





Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

This manual defines how the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) administers the Education Verification Program for the early learning workforce.

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Section 1: Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this manual is to summarize the education verification process, for contractors and the public, about the basic principles of implementing the education verification process for the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). For additional information about policies and procedures, please visit the [Professional Development Policy and Procedure Manual](#).

Education Verification

The Professional Development system in Washington State is supported through a valid and reliable education verification process based on the education standards for the early learning field (Washington State Core Competencies for [Early Care and Education Professionals](#) and [Child and Youth Development Professionals](#)).

It allows professionals to determine compliance with their role requirements, gives them an opportunity to build a professional record, and makes it easier to see how professionals can move into other related roles. DCYF uses the data to support the growth of a diverse workforce, inform program compliance, and recognize professional accomplishments. This data also allows policymakers to make decisions about program-wide improvements that address barriers of entry into the field.

All verified education is recorded in the online professional development Workforce Registry, [MERIT](#).

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

DCYF Professional Development

The DCYF Professional Development team oversees the implementation of the education verification process, policy development, and design of the MERIT Workforce Registry.

System-Building Partnerships

The DCYF Professional Development team partners with colleges and universities across Washington State to stay current on degree offerings and share workforce data for higher education planning and program development. This partnership is crucial for understanding existing workforce recruitment and retention efforts and planning for future workforce needs.

Recognizing New Programs ***Coming Fall 2021**

DCYF is developing an application process for recognizing new programs, certificates, and credentials for early learning staff qualification requirements. In addition, DCYF will review new program applications to determine if it is eligible to be included in the DCYF scholarship program.

**For more information, see the [Recognizing New Programs for Equivalencies](#) section of this manual.*

DCYF Support Services

The DCYF Professional Development team provides policy and technical support for internal DCYF staff and external MERIT Workforce Registry users regarding the education verification process and policy. This team is responsible for:

- Monitoring and managing communications.
- Ensuring accurate record retention and workforce data for education.
- Developing communication about policies, processes, and requirements for education verification.

Centralia College

Centralia College, a contracted partner, is responsible for implementing the education verification process on behalf of DCYF.

Management

Centralia College manages the implementation of the overall education verification program. For more information on the education verification process, see **Section 3**.

Monitoring Implementation for Quality Assurance

Centralia College is responsible for continuously monitoring the implementation of the education verification process. To ensure accuracy and reliability, a quality check process is used to review education once it is entered into the MERIT Workforce Registry. DCYF is responsible for randomly spot-checking verified education for accuracy once completed education applications and corresponding supporting documents are returned to DCYF for permanent filing.

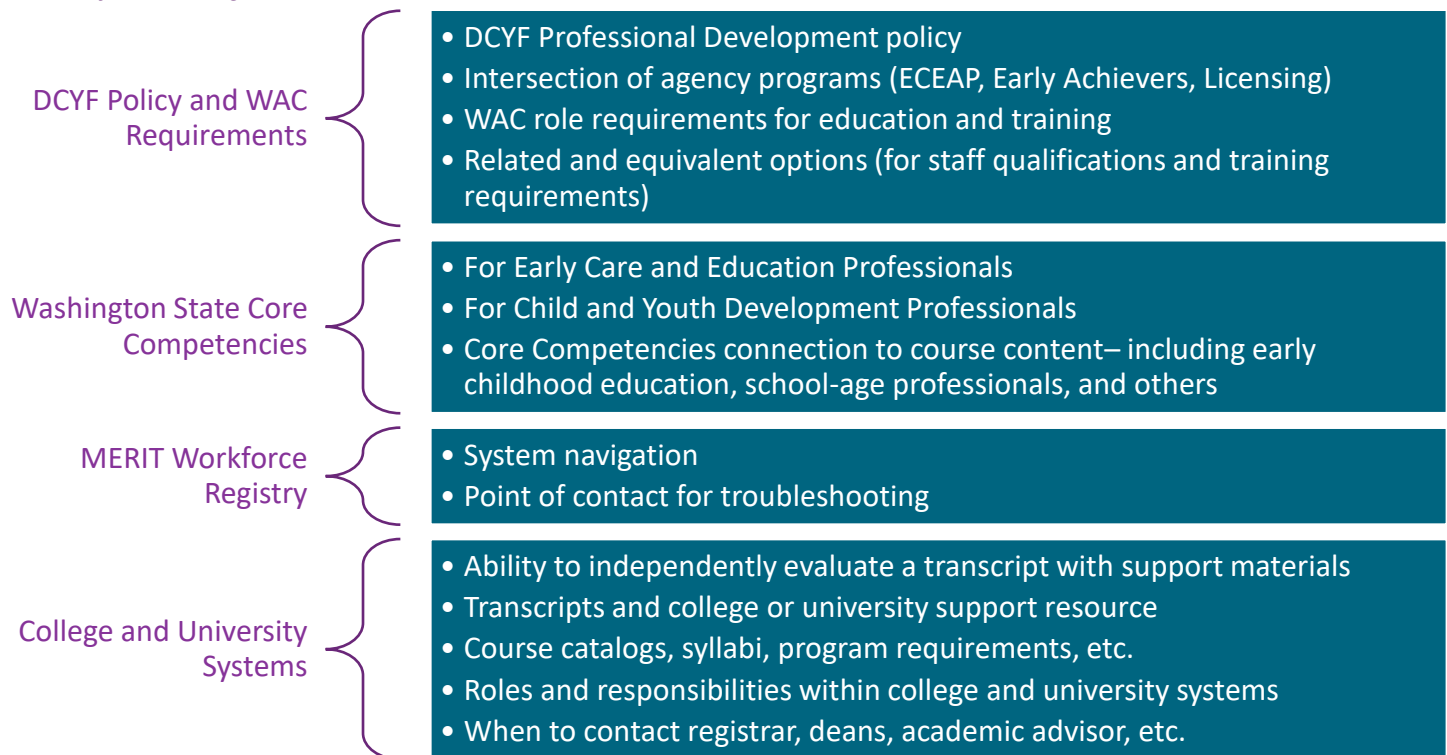
Reporting

Centralia College provides DCYF monthly data reports and quarterly, reflective narratives about the education verification program performance. This summarized information is monitored by DCYF for continuous program reflection and improvement.

Education Verifier Reliability

Centralia College is responsible for ensuring all education verification staff have the necessary skills, knowledge, and familiarity with DCYF policies and education verification processes. This includes ongoing training to ensure all staff use consistent and reliable methods.

Areas of Knowledge



Section 3: Description of Education Verification Process

DCYF uses a single education verification team and process to ensure expert staff are using consistent criteria and methods when reviewing education.

Verify DCYF Recognized Accreditation

DCYF recognizes and records educational programs in the MERIT Workforce Registry that meet the following accreditation criteria:

- Higher education institutions regionally accredited and recognized by the [U.S. Department of Education](#).
- Certificate or credential programs accredited through valid accrediting bodies (Example: MACTE accreditation for Montessori).
- High school institutions or Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) programs regionally accredited and recognized by the [U.S. Department of Education](#).

Review Supporting Document Requirements

All education must be verified through supporting documents. Additional documentation may be requested to complete the verification.

What is Being Verified?	Required Supporting Documents
High School Diploma or GED	Copy of high school diploma or GED
College Coursework	Copy of official transcript
Completed Degree	Copy of official transcript with degree completion date
Certificate or Credential	Copy of certificate/credential Or copy of official transcript with certificate/credential completion date
College Coursework for In-Service Training Hours Only	Copy of unofficial transcript

Verifying DCYF Coursework

All college credits 100 level or above are recorded in the MERIT Workforce Registry.

Verified credits are recorded as Early Childhood Education (ECE), School-Age, and Early Childhood/School-Age (ECE/School-Age) credit. Education verifiers use a Verification Worksheet (see **Appendix A**) to note how credits relate to the core competency areas for Early Care and Education Professionals and Child and Youth Development Professionals. Credits that do not relate to specific Washington State Core Competency areas are recorded as non-applicable (N/A).

ECE	School-Age	ECE/School-Age
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course content in the field of ECE and development (birth - age 8). • Terms such as "young child" and "infants and toddlers" indicate ECE designation. Depending on course content, other codes may include CFS, CHDV, EDUC, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course content in the educational field (age 9-21). • Terms such as "adolescent" and "middle childhood" and "middle school" indicate youth content. Depending on course content, other codes may include EDU, SOWK, PSYC, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course content that overlaps the field of education and child development that spans (birth - age 8) and elementary education. • Terms such as "elementary" and "youth" indicate ECE/School-Age designation. Depending on course content, other codes may include EDU, SOWK, PSYC, etc.

For examples of coursework related to the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education, please see: [Evaluating Coursework for Staff Qualifications](#).

Education Appeals

Verified education may be appealed within 60 days of completed verification (see [Professional Development Policy 203](#)). An appeal must be resolved within 10 business days of receiving all necessary supporting documents.

The appeal form can be found at https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/forms?field_number_value=05-005&title.

Education Appeal Process

1. The education verifier is the first point of contact for appeals. They are responsible for:
 - Reviewing the Education Appeal form and corresponding supporting documents to determine if an error occurred during the verification process.
 - Recording the recommended appeal outcome in the individual MERIT record.
 - Notifying DCYF of the recommended appeal outcome.
 - Submitting recommended data corrections to DCYF, as needed.
 - Tracking the appeal outcome in a monthly data report for DCYF.
2. DCYF is responsible for:
 - Reviewing the recommended appeal outcome submitted by the education verifier.
 - Determining final appeal outcome.
 - Updating the MERIT record if a correction is needed.
 - Notifying the individual of the appeal outcome.

See Education Verification Workflow (see [Appendix B](#)).

Education Awards

Education Award

DCYF uses Education Awards to recognize and reward the educational achievements of all early learning professionals. Once education is verified in MERIT, an early learning professional may be eligible to earn education awards for the following achievements:

1. Highest level of education.
2. Up to four ECE (early childhood education or early care and education) majors.
3. Up to three ECE certificates and credentials.

When determining if an individual qualifies for an education award, please see [Policy 205 in the PD Policy Manual](#). For additional information, please see our [Education Award Guide](#).

Movement Award

When determining if an individual qualifies for a movement award, please see [Policy 206 in the PD Policy manual](#).

Recognizing New Programs for Staff Qualifications *Coming Fall 2021

DCYF is developing an application process for recognizing new programs as meeting early learning staff qualifications requirements. Program recognition may also inform DCYF scholarship policy. Only programs that meet the DCYF accreditation requirements are eligible to apply.

To apply for recognition, the institution related to the program must complete the **DCYF Recognition for New Programs application** (currently under development). To request an application, please contact MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov.

DCYF strives to complete program evaluations within 30 days of the date all materials were received.

Section 4: Verifying Education for Staff Qualifications

All education must be verified to determine if an individual meets the staff qualification requirements for their role.

Equivalent Options for Education

Early learning professionals have multiple options, known as “equivalents,” for meeting education staff qualifications. For licensed early learning professionals, equivalent options may include education, training, or experience. The education equivalent option is referred to as alternative credentials and includes:

- ECE Related Degrees.
- Aligned College Credits.
- DCYF-Recognized Certificates and Credentials.

For more information about equivalents, please see the [Equivalent Options for Education guide](#) and [Alternative Credentials guide](#).

Verifying Degrees

DCYF recognizes degrees earned from a higher education institution that hold regional accreditation and are recognized by the [U.S. Department of Education](#).

To meet education staff qualifications, all degrees must be verified and recorded in the MERIT Workforce Registry. Verifying a completed degree requires copies of official transcripts that include information about corresponding coursework and completion date.

Verifying ECE Degrees

DCYF recognizes the following degrees as ECE degrees:

- AA with a specification in ECE
- ECE
- Childhood Education
- Elementary Education with an endorsement in ECE
- ECE Special Education
- P-3
- P-3 Special Education

Verifying ECE Related Degrees

DCYF recognizes a degree as being an **ECE related degree** if it meets the following:

- It is a bachelor or advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- It meets one of the following options:
 1. **It is a DCYF-recognized related degree major:**
 - Elementary Education major that includes:
 - One course covering ECE curriculum.
 - One class covering guidance/behavior or a practicum class in ECE.
 - Human Development, Child Development, Child and Family Studies, and Children’s Studies major that includes:
 - One course covering ECE curriculum.
 - One class covering guidance/behavior or a practicum class in ECE.
 2. **It includes a minimum of 30 college credits in ECE or related coursework. These 30 credits must include at least two credits in each of the following Competency areas:**
 - Child Growth and Development
 - Curriculum and Learning Environment
 - Ongoing Measure of Child Progress (Observation, Assessment, and Documentation)
 - Families and Community Partnerships
 - Health, Safety, and Nutrition
 - Interactions
 - Program Planning and Development
 - Professional Development and Leadership (Professionalism)

For an example list of courses that may meet each Core Competency area, please see the [Evaluating Early Childhood Coursework](#) guide.

Verifying Non-ECE degrees

DCYF records all non-ECE degrees in the MERIT Workforce Registry.

Non-ECE degrees may meet an education staff qualification if a minimum of 30 college credits ECE or related coursework were earned as a part of the degree or in addition to the degree. These 30 credits must include **at least two credits** in each of the following Competency areas:

- Child Growth and Development
- Curriculum and Learning Environment
- Ongoing Measure of Child Progress (Observation, Assessment, and Documentation)
- Families and Community Partnerships
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Interactions
- Program Planning and Development
- Professional Development and Leadership (Professionalism)

Verifying Aligned College Credits

Aligned credits can be a collection of college credits that provide similar knowledge and skill as one of the Washington State ECE Stackable Certificates. To determine if completed credits are aligned to a Washington State ECE Stackable Certificate, they must be verified and recorded in the MERIT Workforce Registry.

For ECEAP educators, the aligned credits option is only available for the role of ECEAP assistant teachers. Currently, DCYF does not offer an aligned credit option for those in a lead teacher role.

For an example list of courses that may meet each Core Competency area, please see the [Evaluating Early Childhood Coursework](#) guide. *English and Math are not required.*

Aligned to Initial Certificate

12 college quarter credits that meet the following:

- 5 credits in Curriculum and Learning, Family/Community, or Interactions
- 3 credits in Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- 4 credits in any ECE Competency area

Aligned to Short Certificate

20 college quarter credits that meet the following:

- 5 credits in Curriculum and Learning, Family/Community, or Interactions
- 3 credits in Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- 5 credits in Child Development
- 7 credits in any ECE Competency area

Aligned to State Certificate

45 college quarter credits that meet the following:

- 10 credits in Child Development, Curriculum and Learning, or Interactions
- 5 credits in Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- 5 credits in Ongoing Measure of Child Progress
- 5 credits Program Planning and Development or Professional Development and Leadership
- 2 credits Family and Community Partnerships
- 18 credits in any ECE Competency area

Verifying DCYF-Recognized Certificates and Credentials

DCYF recognizes various certificates and credentials for meeting licensing staff qualifications. Below is a list of certificates and credentials that DCYF recognizes and records in the MERIT Workforce Registry. Information on what certificates and credentials meet the education requirements is available in the [Equivalent Options for Education](#) guide.

Stackable Certificate

Washington State ECE Initial Certificate

Washington State ECE Short Certificate Of Specialization – General

Washington State ECE Short Certificate Of Specialization – Administration

Washington State ECE Short Certificate Of Specialization – Family Child Care

Washington State ECE Short Certificate Of Specialization – Home Visiting

Washington State ECE Short Certificate Of Specialization – Infant And Toddler

Washington State ECE Short Certificate Of Specialization – School Age Care

Washington State ECE State certificate

Stackable Certificate

Washington State Teaching Certificate Endorsements:

- a. ECE
- b. Early Childhood Special Education
- c. P-3
- d. P-3 Special Education

University of Washington P-3 Executive Leadership*

Other Certificates

1 Year ECE Certificate/Diploma (Minimum 45 Credits)

13 Military Modules

MACTE Accredited Teacher Credential In ECE

MACTE Accredited Teacher Credential In Infant/Toddler (I/T)

Montessori Elementary 1

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Diploma In Assistants To Infancy (A To I) – Covers Birth to 3

AMI Diploma In Primary – Covers 3 To 6

Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential

Other Family Support/Social Service Credential*

- A Family Support Core Certificate from Edmonds Community College
- A Family Support Studies Certificate from Edmonds Community College
- A National Family Service Credential from The University of Connecticut.
- A Human Services Case Management and Administration Certificate from Washington State University with A Case Management Focus

- Social Service Competency-Based Training Program (SSCBT) From Tennessee State University
- A Credential From A Comprehensive And Competency-Based Family/Social Service Program Not Mentioned Above That Increases Knowledge And Skills In Providing Direct Services To Families (Subject To DCYF Approval)

Other Certificate Equal To Minimum Of 12 ECE Credits

Family Support Studies Certificate From Edmonds Community College

Home Visitor CDA Credential

Family Development Certificate From Community Action Partnership

University Of Washington Certificate In Practice-Based Coaching

For more information, please see [Washington State Stackable Certificates](#).

Verifying International Education

Internationally earned education may be used to meet staff qualifications. To verify international education, supporting documentation must be submitted for verification.

NACES Course-by-Course Evaluation

To determine degree equivalency, complete a course-by-course evaluation with a [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services \(NACES\)](#) member organization. A degree evaluation will determine coursework content and credit calculations from education systems outside of the U.S. Education verified through a course-by-course evaluation may be eligible to receive an [Education Award](#).

For more information about NACES member organizations, visit the www.naces.org.

1. Submit degree to any of the NACES member organizations. If your degree is in a language other than English, it must be translated into English. Price, process for translation, and turnaround time vary by organization.
2. Complete an [Education Application](#) in MERIT.
3. Include copies of translated official documents from NACES for review in one email submission to education.verification@centralia.edu.

Professional Development Plans (PDP) *Coming Fall 2021

DCYF is creating an online form in the [MERIT](#) Workforce Registry that will allow professionals to select their options for meeting the education requirement. Once this function is available in **Fall 2021** and a person has decided on the best option, they will need to complete the online form in MERIT.

Note: If a provider chooses the experience pathway, they will not need to do anything else. Eligibility will be confirmed by DCYF once the required seven years are met in MERIT.

The online form will allow an early learning professional to select a chosen pathway from the following options:

1. I meet the eligibility requirements for experience-based competency and want to meet education requirement with my experience.
2. I am going to college to complete my required education within five years.

3. I am going to complete the community-based approach.
4. I believe the education I have will qualify me, and I will get my education verified.

Currently under development: PDP Guidebook.

Section 5: Verifying Education for Training Requirements

Verifying College Coursework for In-Service Training Hours

DCYF recognizes college coursework in early childhood education as meeting the WAC required in-service training. Only courses completed in the past three years are eligible for annual in-service hours. In addition, all college coursework must be related to the Washington State Core Competencies.

1 college quarter credit = 10 in-service training hours

Verifying College Coursework for Annual In-Service Hours Process:

1. Review College Coursework section of the education application. Complete this section of the application on the applicant's behalf, if needed.
2. Verify institution or program meets DCYF accreditation requirements.
3. Evaluate transcripts. A course description may be requested if needed.
4. Record evaluation outcome in the MERIT Workforce Registry.

Verifying Child Care Basics Alternatives

DCYF recognizes some college coursework in early childhood education as meeting all or part of the required Child Care Basics training: [WAC 300-110-0106](#).

Alternative options for completing Child Care Basics that require education verification include the following:

- ECED& 107: Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- ECED& 100: Child Care Basics
- ECE Education + DCYF Online Training Modules

For additional information on Child Care Basics alternative options and requirements, see the [Completing Child Care Basics Guide](#).

See **Appendix C** for the Child Care Basics verification process.

If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact DCYF Constituent Relations (1-800-723-4831 | 360-902-8060, ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov)

Appendix A: Verification Cover Sheet

Front Side:

NAME: _____ STARS ID#: _____

Barcode Label

STARS Hours Supplemental Guide Modules

<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma: HS GED _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> ECE Initial Cert _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> ECE Short Cert: General _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> ECE Short Cert: Admin _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> ECE Short Cert: Inf/Tod _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> ECE Short Cert: Family _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> State ECE Cert _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other 12 ECE Cert _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> CDA: Pre R I/T R Fam R _____	Approved	Denied	Withdrawn	Staff initials _____	Date _____

_____ ECE Credits _____ School-Age Credits _____ ECE/School-Age Credits _____ N/A

Staff initials _____/_____/_____ Date _____/_____/_____ Approved Denied Withdrawn ECE Degree

_____ ECE Credits _____ School-Age Credits _____ ECE/School-Age Credits _____ N/A

Staff initials _____/_____/_____ Date _____/_____/_____ Approved Denied Withdrawn ECE Degree

_____ ECE Credits _____ School-Age Credits _____ ECE/School-Age Credits _____ N/A

Staff initials _____/_____/_____ Date _____/_____/_____ Approved Denied Withdrawn ECE Degree

Back Side:

ECE Credit Alignment Cover Sheet	ECE INITIAL CERT ALIGNED			ECE SHORT CERT ALIGNED				ECE STATE CERT ALIGNED							
	Minimum 12 Aligned Credits			Minimum 20 Aligned Credits			CDA +8	Minimum 45 Aligned Credits			CDA + 35 Aligned Credits				
COURSE	Credits	Curriculum, Learning, Family/Community or Interactions	Health, Safety, Nutrition	Any ECE Competency Area	Curriculum, Learning, Family/Community or Interactions	Health, Safety, Nutrition	Child Development	Any ECE Competency Area	Curriculum, Learning, Family/Community or Interactions	Health, Safety, Nutrition	Child Development	Ongoing Measurement of Child Progress	Family & Community Partnerships	Program Planning & Development or Professional Development & Leadership	Any ECE Competency Area (up to 15 credits may be any college course)
		5 Credits	Credits	5 Credits	5 Credits	2 Credit	5 Credits	8 Credits	5 Credits	2 Credits	5 credits	2 Credits	2 credits	5 Credits	24 Credits
Total Credits															
Additional Credits Needed															

Appendix B: Workflow for Education Verifier

CHILD CARE BASICS			
College Level Child Care Basics	ECED& / HSN 107 Fall 2019 Forward	ECED& / HSN 107 Prior to 2019	12 or more ECE or E/S credits, current CDA, Montessori or 13 Military Modules
Check CCB Box in MERIT	Check CCB Box in MERIT	Check CCB Box in MERIT	Do NOT Mark the Box in MERIT
Do NOT Check Supplement Guide Box on Cover Sheet	Do NOT Check Supplement Guide Box on Cover Sheet	Check Supplement Guide Box on Cover Sheet	Check Module Box on Cover Sheet
<i>Do not check box for supplemental guide if CCB has already been approved in their profile</i>			
Add to notes: CCB Approved	Add to notes: CCB Approved	Add to notes: Supplemental Guide for CCB <i>(Weekly Return List Needing ??)</i>	Add to notes: modules needed for Child Care Basics
This applies to: *STARS Course work *Other official transcript credits	This applies to: *STARS Course work *Stackable Certs *Other official transcript credits	This applies to: *STARS Course work *Stackable Certs *Other official transcript credits	
Create spreadsheets for supplemental guide, Modules, and			
In Addition to Education Verification			
ECEAP	Related Degree	12 or more ECE Credits No Stackable Cert	Education Outside of US Does Not Request ED Award
Enter and Approve Eligible Coursework for SQ	Competency check list	Credit alignment worksheet	Option 1: Needs translation for HS, possible evaluation for Higher Ed
Suggest SQ or PDP			Option 2: Determine if licensing requirement met

Appendix C: Process for Verifying Child Care Basics

Options	Recording CCB Completion in MERIT
Child Care Basics Training	State-approved trainer records completion on MERIT training roster.
ECED&107: Health, Safety, and Nutrition	If completed before Aug. 1, 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider completes education application and submits unofficial transcript to education.verification@centralia.edu. • Education Verification team records completion in MERIT. Includes providers first and last name, STARS ID, and in an Excel sheet emailed every five days to Workforce Registry Lead. • DCYF emails supplemental guide to provider.
	If completed after Aug. 1, 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider completes education application and submits unofficial transcript to education.verification@centralia.edu. • Education verification team records completion in MERIT.
ECED&100: Child Care Basics	If provider submits transcripts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers completes education application and submits unofficial transcript of completion to education.verification@centralia.edu. • Education verification team records completion in MERIT.
	If provider submits certificate of completion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers submits certificate of completion to MERIT@dcyf.wa.gov. • DCYF reaches out to State-Approved Trainer to update roster or records completion of training.
ECE Education + Modules	If provider has verified education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCYF verifies completion of modules and records completion in MERIT.
	If provider does not have verified education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider must complete education application and submit copy of official documentation. • Education verification team notifies DCYF of provider’s eligibility: Includes providers first and last name, STARS ID, and in an Excel sheet emailed every five days to Workforce Registry Lead. • DCYF verifies completion of modules and records initial training requirement as met in MERIT or notifies provider of eligibility with instructions for completing modules.
Head Start, ECEAP, School District Partnerships	Site manager creates and attests training plan to DCYF PD team, emails roster and date of completion to training@dcyf.wa.gov . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCYF records completion in MERIT.