



Finding High-Quality Child Care

Finding high-quality child care is one of the most important decisions a family will ever make. Science shows us that the early years of a child's life are the most important when it comes to helping prepare our children for success in school and beyond.

We want to make sure the time our children spend in child care is time well spent.

Child Care Aware of Washington is committed to helping families find high-quality child care and to helping our state's child care providers deliver high-quality care. Thanks to Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system, parents now have an easy-to-understand rating system to help them make more informed child care choices.



Contact Child Care Aware of WA's Family Center to begin your search for high-quality child care in your area.

Call 1-800-446-1114 or go online to:
<http://childcareawarewa.org/families>

Also, be sure to visit the Department of Children, Youth, and Families' Child Care Check at <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/child-care-check> to learn more in-depth information about any child care program you are considering.



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



Child Care Aware of Washington has been connecting families to high-quality child care for more than 30 years.

Washington's most trusted child care resource

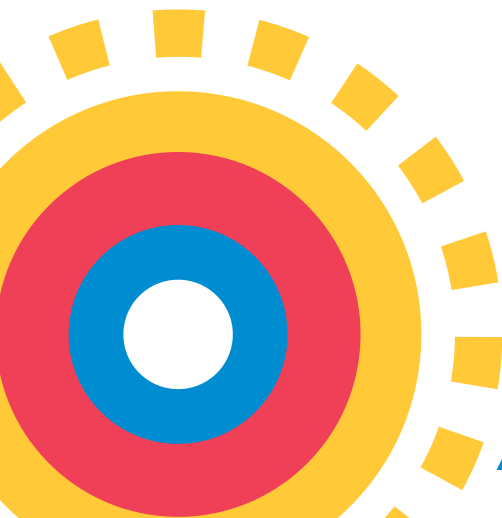




Early Achievers, Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System

Early Achievers is a comprehensive, statewide, research-based program that provides free supports and resources, such as trainings and coaching, to child care providers so they can make improvements to their programs. Thousands of providers are participating statewide, reaching more than 74,000 young children every day.

Early Achievers also provides an easy-to-understand quality rating system. The rating system helps families find child care programs that are engaged in continuous quality improvement efforts and have had their quality validated by the University of Washington.



Understanding the Early Achievers Ratings

Early Achievers rates the quality of child care and early learning programs on a scale of 1 to 5. A Level 1 simply means a child care program is not enrolled in Early Achievers.

Level 2 programs are participating in quality improvement in partnership with coaching support and incentives.

Levels 3-5 are points-based and earned through on-site evaluations conducted by the University of Washington.

Level 3 programs demonstrate supporting and nurturing interactions with children, developmentally appropriate practice and view parents as partners in their children's learning. These programs may be implementing some best practices in early childhood education (ECE) and working toward implementing others to help prepare children for kindergarten. Some staff may have ECE-specific degrees and credentials.

Level 3+ programs have achieved higher scores in their environment and interaction assessments and have typically implemented higher-level practices. Examples of higher-level practices may vary by site, and may include a high-quality curriculum and individualized instruction for all children. Level 3+ providers are actively demonstrating quality in their programs through high-quality interactions with children and engaging learning environments.

Level 4 programs have a focus on preparing children for kindergarten, supporting overall development of individual children and include parents in their child's learning and development plan. Teachers in these programs have time to plan for and create rich learning environments and curriculum. Some staff have ECE-specific degrees and credentials.

Level 5 programs demonstrate consistent best practices associated with positive child outcomes for all children and include a deep understanding of how to individualize instruction/support for every child and family based on information gathered by the program. Many teachers in these programs have ECE-specific degrees and credentials.

Early Achievers rates child care programs on quality in four main areas:

- Child Outcomes
- Curriculum, Learning Environment and Interactions
- Professional Development and Training
- Family Engagement and Partnership



Each of these areas cover important components of high-quality child care—things that *really* make a difference for young children. Think of them as best practices in early learning.

Some Early Achievers providers specialize in key areas of child development. These Areas of Specialization are:

- Interactions and Environment
- Curriculum and Staff Supports
- Staff Professionalism
- Family Engagement and Partnerships
- Child Outcomes

