

RCW 43.216.091 Early achievers program—Administrative policies—Rating and rerating. The department must adopt administrative policies in the early achievers program, within the department's appropriations, to:

- (1) Consider child care provider schedules and needs and allow flexibility when scheduling data collection and rating visits at a facility;
- (2) Prioritize reratings for providers rated at a level 2;
- (3) Prioritize reratings for providers rated at a level 3 who are seeking to become early childhood education and assistance program providers; and
- (4) Provide continuous and robust post-rating feedback to providers. [2019 c 369 s 8.]

Findings—Intent—2019 c 369: "(1) The legislature finds that a commitment to early learning quality was established through the passage of the early start act and creation of the early achievers program. The legislature recognizes that achieving the desired child outcomes from high quality early learning and child care requires additional financial support, including the payment of living wages to providers, and that the success of the early achievers system must continue to be supported through adequate funding. Further, the legislature finds that the federal administration of children and families advises states to set child care subsidy rates at the seventy-fifth percentile of private market rates in order to ensure equal access to high quality child care. The legislature further finds that objectives of the early achievers program include providing professional development and robust training and coaching opportunities that are available in geographically diverse areas to child care and early education providers who are often small business owners and as such play a critical role in our state's economy.

(2) The legislature further finds that the department of children, youth, and families has undertaken efforts to identify professional equivalencies for early learning providers that recognize the commitment and years of experience that much of the workforce demonstrates.

(3) Therefore, as recommended by the joint select committee on the early achievers program, the legislature intends to work toward raising base subsidy rates for licensed child care centers and family homes and further incentivize the provision of care for infants and toddlers by considering rates for providers serving these young children. Further, the legislature intends to look to increase needs-based grants, scholarships, and professional development assistance, as well as reduce early achievers coaching ratios, in order to support providers in continuous improvement. The legislature further intends to support the work of the department of children, youth, and families' professional equivalencies committee and the department's development of the proficiency review process." [2019 c 369 s 1.]