

RCW 43.216.087 Early achievers program—Participation of culturally diverse and low-income center, family home, and outdoor nature-based child care providers. (1)(a) The department shall, in collaboration with tribal governments and community and statewide partners, implement a protocol to maximize and encourage participation in the early achievers program for culturally diverse and low-income center, family home, and outdoor nature-based child care providers. Amounts appropriated for the encouragement of culturally diverse and low-income center, family home, and outdoor nature-based child care provider participation shall be appropriated separately from the other funds appropriated for the department, are the only funds that may be used for the protocol, and may not be used for any other purposes. Funds appropriated for the protocol shall be considered an ongoing program for purposes of future departmental budget requests.

(b) The department shall prioritize the resources authorized in this section to assist providers in the early achievers program to help them reach a rating of level 3 or higher wherever access to subsidized care is at risk.

(2) The protocol should address barriers to early achievers program participation and include at a minimum the following:

(a) The creation of a substitute pool;

(b) The development of needs-based grants for providers in the early achievers program who demonstrate a need for assistance to improve program quality. Needs-based grants may be used for environmental improvements of early learning facilities; purchasing curriculum development, instructional materials, supplies, and equipment; and focused infant-toddler improvements. Priority for the needs-based grants shall be given to culturally diverse and low-income providers;

(c) The development of materials and assessments in a timely manner, and to the extent feasible, in the provider and family home languages; and

(d) The development of flexibility in technical assistance and coaching structures to provide differentiated types and amounts of support to providers based on individual need and cultural context. [2021 c 304 § 7; 2019 c 369 § 5; 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 § 5. Formerly RCW 43.215.101.]

Findings—Intent—2019 c 369: See note following RCW 43.216.091.

Finding—Intent—2015 3rd sp.s. c 7: See note following RCW 43.216.085.