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Tacoma, WA 98402

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Upcoming Events:

Early Achievers Institutes

Best Practices in Early Education and Care
July 13-15, 2018
Yakima Convention Center

Nurturing Early Learning in the Outdoors
Aug. 6-9, 2018

Islandwood Learning Center, Bainbridge Island

Equity Focused Positive Behavior Support
Aug. 13-16, 2018
Hyatt Regency, Renton

<https://depts.washington.edu/cqel/resources/upcoming-events/>

Starting Strong

Aug. 6-8, 2018
Lynwood Convention Center
<http://www.startingstrong.net/>

Elevate Early Learning Conference, presented by Child Care Aware of WA

Sept. 25-26, 2018
Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center
<http://wa.childcareaware.org/EL>



Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Contact us for more information
about Early Achievers:

www.wa.childcareaware.org

1-866-416-4321

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Early Achievers News—Recent Updates & More

There are some exciting things happening in Early Achievers. The Department of Early Learning, now merged into the new Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), has made some great updates that simplify and clarify multiple things. What are the updates about?

First, DEL/DCYF recently released a new aligned parent education curricula list for those providers working toward the Parent Support and Education Quality Standard. The list, available in English, Spanish and Somali, also includes which curricula do not meet the standard. You can find it online at <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ea/AlignedCurriculaList.pdf>

Second, there is now only one parent consent form for Early Achievers data collection, instead of having two versions – one for family child care programs and one for centers. The new forms can be found on DCYF’s website at <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/early-achievers/resources-templates>

Third, certain parts of the Early Achievers Quality Standards are being updated to make them easier to understand and to better connect indicators with points to earn. In general, the updates provide increased clarity by using clear, consistent language and they eliminate duplication.

DEL/DCYF will be providing more information about the updated Quality Standards in the coming months, along with some online tools and resources to help providers get familiar with the updates. Your CCA of WA Early Achievers representative will be able to help too.

What else is new? Early Achievers providers now have access to a new online portal full of helpful resources, discounts, templates and links that are designed to help you manage the business side of your program. Called Washington Child Care Business Edge, the new online portal is available to Early Achievers participants only.

With Edge, providers can save on office supplies, child care staples like diapers and wipes, products for children, food and more, as well as find time-saving tools to help them manage human resources, taxes and trainings. There are even free printable safety posters, a large assortment of forms and convenient links to state and federal child care regulations.

Edge is generously supported by a grant from DEL (now the Department of Children, Youth, and Families). Learn more about Edge on page 3 and stay tuned for more information coming soon. Watch your email for an invitation to join.

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**Save the Date for Elevate 2018!
Sept. 25-26, 2018**

The Elevate Early Learning Conference brings together program directors, trainers and policymakers to attend skill-building sessions and engage in cross-systems conversations to help them become stronger and more successful leaders. This year's gathering will explore sustainable quality. Registration opens soon! <http://wa.childcareaware.org/EL>



Substitutes Available to Help Early Achievers Participants

The Imagine Institute runs the state substitute pool to support Early Achievers providers in their quality improvement work. Eligible providers can qualify to have a substitute for certain Early Achievers activities such as ERS and CLASS preparation, meeting with coaches and working on the file of supporting materials. To be eligible, Early Achievers participants must have served a child on subsidy within the last 12 months, be working toward a Level 3 rating and be in good licensing status. For full details, visit the Imagine Institute's recently updated website here: <http://imaginewa.org/find-a-substitute/>.

Provider Spotlight—Cruz Ortega, Owner, Sweetheart Home Daycare, Lynwood

When Cruz Ortega was a child, she dreamed of owning a candy store. "Now, I have a lot of sweets," she says with a warm smile while gesturing to the children in her care.

Cruz has been in the child care field for many years, including 16 years running her family home program, Sweetheart Home Daycare. She started as a center volunteer years ago, then became an assistant teacher, then was promoted to lead teacher and lastly served as a center assistant supervisor before the birth of her fourth child motivated her to open her own program.

Cruz says she joined Early Achievers soon after it started and has enjoyed many benefits from participating, including earning a scholarship to cover the costs of earning her Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education from Edmonds Community College. She says she has felt more competent in her teaching skills with every course she's taken and with every Early Achievers training she's attended. "I believe knowledge is power," she says.

The warmth and beauty of her early learning environment reflects all she has learned and wishes to share with the children and families in her program. The walls are colorful and bright and her entry way is welcoming and inviting to all. As Cruz interacts with "her" children she constantly seeks ways to maximize every minute with them. For example, recently she wove early numeracy into a fun small motor activity by asking a child who had just strung a bead necklace how long it was and brought out a tape measure for the two of them to use together.

Cruz says the best part of her job is "to watch the children growing and to support them in their development...but at the same time there's a feeling of service and equality." She knows that by supporting children on subsidy, who are often some of the most vulnerable, she is giving them a great start and a firm foundation for lifelong learning.



Button Batteries Are Dangerous for Young Children

More than 2,500 button batteries (the kind that look like coins) are swallowed each year in the U.S. They are extremely harmful to children and can cause severe tissue burns in only two hours. Keep items with button batteries, like key fobs, certain toys and remote controls, away from infants, toddlers and very young children.

If a child has ingested a button battery, or placed it in an ear or nose, that child must immediately be taken to the nearest emergency room. For more information, visit <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Button-Battery-Injuries-in-Children-A-Growing-Risk.aspx>



Help for Families Experiencing Homelessness

Have you ever thought of what you would do if one of the families in your program told you they were homeless and had to withdraw their child? Did you know there is help available to families facing this crisis that can allow their child to continue in licensed child care for up to four months at no cost to them? There is, and the Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center can provide the help these families need to connect them to

the Homeless Grace Period within Working Connections Child Care.

Homelessness across the state of Washington continues to rise, especially for families. Children experiencing homelessness often live in unpredictable, chaotic circumstances, with disruptions in their physical environments and relationships. This can slow their emotional, cognitive and behavioral development. This is why it is so important for young children experiencing homelessness to have access to safe, stable and nurturing child care programs.

What does homelessness look like for families today? Families who live temporarily with family or friends; do not have a home; live in a shelter, car or park; live in transitional housing; or live in Domestic Violence program housing are all considered homeless.

To connect families with young children experiencing homelessness to our Family Center representatives who can help them, please have them call 1-800-446-1114 or visit our website here: <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families/child-care-aware-of-washington-services-for-homeless-families>.

Introducing Washington Child Care Business Edge



Child Care Aware of Washington's new online shared services portal, Washington Child Care Business Edge, is designed to help Early Achievers participants reduce the amount of time they spend on the administrative side of their business, and more time caring for the children and families they serve.

The resources, tools, discounts and supports it offers to Early Achievers participants grew from a study CCA of WA completed last year to learn from providers what they would like help with. Through survey data and focus groups, the items identified were:

- Financial planning, including understanding costs
- Hiring and staffing/human resources and keeping up-to-date with laws and requirements
- Increased purchasing power for supplies and health and business insurance
- Managing revenue, including one-time payments from families and other payers
- Managing administrative issues related to Working Connections subsidy

More resources, information and tools will be added over time. We are excited to hear about how it can help you.

Upcoming Website Changes for both DEL and CCA of WA

Some exciting changes are happening! On July 1, the Department of Early Learning merged into the new Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The resources, supports and information you used to find on DEL's website can now be found on the new DCYF website at <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/>.

CCA of WA's website is being redesigned. We expect to launch our new, easier-to-use and more interactive website later this month. You can still find us online at <http://wa.childcareaware.org/>. Our child care search will remain the same, and families will continue to be able to find licensed child care either online or by calling our Family Center.

Stay Connected!

Follow us on social media to stay on top of all of the latest Early Achievers news and information.

CCA of WA on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Child-Care-Aware-of-Washington-149636987661/>

CCA of WA on Instagram at [wachildcarematters](https://www.instagram.com/wachildcarematters)

CCA of WA on Twitter: [@childcarewa](https://twitter.com/childcarewa)

CCA of WA on Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/CCAofWA>