

RCW 43.216.089 Early achievers program—Final report—Mitigation plan for areas not achieving required rating levels—Data availability—Reports. (1) By December 15, 2020, the department, in consultation with the statewide child care resource and referral network, and the early achievers review subcommittee of the early learning advisory council, shall submit, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, a final report to the governor and the legislature regarding providers' progress in the early achievers program. The report must include the following elements:

(a) The number, and relative percentage, of family child care, outdoor nature-based child care, and center providers who have enrolled in the early achievers program and who have:

(i) Completed the level 2 activities;

(ii) Completed rating readiness consultation and are waiting to be rated;

(iii) Achieved the required rating level to remain eligible for state-funded support under the early childhood education and assistance program or a subsidy under the working connections child care subsidy program;

(iv) Not achieved the required rating level initially but qualified for and are working through intensive targeted support in preparation for a partial rerate outside the standard rating cycle;

(v) Not achieved the required rating level initially and engaged in remedial activities before successfully achieving the required rating level;

(vi) Not achieved the required rating level after completing remedial activities; or

(vii) Received an extension from the department based on exceptional circumstances pursuant to RCW 43.216.085;

(b) A review of the services available to providers and children from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds;

(c) An examination of the effectiveness of efforts to increase successful participation by providers serving children and families from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and providers who serve children from low-income households;

(d) A description of the primary obstacles and challenges faced by providers who have not achieved the required rating level to remain eligible to receive:

(i) A subsidy under the working connections child care program; or

(ii) State-funded support under the early childhood education and assistance program;

(e) A summary of the types of exceptional circumstances for which the department has granted an extension pursuant to RCW 43.216.085;

(f) The average amount of time required for providers to achieve local level milestones within each level of the early achievers program;

(g) To the extent data is available, an analysis of the distribution of early achievers program-rated facilities in relation to child and provider demographics, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, home language, and geographical location;

(h) Recommendations for improving access for children from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds to providers rated at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program;

(i) Recommendations for improving the early achievers program standards;

(j) An analysis of any impact from quality strengthening efforts on the availability and quality of infant and toddler care;

(k) The number of contracted slots that use both early childhood education and assistance program funding and working connections child care program funding;

(l) An analysis of the impact of increased regulations on the cost of child care; and

(m) A description of the early childhood education and assistance program implementation to include the following:

(i) Progress on early childhood education and assistance program implementation as required pursuant to RCW 43.216.515, 43.216.525, and 43.216.555;

(ii) An examination of the regional distribution of new preschool programming by school district;

(iii) An analysis of the impact of preschool expansion on low-income neighborhoods and communities;

(iv) Recommendations to address any identified barriers to access to quality preschool for children living in low-income neighborhoods;

(v) An analysis of any impact of extended day early care and education opportunities directives;

(vi) An examination of any identified barriers for providers to offer extended day early care and education opportunities;

(vii) An analysis of the demand for full-day programming for early childhood education and assistance program providers required under RCW 43.216.515; and

(viii) To the extent data is available, an analysis of the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of early childhood education and assistance program providers and participants.

(2) The elements required to be reported under subsection (1)(a) of this section must be reported at the county level, and for those counties with a population of five hundred thousand and higher, the data must be reported at the zip code level.

(3) If, based on information in an annual report submitted in 2018 or later under this section, fifteen percent or more of the licensed or contracted providers who are participating in the early achievers program in a county or in a single zip code have not achieved the rating levels under RCW 43.216.135 and 43.216.515, the department must:

(a) Analyze the reasons providers in the affected counties or zip codes have not attained the required rating levels; and

(b) Develop a plan to mitigate the effect on the children and families served by these providers. The plan must be submitted to the legislature as part of the final report described in subsection (1) of this section along with any recommendations for legislative action to address the needs of the providers and the children and families they serve.

(4)(a) Beginning December 1, 2020, the department, in collaboration with the statewide child care resource and referral network, shall make available on its public website, in a consumer-friendly format, the following elements:

(i) The number, and relative percentage, of family child care and center child care providers who have enrolled in the early achievers program and who have:

(A) Submitted their request for on-site evaluation and are waiting to be rated; and

(B) Achieved the required rating level to remain eligible for state-funded support under the early childhood education and

assistance program or a subsidy under the working connections child care subsidy program;

(ii) The distribution of early childhood education and assistance program programming by school district; and

(iii) Indicators of supply and demand at the local level, as well as identification of regions or areas in which there are insufficient numbers of child care facilities using nationally developed methodology.

(b) The elements required to be made available under (a)(i) of this subsection (4) must be made available at the county level, and for those counties with a population of five hundred thousand and higher, the data must be reported at the zip code level.

(c) To the extent data are available, the elements required to be reported under (a)(ii) and (iii) of this subsection (4) must be updated at a minimum of a quarterly basis on the department's public website.

(d) If in any individual state fiscal year, based on information reported in (a)(ii) and (iii) of this subsection (4), fifteen percent or more of the licensed or contracted providers who are participating in the early achievers program in a county or in a single zip code have not achieved the rating levels required under RCW 43.216.135 and 43.216.515, the department must:

(i) Analyze the reasons providers in the affected counties or zip codes have not attained the required rating levels; and

(ii) Develop a plan to mitigate the effect on the children and families served by these providers. The plan must be submitted to the legislature by November 1st of the year following the state fiscal year in question, along with any recommendations for legislative action to address the needs of the providers and the children and families they serve.

(5) Beginning September 15, 2021, and each odd-numbered year thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the governor and the legislature outlining the availability and quality of services available to early learning providers and children from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and from low-income neighborhoods and communities. The report must include the following elements:

(a) To the extent data is available, an analysis of the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of early childhood education and assistance program providers and participants, and the providers and participants of working connections child care;

(b) A review of the services available to providers and children from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds;

(c) An examination of the effectiveness of efforts to increase and maintain successful participation by providers serving children and families from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds and providers who serve children from low-income households;

(d) To the extent data is available, the distribution of early achievers program-rated facilities by child and provider demographics, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, home language, and geographical location;

(e) Recommendations for improving and maintaining access for children from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds to providers rated at a level 3 or higher in the early achievers program;

(f) Recommendations to address any identified barriers to access to high quality preschool for children living in low-income neighborhoods;

(g) An examination of expulsion rates of children from diverse racial, ethnic, and diverse cultural backgrounds and from low-income neighborhoods and communities; and

(h) An analysis of how early learning providers and families from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and from low-income neighborhoods and communities have influenced or participated in the department's early learning plans and implementation strategies.

(6) Beginning September 15, 2022, and each even-numbered year thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the governor and the legislature on the availability of supports to providers and their effectiveness at improving quality. The report must include the following elements:

(a) An analysis of the effectiveness of recruitment efforts for new and returning high quality early learning providers and programs;

(b) An analysis of the effectiveness of quality improvement tools and incentives on the retention and quality improvement of early learning professionals;

(c) An analysis of the supply of high quality subsidized early learning. This analysis must include:

(i) An examination of the trend in supply of early learning providers and workers;

(ii) A description of the primary obstacles and challenges faced by providers who have not achieved the required early achievers rating level to remain eligible to receive a subsidy under the working connections child care program or state-funded support under the early childhood education and assistance program;

(iii) The number, and relative percentage, of family child care and center providers who have enrolled in the early achievers program and who have:

(A) Not achieved the required rating level initially but qualified for and are working through intensive targeted support in preparation for a partial rerate outside the standard rating cycle;

(B) Not achieved the required rating level initially and engaged in remedial activities before successfully achieving the required rating level;

(C) Not achieved the required rating level after completing remedial activities; or

(D) Received an extension from the department based on exceptional circumstances pursuant to RCW 43.216.085; and

(iv) Recommendations for improving retention and reducing barriers to entry for early learning providers;

(d) The average amount of time required for providers to achieve local level milestones within each level of the early achievers program;

(e) A summary of the types of exceptional circumstances for which the department has granted an extension to early achievers rating milestones pursuant to RCW 43.216.085;

(f) An analysis of the availability and quality of infant and toddler care; and

(g) An examination of any identified barriers that discourage providers from offering extended day early care and education opportunities.

(7) The information to be disclosed or shared under this section must not include sensitive personal information of in-home caregivers for vulnerable populations as defined in RCW 42.56.640, and must not include any other information protected from disclosure under state or

federal law. [2021 c 304 § 8; 2020 c 262 § 3; 2019 c 369 § 13; 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 § 18. Formerly RCW 43.215.102.]

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.