

**RCW 43.216.080 Integration with other entities.** (1) The foundation of quality in the early care and education system in Washington is the quality rating and improvement system entitled the early achievers program. In an effort to build on the existing quality framework, enhance access to quality care for children, and strengthen the entire early care and education systems in the state, it is important to integrate the efforts of state and local governments, school districts, institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, and nonprofit organizations.

(2) Local governments, school districts, institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, and nonprofit organizations are encouraged to collaborate with the department when establishing and strengthening early learning programs for residents.

(3) Local governments, school districts, institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, and nonprofit organizations may contribute funds to the department for the following purposes:

(a) Initial investments to build capacity and quality in local early care and education programming;

(b) Reductions in copayments charged to parents or caregivers;

(c) To expand access and eligibility in the early childhood education and assistance program.

(4) Funds contributed to the department by local governments, school districts, institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, and nonprofit organizations must be deposited in the early start account established in RCW 43.216.165.

(5) Children enrolled in the early childhood education and assistance program with funds contributed in accordance with subsection (3)(c) of this section are not considered to be eligible children as defined in RCW 43.216.505 and are not considered to be part of the state-funded entitlement required in RCW 43.216.556.

[2019 c 408 s 10; 2017 c 178 s 2; 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 s 15. Formerly RCW 43.215.099.]

**Findings—Intent—2019 c 408:** See note following RCW 43.216.512.

**Intent—2017 c 178:** "The legislature recognizes that local governments, school districts, institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016, and nonprofit organizations play an important role in strengthening the early care and education systems in the state. The legislature acknowledges that these entities may face barriers to investing in early care and education programs. The legislature intends to create a local pathway to high quality early learning to help these entities understand how they can use additional local and private funds with existing funds to expand access for existing programs. The legislature intends for this local pathway to reduce barriers and increase efficiency to provide more high quality early learning opportunities." [2017 c 178 s 1.]

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