

**RCW 43.216.578 Birth to three early childhood education and assistance program—Pilot project—Reports. (Effective until July 1, 2026.)** (1) Within resources available under the federal preschool development grant birth to five grant award received in December 2018, the department shall develop a plan for phased implementation of a birth to three early childhood education and assistance program pilot project for eligible children under thirty-six months old. Funds to implement the pilot project may include a combination of federal, state, or private sources.

(2) The department may adopt rules to implement the pilot project and may waive or adapt early childhood education and assistance program requirements when necessary to allow for the operation of the birth to three early childhood education and assistance program. The department shall consider early head start rules and regulations when developing the provider and family eligibility requirements and program requirements. Any deviations from early head start standards, rules, or regulations must be identified and explained by the department in its annual report under subsection (6) of this section.

(3) (a) Upon securing adequate funds to begin implementation, the pilot project programs must be delivered through child care centers and family home providers who meet minimum licensing standards and are enrolled in the early achievers program.

(b) The department must determine minimum early achievers ratings scores for programs participating in the pilot project.

(4) When selecting pilot project locations for service delivery, the department may allow each pilot project location to have up to three classrooms per location. When selecting and approving pilot project locations, the department shall attempt to select a combination of rural, urban, and suburban locations. The department shall prioritize locations with programs currently operating early head start, head start, or the early childhood education and assistance program.

(5) To be eligible for the birth to three early childhood education and assistance program, a child's family income must be at or below one hundred thirty percent of the federal poverty level and the child must be under thirty-six months old.

(6) Beginning November 1, 2020, and each November 1st thereafter during pilot project activity, the department shall submit an annual report to the governor and legislature that includes a status update that describes the planning work completed, the status of funds secured, and any implementation activities of the pilot project. Implementation activity reports must include a description of the participating programs and number of children and families served. [2019 c 408 § 8.]

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

**RCW 43.216.578 Birth to three early childhood education and assistance program. (Effective July 1, 2026.)** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall administer a birth to three early childhood education and assistance program for eligible children under thirty-six months old. Funds to implement the program may include a combination of federal, state, or private sources.

(2) The department may adopt rules to implement the program and may waive or adapt early childhood education and assistance program requirements when necessary to allow for the operation of the birth to three early childhood education and assistance program. The department shall consider early head start rules and regulations when developing the provider and family eligibility requirements and program requirements.

(3) (a) The birth to three early childhood education and assistance program must be delivered through child care centers and family home providers who meet minimum licensing standards and are enrolled in the early achievers program.

(b) The department must determine minimum early achievers ratings scores for participating contractors.

(4) To be eligible for the birth to three early childhood education and assistance program, a child's family income must be at or below 50 percent of the state median income and the child must be under thirty-six months old. [2021 c 199 § 403; 2019 c 408 § 8.]

**Effective date—2021 c 199 §§ 204-206 and 403:** See note following RCW 43.216.505.

**Findings—Intent—2021 c 199 §§ 402-405:** See note following RCW 43.216.577.

**Short title—Findings—Intent—Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 199:** See notes following RCW 43.216.770.

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