



What are Early Achievers Areas of Specialization?

Child Care Aware of Washington is committed to helping families find high-quality child care and to helping our state's child care providers deliver high-quality care. Thanks to Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system, parents now have an easy-to-understand rating system to help them make more informed child care choices.

Early Achievers is a comprehensive, statewide, research-based program that provides free supports and resources, such as trainings and coaching, to child care providers so they can make improvements to their programs. Early Achievers also provides an easy-to-understand quality rating system that helps families find child care programs that are engaged in continuous quality improvement efforts and have had their quality validated by the University of Washington (UW).

Some Early Achievers providers specialize in key areas of child development. These Areas of Specialization are designated by the UW during an onsite evaluation. They are:

Interactions and Environment

This is the child's experience within the learning environment. It refers to the interactions caregivers have with children and how those interactions create supportive, nurturing relationships and enhance learning. It also refers to how a child care program's space, materials, schedule and routines are organized to enhance learning and maximize children's engagement. Lastly, it refers to the variety of learning materials and activities a program has for children.

Curriculum and Staff Supports

This refers to the learning program a child care provider has that includes goals for children and families, and uses family partnerships to assist with children's learning. It also means this provider has a curriculum that aligns with the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines and supports child development and individualized instruction. Lastly, it indicates that this provider ensures its staff has supports, lesson planning time and training opportunities.

Staff Professionalism

This refers to the professional development of caregivers and teachers. It means that staff at this program have significant training and higher education, and that the program's educational standards align with state guidelines for teacher professionalism.

Family Engagement and Partnerships

This refers to a provider's relationships with families. Providers build relationships with the families of the children in their care by ensuring ongoing communication, and by offering families resources and support for their children as they transition to kindergarten.

Child Outcomes

This refers to the intentional development of instruction and activities that meets an individual child's needs. Providers who excel in this area offer child screening to spot possible developmental concerns, and provide ongoing assessments to monitor each child's progress. This information is shared with families to promote school readiness.

If you need further assistance with your child care search, please contact us at 1-800-446-1114 or visit <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families>.

