



Early Achievers Quality Improvement Awards

Overview

Quality Improvement (QI) Awards are awarded to Early Achievers participants to recognize achievement and support the implementation of quality improvement goals. The Early Start Act of 2015 states that, beginning on July 1, 2016; providers must serve children receiving state child care subsidies to be eligible for QI Awards.

Award eligibility

To be eligible to receive QI Awards, participants must:

- Provide child care to an enrollment population of which at least 5% of total licensed capacity is non-school-age children currently receiving state subsidy.
- Be an active Early Achievers participant with a rating of Level 3 or higher. Family Home Child Care Providers who are a rated Level 2 or higher may qualify for QI Awards.
- Create and maintain a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), as outlined in the Early Achievers Participant Operating Guidelines.
- Register as a vendor of Washington State by submitting the [Statewide Payee Registration form and W-9](#) to the Department of Early Learning. Registration should be completed in the facility name, as funds will not be awarded to individuals. All facilities must submit their payee registration and W-9 prior to receiving a monetary award.

Quality Improvement Award Amounts

QI Awards are distributed annually according to rating level and provider type. Beginning July 1, 2016, the QI Award amounts are:

Family Home Child Care QI Awards

- Level 2 - \$1000
- Level 3 - \$2250
- Level 4 - \$2500
- Level 5 - \$2750

Child Care Center QI Awards

- Level 3 - \$5000
- Level 4 - \$7500
- Level 5 - \$9000

Calculation of the Subsidized Enrollment Population Percentage

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) calculates the percentage of children receiving subsidies by adding the number of non-school-age children on subsidy served each month for the 12 months preceding the rating release date. The total will be divided by the number of months children were present in the facility to determine the average

number of children on subsidy served per month. This average will then be divided by the total licensed capacity of the provider to receive the final percentage of children on subsidy served. Invoices should be submitted promptly to ensure an accurate calculation.

Sample Child Care Center Calculation

The following tables illustrate what this calculation might look like for a typical child care center. In this example, the facility has a licensed capacity of 25 and serves only non-school-age children on a 9-month school calendar. The first table shows the 12-month award period based on a rating release date of August 15th:

Month of Service	Number of children on subsidy served (based on submitted invoices)
August	Closed
September	5
October	5
November	4
December	4
January	0
February	3
March	4
April	4
May	5
June	Closed
July	Closed
Annual Total	34

To determine the center's percentage, the annual total (34) is divided by the number of months the center served children (9) to receive the average number of children receiving subsidy each month (3.77). The average number of children receiving subsidy is divided by the center's average total licensed capacity of 25 for a percentage of 15%, as demonstrated in the second table below:

Total number of children on subsidy served in the last 12 months	Number of months open in the last 12 months	Average number served per month (34/9)	Average total licensed capacity	Percentage of children on subsidy (3.77/25)
34	9	3.77	25	15%

Based on the final percentage, which is higher than the minimum 5%, this facility is eligible for a Quality Improvement Award.

Sample Family Home Child Care Calculation

The following table shows the number of children served each month by a family child care provider serving families with seasonal employment. In this example, the provider has a total licensed capacity of six children but only serves children during part of the year. The provider must be closed for the entire month to have the month excluded from the calculation.

Month of Service	Number of children on subsidy served (based on submitted invoices)
August	1
September	2
October	2
November	2
December	Closed
January	Closed
February	Closed
March	Closed
April	0
May	1
June	1
July	1
Annual Total	10

The number of children on subsidy the provider served each month are added together for a total of 10. This total is then divided by the number of months the provider served children (8) to receive the average number of children receiving subsidy each month (1.25). The average number of children receiving subsidy is divided by the center’s average total licensed capacity of 6 for a percentage of 20.8%, as demonstrated in the second table below:

Total number of children on subsidy served in the last 12 months	Number of months open in the last 12 months	Average number served per month (10/8)	Average total licensed capacity	Percentage of children on subsidy (1.25/6)
10	8	1.25	6	20.8%

Frequently Asked Questions

Which subsidies will count toward the 5% calculation?

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC), Seasonal Child Care (SCC), Homeless Child Care (HCC) and Children's Administration (CA) subsidies for non-school-age children are all included in the percentage calculation. State-funded Medicaid and ECLIPSE child care slots will also count toward your 5% calculation.

What if my program doesn't operate year-round?

Any month in which children were served is included in the percentage calculation. You must be closed for the entire month to have it excluded from the calculation.

Will subsidies for school-age children be counted toward my 5%?

Subsidies for school-age children are not included in the percentage calculation. School-age is defined as children ages 5 and up who are attending Kindergarten or grade school and all children ages 7 and up, regardless of school enrollment.

What if my licensed capacity varies month to month?

If there are changes to your total licensed capacity, DEL will use the average capacity during the months the facility served children.

What do I need to do to receive my QI Award?

You will need to submit your invoices as usual, making sure that all invoices from the award period have been submitted within 30 days of your rating release date. Eligibility will be automatically calculated annually 60 days after the rating release date. Before receiving your award, you must also be registered as a state vendor by filling out a Statewide Payee Registration and W-9 form, which can be found at del.wa.gov/publications/elac-qris/docs/DEL_StateWideVendor_Payee_Form_MERIT.pdf.

I've been rated for several years and have always qualified for QI Awards, based on the rules in place at the time of my rating. Will I continue to qualify until my three-year rating renewal?

Beginning July 1, 2016, all Early Achiever participants must meet the above eligibility requirements, regardless of when they enrolled. Fortunately, you can continue to receive QI Awards in the coming years by providing care for families receiving state child care subsidies. More subsidy information for providers can be found at www.del.wa.gov/requirements/info/subsidy.aspx.

How will I find out if I will receive a QI Award or not?

Rated participants will receive an email from DEL containing the results of the calculation and whether or not they can expect to receive a QI Award approximately 60 calendar days after their rating release date.

I didn't submit all of my invoices before the calculation was made. Can I send them in now?

All invoices must be received by DSHS before the percentage is determined on the 60th day following the rating release date. Once the calculation is completed, no adjustments will be made for additional invoices from the 12-month period.

I received an email stating that I did not qualify for a QI Award and I believe there has been an error. What should I do?

DEL calculations are based on subsidy invoices that have been submitted to DSHS for the 12 full months preceding the participant's rating release date. If you have submitted WCCC, SCC or CA invoices for this time period prior to the calculation and believe that these invoices were not included in your percentage calculation, please contact DSHS to ensure that all invoices have been properly credited to your account. Providers receiving payments from HCC, ECLIPSE or Medicaid should contact DEL at gris@del.wa.gov if they believe there has been a calculation error.

When will I receive my QI Award funds?

QI Awards will be distributed approximately 90 days after the facility's rating release date.

I didn't qualify for a QI Award this year. Can I get one next year?

Your eligibility may change from year to year. The percentage is re-calculated annually 60 days after the anniversary of your rating release date.

What can I spend my QI Award on?

QI Awards are intended to be used toward the achievement of goals outlined on approved Quality Improvement Plans (QIP) and must align with the Early Achievers Quality Standards. Level 2 QI Awards for family home child care providers may be used toward activities that support re-rating. You can find more information about allowable uses for award funds in the Early Achievers Operating Guidelines.

Definitions

Early Achievers – Early Achievers is Washington State’s quality framework. This system of standards and supports help early learning providers make continuous quality improvements in their early learning settings.

Department of Early Learning (DEL) – DEL is the Early Achievers lead agency and is responsible for system development and implementation.

Early Start Act – The Early Start Act is a comprehensive early learning bill passed by the Legislature in July of 2015.

Quality Improvement Awards (QI Awards) – QI Awards are monetary awards given annually to Early Achievers participants who meet the award eligibility requirements outlined in the Early Achievers Operating Guidelines.

Rating Release Date – The date on which DEL sends an email saying that your rating is finalized and can be viewed through the WELS Provider Portal.

Washington State Child Care Subsidies – State child care subsidy programs help eligible families with children pay child care costs. These programs include:

- Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)
- Seasonal Child Care (SCC)
- Homeless Child Care Program (HCCP)
- Children’s Administration (CA)