

# Early Start Act 2014

## *Improving Quality in Early Learning*

**Quality Matters:** The evidence is overwhelming - high quality early learning programs produce significant academic achievement and overall success for students throughout their lives.

High quality programs lead to positive outcomes we all want:

- Higher academic achievement
- Increased graduation rates
- Reduced incarceration rates

**Closing the achievement gap, increasing graduation rates, and breaking the cycle of poverty will be impossible without an improvement in the quality of our early learning programs.**

**Early Achievers** is our nationally-recognized incentive program to improve early learning outcomes for children in Washington State. In fact, we received a federal early learning *Race to the Top* grant in recognition of our beginning work to build a high quality system.

The **Early Start Act** provides a mix of incentives and requirements for providers to become high quality programs.

### **Incentives**

- Tiered reimbursements for Level 3 and higher programs
- Improved coaching and mentoring
- Improved stability with contracted slots and 12-month eligibility

### **Requirements**

- Five years to reach Level 3 or higher for current providers
- New providers with subsidized kids must reach Level 3 within 30 months

This is a bold and ambitious plan for our early learning system. There are several moving pieces, but the end goal is to get 80% of subsidized children into high quality early learning programs by 2020.

## ***The “Why”***

Only high quality programs move the school readiness needle.

Low quality care is *actually bad* for children.

For every dollar invested in high quality preschool programs, taxpayers save up to \$8 in future costs.

## ***Essential elements of high quality learning***

Teachers delivering high quality instruction

Two adults (teacher and aide) in the classroom

Adult-to-child ratios of 2:15 up to 2:22

PreK / early learning standards with rigorous fidelity

Proven curriculum with rigorous fidelity

Professional development (formal and informal)

Dosage of high quality:

- 6.0-6.5 hours per day
- 180-205 days per year



## LEVELS 3, 4, & 5: Points Accumulation

**LEVEL 5**  
91-100 points

**LEVEL 4**  
70-90 points

**LEVEL 3**  
30-69 points

**LEVEL 2**  
Professional  
Growth  
and Facility  
Management

**LEVEL 1**  
Licensing or  
Certification

Levels 3 to 5 are based on points. Your facility rating is determined by the number of points you earn during your independent evaluation. Each assessed facility/family home child care must score at least a 2 on Instructional Support in the CLASS, a 3.5 on Emotional Support and Classroom Organization/Emotional and Behavioral Support in the CLASS and a 3.5 on the ERS to achieve a Level 3 to 5 rating. Facilities that do not meet these minimum thresholds will receive a Level 2 rating.

### POINTS AWARDED FOR THESE AREAS:

- ▶ Child Outcomes
- ▶ Facility Curriculum & Learning Environment & Interactions
- ▶ Professional Development & Training
- ▶ Family Engagement & Partnership

Your overall points will determine your final rating. Degrees and credentials must be verified in MERIT in order to earn professional development points. The points are:

Child Outcomes	<b>+10 points</b>
Facility Curriculum and Learning Environment and Interactions (70 points total)	
Classroom/FCC Home Environment (CLASS/ERS)	<b>+55 points</b>
Curriculum, Learning and Assessment	<b>+15 points</b>
Professional Development and Training	<b>+10 points</b>
Family Engagement and Partnership	<b>+10 points</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>