



WSA Washington State Association
of Head Start & ECEAP



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To Speak with a Head Start or ECEAP Site Participating in Early Achievers Contact:
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***Head Start and ECEAP Programs Receive 4 out of 5 on
Quality Ratings System; Federal Grant Runs out December 2015;
WSA Calls on Governor and Lawmakers to Fund Ratings System***

In 2011 the state of Washington was awarded a four year federal grant to implement our state's Quality Rating and Improvement System called [Early Achievers](#). Much like a hotel or restaurant rating, Early Achievers is meant to inform parents shopping for child care where they can find a quality provider for their child based on an [objective set of measurements](#). Funds from the federal grant go to support the rigorous and evidence based evaluation process conducted by the University of Washington. Providers are then rated from 1 to 5. Providers also receive coaching, mentoring, and professional development to raise their scores through Child Care Aware of WA and current state pre-k contractors. Some additional funds are also available for providers to purchase classroom materials to support quality. More than 2,400 sites are participating in Early Achievers, impacting over 67,000 children.

Today we are happy to report that according to the latest data provided by the Department of Early Learning almost every Head Start and ECEAP programs rated near the very top on the Early Achievers ratings scale. Of the 59 sites that are rated 55 of them scored a 4—and one site received the highest score of 5. This news is further confirmation of the amazing job Head Start and ECEAP programs are doing to ensure that our most at risk preschoolers are ready for kindergarten.

Unfortunately, the federal grant will run out at the end of 2015 and with it the funding to support Early Achievers. We need to make sure funding is available to support Early Achievers so we don't lose all the progress that has been made to date in improving the quality of child care. Our hope is that Governor Inslee and lawmakers in Olympia will agree with us about the importance of quality child care and find the funds necessary to build off of the great start we have made with Early Achievers.

**WSA President-Elect and Director of Community Child Care Center
Mary McDonald, in Pullman, WA said the following:**

"Early Achievers has helped us to improve the quality of our services overall. Our agency provides early childhood education services to a wide range of families and I am truly proud to say that today *all* of our children receive close to the same high quality standards that ECEAP has always provided, no matter what their income. I personally know that having an ECEAP program was of great help to our agency in meeting the Early Achievers standards across the board. We were very excited to rate a high 4 and we are highly motivated to continue to improve services to all our children and families and become a 5. I want to encourage Governor Inslee, Senator Schoesler, and all lawmakers to fund this important initiative so that we don't lose all the gains we have made and we can continue to raise the quality of child care in our state."

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