



Expanding Learning Strategies with Micro-Credentials

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is interested in expanding the learning options that are available to licensed child care professionals by incorporating micro-credentials into the professional development system. This effort will provide learners more choice in how they acquire and develop knowledge and skills in early childhood education and school-age care that will help them ensure that all children and families have an opportunity to flourish.

What is a micro-credential?

A micro-credential is a way to share the knowledge and skills you develop while on the job. Learners can earn a micro-credential by completing activities, assessments, and projects. If their work shows that they have learned the content, they will be awarded a certificate by DCYF.

Micro-credentials can provide a structured approach for job-embedded learning and offer a way of documenting professional learning that may not be recorded in other ways in the professional registry system.

A micro-credential is:

Driven by learner's choice

Competency-based

Personalized to the learners' needs and interests

Responsive to learners' schedules

Job-embedded demonstrations of learning

What will this look like in the DCYF system?

Our vision is to develop eight micro-credentials that would support an early childhood provider who has completed a degree outside of early childhood education and needs to take two college credits in each core competency area to meet their education requirement.



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

As we initially begin to conceptualize micro-credentials within our system, we will build out a model to support licensed child care providers who need a way to meet their education requirements for licensing. The micro-credentials will build onto and supplement their existing degrees outside of early childhood education. For example, a provider with a bachelor's degree in anthropology may complete a series of micro-credentials in early childhood education to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in this area. Once the micro-credential model is designed, it may be used by other programs, such as Early Achievers, to create additional professional development offerings.

Participants in a micro-credential will not earn credits for college-level courses. They may apply what they have learned toward their college's prior learning assessments. Colleges would make the final decision about awarding credit.

How is DCYF getting there?

It will take some time to build out this micro-credential program. To get there, we will pull together a steering committee that will guide the work of this multi-year project. Once this group is convened, we will:

- Identify learning objectives for the micro-credentials
- Develop a micro-credential concept model
- Develop and pilot the micro-credentials

We will use feedback from the pilot to inform the revision and statewide roll-out.



Why now?

Micro-credentials allow professionals to focus their learning on specialized content areas. This learning strategy acknowledges providers' work experience and on-the-job learning and offers targeted supports to strengthen competency areas. Micro-credentials may be a way to bridge a provider's knowledge and experience from already earned degrees outside of early childhood education with the staff qualifications requirements for licensed child care professionals.

Stay Informed

We will provide updates on the micro-credential project on the DCYF website in the future. For now, if you have any questions, please email training@dcyf.wa.gov.

You can also subscribe to the Growing the Workforce Newsletter to stay up-to-date on our developments.

If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact DCYF Constituent Relations (1-800-723-4831 | 360-902-8060, ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov).