RCW 43.216.010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Agency" means any person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, or facility that provides child care and early learning services outside a child's own home and includes the following irrespective of whether there is compensation to the agency:

(a) "Child day care center" and "child care center" mean an agency that regularly provides early childhood education and early learning services for a group of children for periods of less than 24 hours;

(b) "Early learning" includes but is not limited to programs and services for child care; state, federal, private, and nonprofit preschool; child care subsidies; child care resource and referral; parental education and support; and training and professional development for early learning professionals;

(c) "Family day care provider" and "family home provider" mean a child care provider who regularly provides early childhood education and early learning services for not more than 12 children at any given time in the provider's home in the family living quarters except as provided in RCW 43.216.692 and subsection (2)(n) of this section;

(d) "Nongovernmental private-public partnership" means an entity registered as a nonprofit corporation in Washington state with a primary focus on early learning, school readiness, and parental support, and an ability to raise a minimum of $5,000,000 in contributions;

(e) "Outdoor nature-based child care" means an agency or an agency-offered program that:

(i) Enrolls preschool or school-age children;

(ii) Provides early learning services to the enrolled children in an outdoor natural space approved by the department for not less than four hours per day or fifty percent of the daily program hours, whichever is less; and

(iii) Teaches a nature-based curriculum to enrolled children;

(f) "Service provider" means the entity that operates a community facility.

(2) "Agency" does not include the following:

(a) Persons related to the child in the following ways:

(i) Any blood relative, including those of half-blood, and including first cousins, nephews or nieces, and persons of preceding generations as denoted by prefixes of grand, great, or great-great;

(ii) Stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, and stepsister;

(iii) A person who legally adopts a child or the child's parent as well as the natural and other legally adopted children of such persons, and other relatives of the adoptive parents in accordance with state law; or

(iv) Spouses of any persons named in (a)(i), (ii), or (iii) of this subsection, even after the marriage is terminated;

(b) Persons who are legal guardians of the child;

(c) Persons who care for a neighbor's or friend's child or children, with or without compensation, where the person providing care for periods of less than 24 hours does not conduct such activity on an ongoing, regularly scheduled basis for the purpose of engaging in business, which includes, but is not limited to, advertising such care;

(d) Parents on a mutually cooperative basis exchange care of one another's children;

(e) Nursery schools that are engaged primarily in early childhood education with preschool children and in which no child is enrolled on a regular basis for more than four hours per day;

(f) Schools, including boarding schools, that are engaged primarily in education, operate on a definite school year schedule, follow a stated academic curriculum, and accept only school age children;

(g) Seasonal camps. For purposes of this chapter, "seasonal camp" means a program that:

(i) Operates for three months or less within a period of twelve consecutive months;

(ii) Is engaged primarily in recreational or educational activities conducted on a closely supervised basis; and

(iii) Is owned by any person, organization, association, or corporation, or is operated by a federal, state, county, or municipal government;

(h) Facilities providing child care for periods of less than 24 hours when a parent or legal guardian of the child remains on the premises of the facility for the purpose of participating in:

(i) Activities other than employment; or

(ii) Employment of up to two hours per day when the facility is operated by a nonprofit entity that also operates a licensed child care program at the same facility in another location or at another facility;

(i) Any entity that provides recreational or educational programming for school age children only and the entity meets all of the following requirements:

(i) The entity utilizes a drop-in model for programming, where children are able to attend during any or all program hours without a formal reservation;

(ii) The entity does not assume responsibility in lieu of the parent, unless for coordinated transportation;

(iii) The entity is a local affiliate of a national nonprofit; and

(iv) The entity is in compliance with all safety and quality standards set by the associated national agency;

(j) A school-day early childhood education and assistance program or head start program that is located in a public school building or community or technical college building, or on the premises of a public school or community or technical college;

(k) A program operated by any unit of local, state, or federal government;

(l) A program located within the boundaries of a federally recognized Indian reservation, licensed by the Indian tribe;

(m) A program located on a federal military reservation, except where the military authorities request that such agency be subject to the licensing requirements of this chapter;

(n) A family home provider located in the surrounding metropolitan area of a federal military reservation and is overseen and currently certified by a federal military service; or

(o) A program that offers early learning and support services, such as parent education, and does not provide child care services on a regular basis.

(3) "Applicant" means a person who requests or seeks employment in an agency.

(4) "Certificate of parental improvement" means a certificate issued under RCW 74.13.720 to an individual who has a founded finding

of physical abuse or negligent treatment or maltreatment, or a court finding that the individual's child was dependent as a result of a finding that the individual abused or neglected their child pursuant to RCW 13.34.030(6)(b).

(5) "Conviction information" means criminal history record information relating to an incident which has led to a conviction or other disposition adverse to the applicant.

(6) "Department" means the department of children, youth, and families.

(7) "Early achievers" means a program that improves the quality of early learning programs and supports and rewards providers for their participation.

(8) "Early childhood education and assistance program contractor" means an organization that provides early childhood education and assistance program services under a signed contract with the department.

(9) "Early childhood education and assistance program provider" means an organization that provides site level, direct, and high quality early childhood education and assistance program services under the direction of an early childhood education and assistance program contractor.

(10) "Education data center" means the education data center established in RCW 43.41.400, commonly referred to as the education research and data center.

(11) "Employer" means a person or business that engages the services of one or more people, especially for wages or salary to work in an agency.

(12) "Enforcement action" means denial, suspension, revocation, modification, or nonrenewal of a license pursuant to RCW 43.216.325(1) or assessment of civil monetary penalties pursuant to RCW 43.216.325(3).

(13) "Extended day program" means an early childhood education and assistance program that offers early learning education for at least 10 hours per day, a minimum of 2,000 hours per year, at least four days per week, and operates year-round.

(14) "Family resource and referral linkage system" means a system that connects families to resources, services, and programs for which families are eligible and uses a database that is developed and maintained in partnership with communities, health care providers, and early learning providers.

(15) "Family resource center" means a unified single point of entry where families, individuals, children, and youth in communities can obtain information, an assessment of needs, referral to, or direct delivery of family services in a manner that is welcoming and strength-based.

(a) A family resource center is designed to meet the needs, cultures, and interests of the communities that the family resource center serves.

(b) Family services may be delivered directly to a family at the family resource center by family resource center staff or by providers who contract with or have provider agreements with the family resource center. Any family resource center that provides family services shall comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations regarding the delivery of such family services, unless required waivers or exemptions have been granted by the appropriate governing body.

(c) Each family resource center shall have one or more family advocates who screen and assess a family's needs and strengths. If requested by the family, the family advocate shall assist the family with setting its own goals and, together with the family, develop a written plan to pursue the family's goals in working towards a greater level of self-reliance or in attaining self-sufficiency.

(16) "Full day program" means an early childhood education and assistance program that offers early learning education for a minimum of 1,000 hours per year.

(17) "Inspection report" means a written or digital record or report created by the department that identifies or describes licensing violations or conditions within an agency. An inspection report does not include a child care facility licensing compliance agreement as defined in RCW 43.216.395.

(18) "Low-income child care provider" means a person who administers a child care program that consists of at least 80 percent of children receiving working connections child care subsidy.

(19) "Low-income neighborhood" means a district or community where more than 20 percent of households are below the federal poverty level.

(20) "Negative action" means a court order, court judgment, or an adverse action taken by an agency, in any state, federal, tribal, or foreign jurisdiction, which results in a finding against the applicant reasonably related to the individual's character, suitability, and competence to care for or have unsupervised access to children in child care. This may include, but is not limited to:

(a) A decision issued by an administrative law judge;

(b) A final determination, decision, or finding made by an agency following an investigation;

(c) An adverse agency action, including termination, revocation, or denial of a license or certification, or if pending adverse agency action, the voluntary surrender of a license, certification, or contract in lieu of the adverse action;

(d) A revocation, denial, or restriction placed on any professional license; or

(e) A final decision of a disciplinary board.

(21) "Nonconviction information" means arrest, founded allegations of child abuse, or neglect pursuant to chapter 26.44 RCW, or other negative action adverse to the applicant.

(22) "Nonschool age child" means a child who is age six years or younger and who is not enrolled in a public or private school.

(23) "Part day program" means an early childhood education and assistance program that offers early learning education for at least two and one-half hours per class session, at least 320 hours per year, for a minimum of 30 weeks per year.

(24) "Private school" means a private school approved by the state under chapter 28A.195 RCW.

(25) "Probationary license" means a license issued as a disciplinary measure to an agency that has previously been issued a full license but is out of compliance with licensing standards.

(26) "Requirement" means any rule, regulation, or standard of care to be maintained by an agency.

(27) "School age child" means a child who is five years of age through 12 years of age and is attending a public or private school or is receiving home-based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW.

(28) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department.

(29) "Washington state preschool program" means an education program for children three-to-five years of age who have not yet entered kindergarten, such as the early childhood education and assistance program. [2026 c 54 s 1; 2025 c 181 s 1. Prior: 2021 c 304 s 2; 2021 c 199 s 501; 2021 c 39 s 4; prior: 2020 c 270 s 11; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 s 201; prior: 2016 c 231 s 1; 2016 c 169 s 3; 2015 3rd sp.s. c 7 s 19; prior: 2013 c 323 s 3; 2013 c 130 s 1; prior: 2011 c 295 s 3; 2011 c 78 s 1; prior: 2007 c 415 s 2; 2007 c 394 s 2; 2006 c 265 s 102. Formerly RCW 43.215.010.]

Short title—Findings—Intent—Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 199: See notes following RCW 43.216.770.

Intent—Findings—2021 c 39: See note following RCW 74.14C.010.

Effective date—2020 c 270: See note following RCW 74.13.720.

Effective date—2017 3rd sp.s. c 6 ss 102, 104-115, 201-227, 301-337, 401-419, 501-513, 801-803, and 805-822: See note following RCW 43.216.025.

Finding—Intent—2016 c 169: See note following RCW 43.216.735.

Finding—Intent—2015 3rd sp.s. c 7: See note following RCW 43.216.085.

Finding—Declaration—2007 c 394: "The legislature finds that education is the single most effective investment that can be made in children, the state, the economy, and the future. A well-educated citizenry is essential both for the preservation of democracy and for enhancing the state's ability to compete in the knowledge-based global economy.

As recommended by Washington learns, the legislature declares that the overarching goal for education in the state is to have a world-class, learner-focused, seamless education system that educates more Washingtonians to the highest levels of educational attainment." [2007 c 394 s 1.]

Captions not law—2007 c 394: "Captions used in this act are not any part of the law." [2007 c 394 s 8.]