“The Department of Early Learning develops, implements and coordinates system oversight to early learning policy and programs that create safe, healthy, nurturing learning experiences for all Washington children.”
Who is DEL?

DEL is the acronym for the Department of Early Learning.

DEL licenses and monitors Washington's 7,400-plus licensed child care settings in family homes and centers that serve about 174,000 children.

DEL licensors support child care business owners and their staff in offering safe, healthy care, and take action if settings are found to be unsafe for Washington's children.
DEL also oversees the state professional development system (STARS) to help ensure that those who care for and teach young children continue to increase their skills and education levels.
What is MERIT?

MERIT is the acronym for Managed Education and Registry Information Tool.

MERIT replaces the STARS database as the place for information on STARS approved training and education.

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is the State agency in charge of child care licensing and managing the STARS program.

MERIT is a Web Based Database Managed by DEL.
MERIT is the acronym for Managed Education and Registry Information Tool

**MERIT** is designed as a tool for all those who work with young children and their families in an early care and education or school-age program. This includes licensed child care professionals in family home and center-based care, Head Start professionals, Early Care and Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) professionals, preschool teachers, school-age professionals and administrators who support the direct care of children.

**MERIT is a Web Based Database Managed by DEL**
There are three types of licensed child care in Washington State. All licensed child care must follow the licensing laws – WAC’s.

**Types of Licensed Child Care**

- **Family Home Child Care**
  - Care provided in the residence of the provider.
  - Children 1 month to 12 years according to licensed capacity.

- **Child Care Center**
  - Located in a commercial building, public or private school, or church setting.
  - Children 1 month to 12 years according to licensed capacity.

- **School-Age Care**
  - Sometimes located in elementary school setting.
  - Children 5 to 12 years of age only.
Maximum allowable capacity of a child care center is determined based on usable square footage and available toilets and sinks. The licensed capacity is based on DEL's evaluation of the program, the ages and characteristics of the children, the experience of the staff, and usable floor space.

*Licensed capacity is the number of children which is permitted to be present in the child care facility at one time.*
You must ensure the required staff-to-child ratios are met at all times when children are in your care. In centers licensed for thirteen or more children, the licensee must conduct group activities within the group size and staff-to-child ratio requirements, according to the age of the children.
The most common type of child care in the United States provided other than by a relative or parent is called family child care. In this type of program, child care is provided in a private home.

Washington State requires that a family child care home is licensed by the Department of Early Learning just as a Child Care Center.
The basics of providing developmentally appropriate care, adequate supervision, liability, and nutrition are much the same as a center. However, family child care providers have a different set of regulations (WAC's) which they must follow.
Each employee and volunteer in a child care program is responsible for completing a number of forms for complying with certain licensing rules and policies in order to maintain their employment with the program. In addition, if a center employs more than five people, certain written policies must be in place and discussed with each employee that is hired. Each employee will have a personnel file with required items that will be monitored by the licensor.
During a monitoring visit, the licensor will review if the program is in compliance with the licensing rules, also known as WACs or Washington Administrative Codes. The WACs can be found in a document called the Child Care Center Licensing Guidebook or the Family Home Child Care Licensing Guide as well as online. The guidebooks are used as primary texts for this course and assist everyone who works in early learning programs to implement the requirements of licensing.
Both the Center Guidebook and the FHCC Guide are useful resources, helpful in answering questions and guiding day-to-day practice. Sometimes addendum's and additions are made to the WACs. Updates will be posted on the Department of Early Learning’s website.
As you begin your work with children, it will be necessary for you to be aware of the Washington State licensing rules, and to be able to find the information quickly and accurately if needed.
You have probably noticed as you look through the Center Guidebook or FHCC Guide in this course that the WACs are divided into sections including:

1. Licensing
2. Staffing
3. Program
4. Health and nutrition
5. Care of Young Children
6. Safety and environment
7. Agency practices
8. Records, reporting and posting
Within each section are listings of the WACs written in numerical order.

Family Child Care WACs have a letter A in the middle sequence of numbers listed for the WAC. If a center fails to comply with the WAC, civil fines can be imposed or in some cases licenses can be denied, suspended, or revoked.
This slide show is complete.

Click on next page to continue with the training.