

WV Tiered Reimbursement Policy and Procedures

Updated May 2025

Eligibility Policies: Tier II and III Programs	
1.	To be eligible for Tier II or III, childcare centers and facilities must have a regular 2-year operating license through the WV Department of Human Services, Division of Early Care and Education and have been in operation for a minimum of 1 year. Family childcare homes must have a regular certificate of registration for at least 1 year in WV. a. Programs with an initial or provisional license will not be eligible for tiered reimbursement.
2.	Programs applying for Tier II or III quality status must hold a current provider service agreement (PSA) in good standing with the local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency. a. If a program has a PSA but does not currently have any subsidized children enrolled in care, the program is eligible to apply for tiered reimbursement.
3.	Programs applying for Tier II or III must not have been placed on a provisional license or provisional certificate of registration for noncompliance(s) within the past 6 months.
4.	Programs applying for Tier III through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) must apply for the highest level of accreditation called Accreditation+ in order to be eligible for Tier III designation with the WV Tiered Reimbursement System. a. The first two levels of the NAEYC Accreditation Model, NAEYC Recognized and NAEYC Accredited, are not eligible for Tier III status and payment rates. Nor are they eligible for reimbursement of fees from WV Quality Support Services. b. Programs working toward the highest level of the NAEYC Accreditation model, called Accreditation+, can find information about associated fee reimbursement and the reimbursement rates on the WV Quality Support Services link. (https://www.wvearlychildhood.org/wv-quality-support-services)
5.	Any program that has submitted an application for Tier II status and been denied must wait a minimum of 6 months before reapplying for a higher tier.
6.	Existing Tier II programs that change the type of care they provide (i.e., from a home to a facility, facility to center) must be in operation for a minimum of 1 year before applying for a higher tier.
7.	Programs applying for Tier II quality status must submit a Tiered Reimbursement application and all required documentation for review to be considered.
8.	In the event a Tier II or III program is under investigation by Child Protective Services/IUU, the program may retain the quality tier level during the investigation until a claim is substantiated, assuming that all other eligibility criteria are met. Substantiated claims that cause a program to be placed on a provisional license will result in that program's higher Tier status being revoked and returning to Tier I status.
9.	If a program's Tier II status is revoked due to non-compliances of Tier II standards, the program's eligibility to reapply for Tier II quality status will be determined by their local Quality Improvement Specialist once all standards have been successfully corrected.

Renewing Tier Status Policies: Tier II and III Programs

1. As the time approaches for a program to renew Tier II quality status, a notification letter will be sent by mail to the program. This will include a deadline date by which to submit validation materials to the Division of Early Care and Education. If the materials are not received at the Division by the deadline date given, the Tier II quality status may lapse until the Division has had up to 60 days from the application due date to review the documentation materials.
2. Programs that have been approved for Tier II quality status must renew their status on an annual basis with the Division of Early Care and Education.
 - a. Each year, new documentation must be submitted with updated and accurate information to maintain the Tier II reimbursement rate. Environment Rating Scale self-assessments for each age group must be completed on an annual basis.
3. **Applicants are expected to keep a copy of their renewal application and supporting documentation on site.** Material that is submitted to the Division of Early Care and Education will not be retained after review. Any Department employee, or its representative, may come to the approved program to review validation material at any time. Programs have the option to send return postage to the Division so that binders or flash drives may be returned to the program by mail. Any documentation not requested to be returned will be destroyed 90 days after approval or denial of application.
4. Tier III programs that are renewing accreditation must submit all required paperwork and fees to the approved accrediting agency on time to prevent a lapse in Tier III reimbursement rates.
 - a. In the event a program has submitted all required paperwork and fees, but is waiting an excessive amount of time on a validation visit from the accrediting agency, the program may send a copy of the paperwork submitted and proof of payment to the Division of Early Care and Education for consideration to remain at a Tier III quality status until a decision has been made on the part of the accrediting agency.
 - b. **This request will only be considered if the Division of Early Care and Education has been contacted a minimum of 30 days prior to the accreditation expiration date. If the Division is not contacted within the required timeframe, the program will return to Tier I status until approval from the accrediting body has been received by the Division.**

Bonus Payment Policies: Tier II and III Programs

1. A one-time bonus payment will be awarded to programs that advance in quality tier level. Bonus amounts are determined based on available funding.
 - a. Annual Tier II renewals will not be considered for bonus payments to programs.
 - b. A Tier II or III program that returns to Tier I quality status due to non-renewal or revoked status is not eligible for a second bonus payment if they are approved for a higher tier within a 3-year period.

General Policies: Tier II Programs

1. Upon submission of an application, the program administrator claims the information and supporting documentation to be true and complete to the best of their knowledge. It is also understood the Department, or its representative, may contact the administrator or childcare staff to verify the contents of the application. Submitting false information and/or documentation will result in an automatic denial or revocation of higher quality status. Any program found to have submitted false information or documentation must wait six months to reapply.
2. Applicants are expected to keep a copy of their renewal application and supporting documentation on site. Material that is submitted to the Division of Early Care and Education will not be retained after review. Any Department employee, or its representative, may come to the approved program to review validation material at any time. Programs have the option to send return postage to the Division so that binders or flash drives may be returned to the program by mail. Any documentation not requested to be returned will be destroyed 90 days after approval or denial of application.
3. The liability insurance requirement for family childcare home can be met in one of two ways (FCC Homes only): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A homeowner's insurance policy that includes the childcare business. If this option is used, applicants must submit a letter or other documentation from their insurance company stating the company is aware of multiple children being cared for in the home and they are assuming liability for the childcare business. Otherwise, you will have to use option b below. b. A separate business liability insurance policy.
4. Programs must contact their local Quality Improvement Specialist for a documentation review prior to applying for Tier II quality status. Documentation not reviewed prior to submission will be returned to the provider/program.
5. Tier II documentation material may be submitted in one of 2 formats: in a three-ring binder organized and divided into sections of tiered standards or on a flash drive with an electronic copy of all documentation material saved, organized, and labeled according to the tiered standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No faxed or emailed documentation will be accepted.
6. Tier II programs will return to a Tier I status if placed on a provisional license or provisional certificate of registration exceeding 30 days. Tier II programs that have had their status revoked due to a provisional license must wait a minimum of 6 months before reapplying for a higher tier.
7. Tier II programs must notify the Tiered Reimbursement/QRIS Coordinator within 5 business days of any changes in their operating license.
8. The Division of Early Care and Education is allowed 60 days from the date of receipt to process an initial tiered reimbursement application and 60 days from the expiration of current Tier II quality status to report approval or denial.
9. Tier II applications that are submitted with minimal missing, inaccurate or incomplete documentation items will result in the applicant being notified of the missing documents and given a deadline date by which to submit them. The application can only remain in a pending status for up to 2 weeks. If the missing documentation is not received by the deadline date, the application will be denied, and the applicant can reapply in 6 months. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tier II applications that are submitted with a substantial amount of missing, inaccurate or incomplete documentation will result in an automatic denial. b. Tier II applications that reflect use of a non-approved curriculum will result in an automatic denial. See the weblink below for the approved curriculum list.

<https://dhhr.wv.gov/bfa/ece/Provider%20Information/Pages/Tiered-Reimbursement.aspx>

10. Quality supplemental reimbursement rates will take effect on the first day of the month following the month of approval for Tier II.

11. Tiered reimbursement applicants have the right to request a conference or file a grievance. To do so, applicants must submit in writing a request for a conference or a statement of complaint to the Division of Early Care and Education within 90 days of the date of the action.

Staff and Professional Development Policies: Tier II Programs

1. For the purpose of Tier II standard requirements, qualified staff refer to staff members who have a high school diploma or GED and meet the requirements for position of director, assistant director, lead teacher, teacher, assistant teacher, teaching assistant, and substitutes (as defined in WV Childcare Licensing and Regulatory Regulations).

2. Professional development requirements for Tier II must be met with training that is either registered with WV STARS or from an accredited college or university.

3. For Tier II initial applications reviewed and approved after October 2023, all required professional development core knowledge/content areas are to be within the past 3 years prior to the application submission.

a. For all Tier II programs, any staff hired or rehired after October 2023 as also held to this requirement for professional development.

4. The following regional accrediting associations will be accepted when considering academic courses for completion of Tier II requirements: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

5. All qualified staff are required to complete the required training hours as stated in the Tier II application annually regardless of how many hours they are scheduled to work on a weekly basis.

6. Staff members with a teaching certificate who are employed by the Board of Education for WV Pre-K or kindergarten classrooms are not required to complete the 18 hours of professional development annually.

a. If staff members with a teaching certificate are employed by the center, then they are required to complete the professional development requirements for Tier II.

b. If the staff member works only during the school year (9 mos.) and is not working during the summer months, professional development requirements can be pro-rated for 9 months of the year (13.5 hours).

7. WV STARS will recognize 'non-registered training' of up to 15 hours of the required 45 to renew a WV STARS Credential. Therefore, tiered reimbursement policy will reflect approval of up to 6 hours of the required 18 professional development hours for Tier II.

a. Only Non-STARS hours reflected on the WV STARS transcript will be accepted. College transcripts may be submitted for verification of approved courses.

8. Professional development for new staff members may be pro-rated according to the date of hire. Pro-rating of new staff is limited to 25% of the total number of staff in a program. For instance, a program with 16 staff members will be allowed to pro-rate professional development for up to 4 staff.

<p>a. The staff members <u>must</u> be newly hired to the program (within 12 months of a Tier II application submission), and the pro-rated amount is determined in 3-month increments. See the weblink below for the staff pro-rate information https://dhhr.wv.gov/bfa/ece/Provider%20Information/Documents/Tier%20II%20Provision%20for%20New%20Staff%20Members-revised%2082016.pdf</p>
<p>9. In regard to the conference requirement for Tier II: A conference is defined as multiple training sessions with a keynote speaker or an all-day training institute on the same topic with a minimum of 6 documented training hours. However, some trainings that do not qualify as a conference may fit this description. For the purpose of Tier II, a professional development event that may qualify as a conference is subject to approval by the Division of Early Care and Education.</p> <p>a. Super Saturdays do not meet the Tier II requirement of annual attendance at an early childhood conference. See Appendix 1 for a list of Approved Conferences for Tiered Reimbursement or inquire with the WV Tiered Reimbursement/QRIS Coordinator.</p>
<p>10. Only the Environment Rating Scales written by Harms, Cryer, and Clifford (ITERS-3, ECERS-3, FCCERS-3, SACERS-Updated) will be accepted for the Tier II ERS requirement.</p> <p>a. The most current edition of each Environment Rating Scale must be used and accurately completed including individual items and subscales.</p> <p>b. The Rating Scales for each age group are meant to be self-assessments conducted by program director to develop a plan of action for quality improvement.</p> <p>c. Scores on the self-assessment are not factored into the approval or denial of an application.</p>

General Policies: Tier III Programs	
1.	Programs applying for Tier III are required to submit a tiered reimbursement application form (Section I- Program Information and Section VIII- Self-Certifying Statements pages) along with a current accreditation certificate from an approved accrediting body. No additional documentation is required for programs applying for Tier III quality status.
2.	Quality supplemental reimbursement rates will take effect on the first day of the month following the month of approval for Tier III.
3.	Tier III programs that change provider type may retain their Tier III status if there is no change in their accreditation status.
4.	Tier III programs that are placed on a provisional license or provisional certificate of registration will return to a Tier I quality status. Tier III programs that have had their tier status revoked may return to a Tier III status once they are placed back on a regular operating license or certificate of registration given that their national accreditation certificate is still valid.
5.	Tier III programs must notify the Tiered Reimbursement/QRIS Coordinator within 5 business days of any changes in their operating license.
6.	Tiered reimbursement applicants have the right to request a conference or file a grievance. To do so, applicants must submit in writing a request for a conference or a statement of complaint to the Division of Early Care and Education within 90 days of the date of the action.