

Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT)

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CONTACTING DEL OR MERIT SUPPORT STAFF:

If your question is not answered here, you can find more information at www.del.wa.gov/stars. You may also e-mail MERIT support staff at merit@del.wa.gov or call 1.866.482.4325 and choose option 8. DEL will respond to your request. **E-mailing is quicker; please consider using this method instead of calling.**

[GENERAL MERIT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS](#)

Q1: What is MERIT?

A: The Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT) is the new online statewide training database administered by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) for early learning professionals, STARS-approved trainers and training organizations and DEL staff. MERIT is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and tracks STARS-approved training, employment and educational information. MERIT also serves as part of Washington's professional development system.

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Q2: When MERIT is fully launched, what will it do?

A: When fully launched, MERIT will:

- a. Allow users to access and easily manage their information.
- b. Give automatic notifications of critical information and deadlines to users.
- c. Allow early learning professionals to apply online for:
 - STARS IDs (provided immediately upon completing the online application and sent via e-mail)
 - A new password if the previous one is forgotten (new password sent immediately via e-mail)
 - STARS Scholarships
 - Educational Exemptions and Continuing Education Credits and Proposals
- d. Allow STARS-approved trainers and training organizations to:
 - Add information for available trainings online so early learning professionals can easily search for them and link quickly to training registry sites
 - Allow entry of training completion information that will automatically update the attendees' MERIT profiles
 - Give access to child care center administrators, family home child care providers and DEL licensors to view employee training history
 - Produce reliable and timely reports for DEL

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Q3: Why is DEL launching MERIT in phases? Why can't everything be launched at once?

A: Because this is such a large change in systems, it is important that each phase of the program be tested thoroughly and adjustments made prior to statewide release. DEL must also ensure we have internal support in place for the users and each phase of the program.

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Q4: What's the difference between MERIT and STARS?

A: MERIT is the tool to help track early learning professionals' education, training and professional development and it houses the STARS-approved trainings, trainers and training organizations. The State Training and Registry System (STARS) regulates the licensing and training requirements that are in statute for child care providers in Washington.

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Q5: Do I still have to meet STARS requirements according to licensing rules?

A: Yes. All the STARS training requirements in [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#) remain in place. There's more information about child care licensing rules on DEL's website at www.del.wa.gov/laws/rules/licensing.aspx.

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Q6: How can early learning professionals learn how to use MERIT?

A: Visit the MERIT homepage merit.del.wa.gov and click on the link for the Early Learning Professional User Manual, located on the right-hand side of the screen. The manual is easy-to-use. There are illustrated step-by-step instructions for everything you can do in MERIT.

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Q7: How can trainers and training organizations learn how to use MERIT?

A: DEL offered two recorded webinars for trainers and training organizations which you can watch at: http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/licensing/video/MERIT_webinar.wmv. On the MERIT homepage merit.del.wa.gov, there is a user manual for trainers and training organizations with illustrated step-by-step instructions for everything you can do in MERIT.

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MERIT PROFILE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Early Learning Professionals

Q8: What is the difference between a MERIT profile, a MERIT account and a STARS ID?

A: Your MERIT profile is the complete record that includes your MERIT account information and your education, employment and training history. When you register as an early learning professional in MERIT, the process includes creating a MERIT account and requesting a STARS ID.

Your MERIT account is the information that includes your personal and contact details: name, address, phone number, etc. Your STARS ID is your personal training number, which you will give to trainers when you take training so they can assign you STARS credit in your MERIT profile.

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Q9: Do I still use my previous STARS ID in MERIT?

A: Yes. Your STARS ID will continue to be your personal training ID number and the first time you sign in to MERIT, it will be your username.

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Q10: How do I find my STARS ID and log into my MERIT profile?

A: Find your STARS ID using the early learning professional search. Instructions are located on the sign in page and in the Early Learning Professional User Manual.

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Q11: Should I still search for my STARS ID in MERIT if:

- a) I never had a STARS ID?
- b) I don't remember if I had a STARS ID?
- c) I applied for a STARS ID before April 1, 2010 but I did not receive a response to my application?

A: Yes. We continued to receive STARS ID requests after the STARS database went offline. We processed all these requests and assigned STARS IDs. Find your STARS ID using the early learning professional search. Instructions are located on the sign in page and in the Early Learning Professional User Manual.

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Q12: I don't have access to a computer or the internet. How do I access MERIT or submit applications?

A: Paper applications are available. You may contact DEL for an application by calling toll-free 1.866.482.4325 and select option 8. When you leave a message please clearly spell your address, spell your name and include a contact phone number with area code.

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MERIT PROFILE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: STARS Trainers and Training Organizations

Q13: I am currently a STARS-approved trainer or training organization. How do I renew my approval status?

A: Until you are contacted by DEL with specific instructions, you will remain approved and you can continue to offer training with no renewal application or fees. Current approval dates extend to June 30, 2011.

* A trainer or training organization can lose its STARS approval status if DEL determines that the trainings do not meet the appropriate standards.

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Q14: How do individuals or organizations become STARS-approved to provide training?

A: No applications are being accepted for new trainers or training organizations after March 31, 2010. We are reviewing our approval process and will be accepting new applications at a later point in time. Please check our website for updates on how to become approved as a trainer or training organization.
www.del.wa.gov/stars

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Q15: I applied to be a STARS-approved trainer or training organization before March 31, 2010 but did not receive a response to my application; can I provide training now?

A: No. In order to provide STARS-approved training, you needed to receive your approval before March 31, 2010. DEL will contact you at a later date about finishing this approval process.

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STARS-APPROVED TRAINING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q16: What is STARS-approved training?

A: STARS-approved training is any training provided by a STARS-approved trainer or training organization that meets licensing requirements. For every STARS-approved training taken, the attendee should receive:

1. A certificate of completion within one week following the training end date, that includes:
 - a. Name of participant
 - b. Title, date and number of hours of training
 - c. Name, signature and STARS ID Number of approved trainer
 - d. Core Competency area(s) (for continuing education only)
 - e. Audience: family child care, school-age program, or child care center or mixed group (for 20-Hour Basic only)
2. A receipt if payment was made, which includes:
 - a. Date
 - b. Payer name
 - c. Payment amount
 - d. Who is being paid
 - e. What payment is for
 - f. For whom payment is made, if applicable

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Q17: How do I find STARS-approved training?

A: You can search for STARS-approved training in the MERIT merit.del.wa.gov without signing in. Detailed instructions are located in the user manuals on the homepage if necessary.

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Q18: Are all the trainings, trainers and training organizations listed in MERIT STARS-approved?

A: Yes. Currently all trainings, trainers and training organizations are STARS-approved. In the future, MERIT may include outside training.

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Q19: Do I need a STARS ID or MERIT profile to take STARS-approved training?

A: No, anyone can take training. However, to have your STARS credit recorded you must be registered as an early learning professional in MERIT. Registering is the process of creating a MERIT profile, and includes applying for a STARS ID and a MERIT account.

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Q20: How will I get credit for completed STARS-approved trainings?

A: When you register for or attend STARS-approved training, please provide the STARS-approved trainer your STARS ID. Following your successful completion of the training, the trainer will enter your information in MERIT and it will automatically show up on your profile.

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Q21: What should I do with my training certificates?

A: You should always receive a certificate of completion as proof that you successfully completed any training within one week following the training end date. Keep original copies of that documentation. When asked to verify your training, only provide a copy of the certificate to the requestor.

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Q22: How do I request an educational exemption for the 20-Hour Basic STARS Training?

A: An educational exemption is not required; it is one way to meet the 20-hour Basic STARS Training requirement. If your educational background demonstrates that you have met licensing requirements in accordance with the 20-hour Basic STARS training guidelines, you may request DEL to review your information and grant you an exemption. More specific criteria and guidelines are included on the application form. In the future, you will be able to apply for an educational exemption online through MERIT. Currently, you may:

1. Find the Educational Exemption form by clicking the STARS Forms link on the MERIT homepage: merit.del.wa.gov
2. Print the form in either English or Spanish.
3. Follow the instructions on the form by filling it out and gathering the appropriate documents.
4. Sign the application.
5. Mail or fax the application to:
Department of Early Learning
Attn: MERIT
PO Box 40970
Olympia, WA 98501

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Q23: Can I get STARS credit for trainings that are non-STARS approved or out-of-state?

A: You may submit a Continuing Education Proposal to request that a college course (outside of the early childhood department) or other training that is not given by a STARS-approved trainer or organization counts towards the annual 10 hours of Continuing Education training requirement. Training can only count towards the training requirement for the year in which it was completed. In the future, you will be able to apply for a Continuing Education Proposal online through MERIT. Currently, you may:

1. Find the Continuing Education Proposal form by clicking the STARS Forms link on the MERIT homepage: merit.del.wa.gov.
2. Print the form in either English or Spanish.
3. Follow the instructions on the form by filling it out and gathering the appropriate documents.
4. Sign the application.
5. Mail or fax the application to:
Department of Early Learning
Attn: MERIT
PO Box 40970
Olympia, WA 98501

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Q24: What should I do if my training history can't be found or it's not complete?

A: Please DO NOT call or e-mail DEL about missing trainings in your account until after June 1, 2011. STARS-approved trainers are now recording attendance for trainings you have taken since the beginning of 2010. They have not been able to enter this information in MERIT until now. Once a trainer completes your attendance information, your training history is updated in MERIT. Trainers need time to enter the information in MERIT. If you received a certificate of completion for training, keep an original copy of that documentation as proof.

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Q25: What happened to my training information stored in the STARS database?

A: Information from your STARS record was transferred to the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT).

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Q26: What do I do if I have a concern about a STARS approved trainer or training that I attended?

A: Please complete and submit the Training Concern Form and DEL will respond to you.

1. Find the Training Concern Form by clicking the STARS Forms link on the MERIT homepage: merit.del.wa.gov.
2. Print the form in either English or Spanish.
3. Follow the instructions on the form by filling it out and sign the application.
4. E-mail, mail or fax the application: merit@del.wa.gov, 360.413.3482 or
Department of Early Learning
Attn: MERIT
PO Box 40970
Olympia, WA
98501

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SCHOLARSHIPS (REIMBURSEMENTS) QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q27: What is a scholarship?

A: You may request a scholarship to reimburse the cost of the required 20-Hour Basic or the 10-Hour Continuing Education STARS-approved training. The guidelines are listed on the application form. Find the form on the MERIT homepage merit.del.wa.gov in STARS Forms.

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Q28: Where do I send my scholarship application?

A: The Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC) is the organization that handles the reimbursements, and staff there will continue to do so throughout and after the transition to MERIT. For your convenience, WAEYC contact information is:

Washington Association for the Education of Young Children
841 N Central Avenue Suite 206
Kent WA 98032
(253) 854-2565
waeyc@waeyc.org

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