

New Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Recovery and Retention Grant Agreement

Under the bilateral agreement with the federal government, Children's Services is investing \$20.57 million to help licensed child care programs recruit, train and retain qualified staff. This one-time funding will be allocated based on the assumption that programs lost an average of 20 per cent of their workforce during the pandemic.

This funding can help programs pay for:

- Financial incentives for new or returning certified frontline ECEs, or those who continued to work throughout the pandemic, as determined by your program.
- Incentives provided to frontline ECEs for training purposes.
- Education supports (e.g., bursary, backfilling for ECEs on education leaves), and
- Up to 7.66 per cent for related grant administration costs.

To receive your share of this funding, please review and sign the attached ECE Recovery and Retention Grant Agreement (only hand-written signatures accepted). Your agreement states the funding amount allocated to your program.

An authorized official of the licensed program must complete the following:

- Validate the program and contact information in the Agreement (page 8).
 - If a correction is required, strike through the incorrect text, note the correction on the right-hand side and **include your initials** next to the correction.
- Sign and date the Agreement (page 9).

Once the Child Care Claims Unit has reviewed your signed Agreement (*instructions below*), you will receive a fully signed copy by email. Please note: If a licence holder operates more than one licensed child care program, **a separate signed Agreement is required for each licensed program**.

Once a signed agreement is received by the ministry, programs will receive payments within 10 to 15 days, with the first payments to programs issued near the end of September.

If you have questions or require additional information about the Recovery and Retention Grant, please contact the Alberta Child Care Claims Unit via e-mail at cs.childcareclaims@gov.ab.ca or call 1-855-638-6121 (toll free).

New Wage Top-up and Professional Development Grant Agreement

Under the bilateral agreement, Children's Services is also expanding access to professional development funding to all certified staff working in licensed child care programs, including ECEs working in preschool programs, and day home providers working in licensed family day home agencies.

As well, ECEs at all levels will be able to access up to \$1,500 per year for post-secondary coursework that leads to a higher level of certification. Staff will also receive up to \$500 to attend approved workshops and conferences.

Release time will now be available to ECEs so they can be paid while studying, completing post-secondary coursework and attending approved workshops.

Release time will be paid as follows:

- ECEs attending approved post-secondary coursework will be eligible to receive a flat rate of \$800 per course, to a maximum of two courses per fiscal year.
- ECEs attending approved workshops are eligible to receive \$17.50 per hour (up to 45 hours per fiscal year).
- Programs that access this grant for their employed staff will receive an additional 7.66 per cent of the grant amount to help offset payroll expenditures associated with administering this funding (\$60 per course payment and \$1.33 per hour for staff attending workshops).

To benefit from the new professional development funding, all licensed preschool programs, and all programs currently receiving wage top-ups and professional development funding, will need to sign a new Wage Top-up and Professional Development Agreement, **attached**.

Payments will be made to programs as described in the new Funding Guide, which will be available online on September 7, 2021 (<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-guide>).

If you have questions or require additional information about professional development funding or wage top ups for preschool staff, please contact Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program at cs.childcarefunding@gov.ab.ca or call 780-422-1119 (toll free 1-800-661-9754).

Action Required:

Please print out, review, complete and sign (by an authorized official of the license holder) both agreements attached, and then:

1. Return all pages of the **ECE Recovery and Retention** signed agreement (including schedules) to the Child Care Claims Unit via e-mail at cs.childcareclaims@gov.ab.ca.
2. Return all pages of the signed **Wage Top-up, Professional Development and Release Time** Agreement (including schedules) to the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program via e-mail at cs.childcarefunding@gov.ab.ca.

Please ensure the entire signed Agreements are scanned into a good quality PDF attachment with all text clearly visible.