
Alberta child care grant funding guide

For wage top-ups and professional development



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Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Guide (For wage top-ups and professional development) | Children's Services

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Overview

This document is a reference guide for the official grant agreement between licensed and approved child care programs in Alberta and the Alberta government. This document outlines the process, eligibility, and accountability requirements for eligible licensed facility-based programs and licensed family day home agencies to access grant funding from the Alberta Government for wage top-ups and professional development.

Types of grant funding

The Alberta government offers grant funding to licensed facility-based child care programs and licensed family day home agencies including wage top-ups and professional development to support the recruitment, retention and professional development of qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in supporting quality early learning and child care environments for children.

Funding will be allocated to eligible programs that have a signed grant agreement with the Alberta government to receive wage top-ups and professional development funding.

To apply for funding, refer to the [applying for funding](#) section of this document.

Wage top-up funding

Wage top-up funding is allocated to child care programs as a grant to administer additional pay for certified ECEs and family day home educators over and above the employer-paid wage. When the program administers the wage top-up to ECEs, it is considered a 'wage' and thus the program is required to assume the costs associated with administering the top-up in accordance with all applicable provincial and federal legislation.

Wage top-ups are paid up to a maximum of 181 hours per month.

TABLE 1: WAGE TOP-UP RATES BY CERTIFICATION LEVEL

ECE certification level	Amount
Level 1 early childhood educator	\$2.14 / hour
Level 2 early childhood educator	\$4.05 / hour
Level 3 early childhood educator	\$6.62 / hour

Who is eligible?

The wage top-up grant allocated to child care programs provides a wage enhancement for frontline ECEs that are certified paid employees and contracted certified family day home educators who:

- provide direct child care, including program supervisors and alternate supervisors (as defined in the Child Care Licensing Regulation) as well as persons hired in the role of family child care consultants/coordinators with a licensed family day home agency;
- are certified as an Early Childhood Educator Level 1, 2 or 3; and
- meet the conditions outlined in the [eligible hours for wage top-up](#) section of this document.

Who is not eligible?

This funding is not available to:

- individuals that are not a paid employee, including volunteers;
- owners and operators that do not draw a wage/salary;
- persons, including owners and operators, whose hours are worked outside the business/operational hours of the program;
- individuals with work visas that restrict employment in child care;
- persons whose income is funded by another program such as Program Unit Funding through Alberta Education, therapists and assistants paid through other organizations;

- cooks/cleaners/accountants/receptionists not providing direct child care;
- ECEs and family day home educators not certified by the Alberta Child Care Staff Certification Office; and
- individuals whose duties fall under the [non-eligible hours](#) section.

Eligible hours for wage top-up

Direct child care hours

Direct child care hours includes:

- Hours worked by paid ECEs employed in a licensed facility-based program responsible for the frontline child care and supervision of children and included in the staff:child ratios.
- Hours worked by a family day home educator who is under a contract with the licensed family day home agency to provide child care and supervision to children up to 12 years of age (not including their own) in their private residence.
- A maximum of eight hours per month may be claimed when ECEs are required to be out of ratio to complete programming responsibilities. These hours are to be claimed under 'direct child care' in the online claims system.

All claimed hours (including programming hours) must be clearly documented on attendance records for audit purposes and the employer must pay the employee's base wage for all hours claimed with supporting payroll documentation.

ECEs with direct child care hours claimed in multiple programs will be eligible to receive the wage top-up to a maximum of 181 hours per month across all programs. Hours must not be claimed for statutory holidays and/or when the program is closed.

Refer to the [non-eligible hours](#) section for a complete list of hours not eligible to be included on the monthly claim form.

Note: If any ECE or family day home educator is not certified, the individual must apply for certification to the Alberta Child Care Staff Certification Office. The application process can be found online at [alberta.ca/child-care-staff-certification.aspx](https://open.alberta.ca/publications/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-guide). Grant funding will not be allocated to programs on behalf of individuals who are not certified.

Administrative hours

Administrative hours may be claimed for paid employees hired into the positions of program supervisor, as well as family day home agency coordinator and/or home visitor/consultant for hours worked onsite during the operational hours of the program. The definition of these positions are found in the Schedule 1 (section 1(l) on page 11) of the Early Learning and Child Care Regulation and the Family Day Home Standards Manual for Alberta (page 4, section "Definitions") that can be found on [alberta.ca/child-care](https://open.alberta.ca/publications/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-guide).

Administrative hours include:

- Hours worked by paid staff employed in the role of "program supervisor", a staff member of a facility-based program whose duty is to supervise the provision of child care to children in the program.
- Hours worked by staff employed by the family day home agency in the role of an "agency coordinator" who manages the day-to-day operation of the licensed family day home service. The coordinator is responsible for administering the program and acting as a contact person for families in the community.
- Hours worked by staff employed by the licensed family day home agency in the role of "home visitor/consultant" who is responsible for the recruitment, approval, monitoring, training and support of program educators.

Only administrative hours that have been worked onsite during the operational hours of the program may be claimed for the wage top-up payment.

Programs are required to have timesheets with a breakdown identifying direct child care hours and administrative hours claimed.

Non-eligible hours (what hours cannot be claimed)

Hours may not be claimed for:

- Statutory holidays and/or anytime when the program is closed
- Vacation time
- Sick time
- Training time
- Hours spent cleaning or cooking
- Hours worked performing duties including, but not limited to: accounting/payroll, reception, administrative/office support, janitorial and maintenance
- Administrative hours worked by an owner/operator who is not a paid employee in the role of a program supervisor
- Administrative hours worked by an owner/operator who is not a paid employee in the role of an agency coordinator or home visitor/consultant
- Hours worked off-site (with the exception of agency home visitors/consultants responsible for the monitoring the homes of the licensed family day home educators)
- Hours worked during non-operational hours of the program
- Overtime hours worked at the rate of time and a half (1.5). Hours can only be claimed for actual hours worked (the additional "0.5 rate" is the responsibility of the employer)

Professional development funding

Professional development funding is provided to licensed facility-based child care programs as well as licensed family day home agencies to assist eligible ECEs with the costs of approved post-secondary tuition and textbooks as well as approved conferences or workshops. The funding is intended to support paid ECEs to pursue further training and professional development opportunities to obtain higher levels of certification and strengthen leadership, management, administration, and early childhood education skills and knowledge.

TABLE 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RATES

Professional development	Required monthly hours	Level ½ early childhood educator	Level 3 early childhood educator
Post-secondary coursework	29-79 hours	Up to \$250/year	Up to \$200/year
	80 or more hours	Up to \$1,000/year	up to \$1,500/year
Conferences and workshops	29-79 hours	Up to \$125/year	Up to \$100/year
	80 or more hours	up to \$500/year	up to \$200/year
Maximum annual funding	29-79 hours	Up to \$250/year (combined of tuition, textbooks, workshops, and conferences)	Up to \$200/year for coursework Up to \$100/year for conferences/workshops
	80 or more hours	Up to \$1,000/year (with maximum of \$500 for conferences & workshops)	Up to \$1,700/year (\$1,500 for coursework and \$200 for conferences and workshops)

Who is eligible for professional development?

The professional development grant funding is intended for ECEs that are paid employees of eligible child care programs who:

- Provide direct child care, including program supervisors (as defined in the Early Learning and Child Care Regulation) as well as persons hired by the licensed family day home agencies in the role of agency coordinators or home visitors/consultants.
- Are certified as an Early Childhood Educator Level 1, 2 or 3.
- Are a Canadian citizen or an official Permanent Resident of Canada.
- Have worked at least 29 hours per month for the previous two consecutive months from the date of the expenditure or the date the application was received.
- Have submitted a Professional Development Funding Request Form (found at <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-program.aspx>) and made a payment for the course, workshop, or conference within the same fiscal year (April to March).

What types of training costs are covered?

Professional development funding helps offset tuition fees and required course textbooks for approved post-secondary coursework leading to a higher level of certification for staff certified as an Early Childhood Educator Level 1 or 2 or to strengthen leadership, management, pedagogical leadership, administration, and early childhood education skills and knowledge (for staff certified as an Early Childhood Educator Level 3).

Professional development funding may also be used to offset the cost of tuition fees, conference and workshop fees related to early learning and child care that have been approved by the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program. Please contact the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program to verify if the course/conference/workshop you are interested in is eligible for professional development funding by emailing cs.childcarefunding@gov.ab.ca.

Expenses not allowable for professional development:

- Accommodations, meals, alcohol, and travel costs.
- Additional fees charged by an educational institution.
- Non-approved courses, workshops or conferences (i.e., those not related to child development or not approved by the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program).
- Language proficiency assessments (CELP/IP/IELTS).
- English as a Second Language coursework.
- First-Aid training and food safety courses.
- Resource books and materials not part of registered coursework.

Professional development funding may not be requested if another grant or bursary has been awarded for the same purpose.

A Professional Development Funding Request Form must be submitted to the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program. The form is available online at (<https://cfr.forms.gov.ab.ca/Form/CDEV12397.pdf>).

Additional information

- The professional development balance resets every April 1. Any unused funding is not transferrable to the next fiscal year.
- The expense for professional development is applied to the fiscal year in which the payment was made (not the date the service/product was received or the date the course/conference/workshop was taken or completed).
- Unused funds from the professional development grant are not transferable from one ECE to another.
- The Professional Development Funding Request Form must be submitted within the fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) in which the expenditure was made (date paid) by the person or program.
- The deadline for submitting the Professional Development Grant Request Form is March 31 for all expenditures paid within the same fiscal year (April to March).

Applying for funding

The online grant application (for wage top-up and professional development funding) form is required when:

- the program is applying for funding for the **first time**
- there is a change to the program's license/contract holder
- the program is sold or purchased
- the program changes its operating name
- the Alberta government determines the signed grant agreement does not match the license holder and/or program information

If a program chooses to receive only the the professional development funding, this must be noted on the grant application. The grant application form is available online at <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-program.aspx>.

Step 1: Submit the grant application form

Fill out the online grant application [and submit it to the Alberta child care grant funding program noted on the form](#).

Complete one application for each licensed program.

Funding may not be backdated for late, missing or incomplete information.

Prior to having a fully executed (i.e., signed by both parties) grant agreement, there is no agreement between the parties, and the Alberta government has no obligation to provide the wage top-up and professional development funding.

Once the grant application has been submitted, it will be reviewed by the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program. If the program is determined as eligible for the wage top-up and/or professional development funding, a grant Agreement will be sent to the authorized representative of the license holder (as specified by the program on the grant application).

If the program is determined as not eligible for the wage top-up and professional development funding, the authorized representative of the license holder will receive a written notification indicating the reason why.

Step 2: Review and sign the grant agreement

After the completed grant application has been processed and the child care program has been determined eligible for the wage top-up and professional development funding, the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program will send the official (unsigned) grant agreement to the authorized representative of the license holder as listed on the application.

The license holder must ensure full understanding and compliance to all requirements for the wage top-up and professional development funding as contained in this Funding Guide prior to signing the Agreement.

The authorized official of the license holder must sign the grant agreement and return the original signed copy by mail or email to:

Alberta Children's Services
Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program
6th Floor, Sterling Place, 9940-106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2N2
cs.childcarefunding@gov.ab.ca

Once the signed grant agreement has been received by the Ministry, an authorized representative of the Alberta government will sign it and a signed copy of the executed agreement will be sent to the designated official as indicated by the license holder.

Only after both parties have signed the grant agreement, is the child care program considered approved for funding. Funding will commence based on the "Effective Date" as stated on the grant agreement.

How to receive funding

Wage top-up funding

Once approved for funding, the program must have access to the online Child Care Claims Payment (C3P) system to submit monthly claims identifying staff names, eligible hours worked, and employer-paid wage. The claims system is available online at alberta.ca/online-child-care-claims-system.aspx.

For information about how to access an online Claims ID and password, contact the Alberta Child Care Claims Unit by calling 1-855-638-6121, or email at cs.childcareclaims@gov.ab.ca. Information is also available online at alberta.ca/child-care-staff-certification.aspx. The claims unit staff are always available to answer telephone inquiries Monday through Friday 8:15 am to 4:30 pm.

In order to receive the wage top-up funding, the program is required to submit an online monthly claim form through the C3P system listing the staff names, certification and registration identification number, employer-paid wage, and the number of eligible hours worked as identified in this funding guide. The program will receive payment within 5-10 business days upon submitting the claim.

Once the monthly claim has been processed, the program will receive a monthly payment summary statement, which specifies the amount allocated on behalf of each staff member. This funding must be administered to staff in accordance with the conditions set out in the grant agreement and this funding guide inclusive of all legislated requirements.

Once the deposit has been made, the program may request any funding adjustments (due to errors and omissions to the claimed hours, not able to administer funding to staff, etc.) using the Program Funding Adjustment form found online at alberta.ca/online-child-care-claims-system.aspx. This form must be sent to the child care claims unit as instructed on the form. Adjustment requests must be made within six calendar months following receipt of the original payment.

Professional development funding

A separate form is required for professional development funding. Programs must submit a Professional Development Funding Request form located online at: <https://cfr.forms.gov.ab.ca/Form/CDEV12397.pdf>.

Once your professional development funding request form has been assessed by the child care grant funding program, written notification will be sent to the program indicating whether the funding has been approved or not approved. Where the funding is not approved, a reason will be provided.

The approved professional development funding payment will be part of the overall child care program deposit when the next monthly claim is processed. The staff name and professional development funding payment amount will be reflected on the monthly payment summary statement.

Program accountability

The program must comply with all the terms set out in the grant agreement that was signed between the grant recipient and the Minister, which includes the content contained in this funding guide.

All child care programs that receive grant funding must maintain required attendance records, receipts, and financial/payroll records to support all funding payments relating to wage top-ups and professional development. Programs are subject to selected or random audits by the Government of Alberta. If a program falsely obtains funds, fails to provide required documentation, or fails to report funding not paid to ECEs, the amount will be adjusted accordingly through the claims payment process and eligibility for ongoing funding may be terminated.

Failure to comply with the terms set out in the agreement and this funding guide may result in recovery of the funding.

Wage top-ups

- The wage top-up funding is paid to the program as a grant but when the program transfers this funding to staff, payments fall under the definition of “wage” in the Alberta’s Employment Standards Code. As such, the program must administer this funding as a wage in accordance with all applicable legislation.
- According to the Alberta Employment Standards Code, employers must pay at the least the minimum wage and pay to staff the legislated vacation and general holiday pay on both the employee’s base wage and the wage top-up funding. Information about the Employment Standards Code is available at www.alberta.ca/employment-standards.aspx.

- The employer is also responsible to pay the legislated premiums on the wage top-ups that include Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, and Worker's Compensation Board premiums.
- For licensed family day home agencies, the top-up paid to family day home educators must be identified as income and administered according to all applicable legislation.
- The program must distribute the funding to each staff as a wage top-up, over and above the employer-paid wage, at the same amount as noted on the monthly claim payment summary prior to the legislated payroll deductions.
- Programs must reflect the wage top-up funding payments as a provincial government contribution on paystubs.
- Programs must keep a written record of all direct child care hours, programing/planning hours, and administrative hours claimed on staff attendance records/time sheets (indicating date, start and end times).
- Programs must report on the monthly claim form, the current rate of the employer-paid wage for each staff, not including the wage top-up.
- The program may not impose any extra conditions on staff outside the scope of the grant agreement and this funding guide regarding the distribution of funding to staff.
- Programs must report any unused or incorrectly reported funding using the program funding adjustment form found online at alberta.ca/online-child-care-claims-system.aspx.

Professional development

- The program must retain a copy of the professional development funding request form that was submitted and all receipts supporting the professional development grant payments made to the program.
- Receipts must indicate the same expenditure that was claimed and must match the ECE's or program's name, amount of payment and payment date as was submitted on the professional development funding request form.
- Any funding that is paid without supporting receipts, not transferred to the ECE, or not used as approved on the professional development funding request form, must be reported using the program funding adjustment form found online at alberta.ca/online-child-care-claims-system.aspx.
- The professional development grant is not taxable.

Contact information

Funding

If you have questions about wage top-ups and professional development funding, you can call the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program at 1-800-661-9754 or email cs.childcarefunding@gov.ab.ca.

For more information, visit <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-program.aspx>.

Claims

If you have questions about submitting your monthly claim or the payments received, you can call the Alberta Child Care Claims Unit at 1-855-638-6121 or email cs.childcareclaims@gov.ab.ca.

For more information, visit <https://www.alberta.ca/online-child-care-claims-system.aspx>.