

Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program Questions and Answers for operators

Q: When is the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program available to operators?

A: The Early Learning and Child Care funding model came into effect on April 1, 2021.

Q. Where can I find more information about the new funding program?

A. You can go online to Yukon.ca/early-learning or email questions to earlylearning@yukon.ca and someone will reply within 3 business days.

Q. What are the highlights of the ELCC funding program?

A. The new ELCC funding program provides:

- increased funding to licensed early learning and child care operators to reduce fee payments made by families;
- an additional payment to operators to reduce operational and administrative expenses and support program needs;
- funding to support high-quality early learning environments;
- additional funding to increase wages paid by operators to early childhood educators;
- funding to early learning and child care centre operators to support operational costs;
- funding to support the provision of extended health benefits to Early Learning and Child Care centre staff.;
- and more.

Q. Do the Child Care Subsidy program, Teen Parent Grant, and Grandparent Grant still exist?

A. Yes, Yukon families will continue to benefit from these programs.

Affordability for parents

Q: How does the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program reduce fees for families?

A: To reduce monthly payments for families, the Government of Yukon provides licensed early learning and child care operators with up to \$700 for each child registered full-time. These funds are applied in full as a cost reduction to the total monthly parent fees. Parents and caregivers of children in part-time programs receive a pro-rated reduction. Parents and caregivers of children attending on a drop-in basis are not eligible for funding.

Parents and caregivers do not need to apply for the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program, as the cost reduction to families is automatically applied by the program operator.

Q: How does the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding program reduce fees for families with school-age children?

A: To reduce monthly payments for families, the Government of Yukon provides licensed early learning and child care operators offering after-school care with \$350 for kindergarten and \$300 for grade 1 and older, for each child registered full-time. During summer months, licensed programs providing out-of-school care receive \$700 for kindergarten and \$500 for grade 1 and older, for each child registered full-time. Parents and caregivers of children in part-time programs will receive a pro-rated reduction. Parents and caregivers of children attending on a drop-in basis are not eligible for funding.

Q: How do operators invoice families? What does an sample invoice look like?

A. Sample Invoice:

Monthly child care fee:	\$ 850.00
Yukon Government contribution <u>paid directly to the provider:</u>	<u>\$(700.00)</u>
Parent pays directly to the provider:	\$ 150.00

Q: Can parents still receive the Yukon child care subsidy?

A: Low-income families can still apply for and receive the Yukon child care subsidy, it will be applied on top of the universal portion of their child care program fees.

Q: Do parents need to apply to be eligible for universal child care?

A: There is no application needed. Yukon families utilizing licensed child care spaces are automatically eligible.

Children attendance

Q: Do children have to attend early learning and child care programs regularly?

A: We encourage regular participation of children enrolled in early learning and child care programs. However, we understand that in some cases children may not be able to attend regularly due to a variety of circumstances.

Q: Will operators report on the attendance of children in their program?

A: We encourage early learning and child care programs to discuss the benefits of regular attendance with families. Under this funding program, operators are required to report attendance.

Q: Will funding be provided when a child is absent?

A: Funding will be available during both voluntary and non-voluntary absences (e.g., family vacation, sickness, medical travel, bereavement, First Nations harvesting, and cultural activities). There must always be space available for the child if the family is charged a fee, regardless of whether or not a child is in attendance.

Q: Will funding be available for an extended absence?

A: Government will not provide funding in cases where families are paying to 'save a space' for an extended period when the space could otherwise be occupied by another child.

Q: What is considered an extended absence?

A: An extended absence is considered to be a voluntary absence of longer than 4 consecutive weeks.

Q: Can families pay the full fee to reserve a space?

A: Families retain the option of paying the full fee directly to the operator in these circumstances.

Increased wages for educators

Q. What are the wage enhancements?

A. Wages for many early childhood educators (ECEs) increased starting on April 1, 2021. The increased wage supplement depends on the qualification level of the educator.

Q. With the increased wage enhancements, what is my responsibility as an employer?

A. The Government of Yukon provides funding to operators in the form of a wage supplement for ECEs. The wage supplement will be paid based on the actual hours worked to a maximum of 40 hours per week, and will include an additional 14% payment for mandatory employment-related costs (e.g., CPP, EI and WCB). Operators must agree that the wages paid to each ECE, before the addition of the wage enhancement, must be no less than the minimum wage under the *Employment Standards Act*.

Q. The Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program includes enhanced funding for wages: does this also include the wages for the Supported Child Care Program?

A. Yes, wages for supported child care workers are based on their ECE level. Wage increases will be incorporated in the new contracts for the Supported Child Care Program.

Q. When will you be reviewing guidelines for ECE levels?

A: We will continue to review the guidelines regularly. We most recently updated the guidelines for ECE credentialing in October 2021. We are continuously working towards ensuring a fully qualified ECE workforce.

Ongoing support for programs

Q. Where do I go for support or questions regarding the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program?

A. You can contact the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) unit at the Department of Education. You can email earlylearning@yukon.ca or call 867-667-3492. We are located at 1000 Lewes Blvd. in Whitehorse.

Q. What resources are available to my program?

A. Each program will receive regular visits and correspondence from our team of child care inspectors. Additionally the ELCC unit is supported by 3 early learning specialists, who work with individual programs to support high-quality learning environments.

Q. Why does the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program have fee limits?

A. Fee limits are necessary to allow the rates charged by programs to be sustainable and affordable. Fee limits help to keep monthly fees in line with those charged by other local providers who are delivering the same type of service.

Whitehorse area fees

This funding model introduced limits on the amount by which early learning and child care centres can raise their fees. Annual fee increases are limited to 3% for those charging within 10% of the Yukon average, and 1% for those charging 10% or more than the Yukon average.

Centres that require a parent fee increase that is greater than the 1% to 3%, due to operational pressures, can contact the Department of Education to request an exemption.

Rural Yukon fees

Fee increases will be considered on an individual basis depending on program needs.

Q. When can I adjust my fees?

A. You may adjust your fees annually on April 1st.

Q. How will fees for newly licensed programs be determined?

A. Through the licensing process, fees for new child care operators who are accessing Government of Yukon funding must be approved by the Department of Education. New operators will not be allowed to charge more than 3% of the average fee. The Department of Education will consider exceptions for operators based on the specific circumstances of their proposed operation.