

Early Learning and Child Care Initiative

Program Enhancement Grant

Terms and Conditions

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Background

The priorities for the Government of Nova Scotia include the following key items:

- Health Promotion and Protection;
- Youth, Families and Communities;
- Community Safety;
- Economic Development and Infrastructure; and
- Environment.

These initiatives are focused on strengthening the social service system, enabling the government to improve outcomes for Nova Scotia's youth, families, and communities.

One of the priorities of the Department of Community Services Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) program is to strengthen the child care sector by providing services and funds to "ensure that all Nova Scotia children enjoy a good start in life and are nurtured and supported by caring families and communities". This is compatible with the Department's goal of "self reliant people, strong families and inclusive communities".

A number of investments will be made in Early Learning and Child Care including providing funding to licensed child care facilities enabling them to enhance the child care program they are able to offer to the children in their care.

This document describes the Department of Community Services terms and conditions regarding the **Program Enhancement Grant**.

Terms and Conditions Overview

The purpose of the **Program Enhancement Grant** is to provide **one-time** funding that will build the facility's capacity to offer a high quality early learning environment. As such, equipment and materials purchased should be multi-purpose, open ended and well made – designed to support children's learning.

Note: *Please refer to “Appendix A – Definitions” for definitions of the terms used throughout this Terms and Conditions document.*

Grant Description

The Program Enhancement Grant is available to all licensed full-day, part-day centres, Child Development Centres (CDC's) and Family Home Day Care Agencies. This funding is being provided as a one-time grant for use in the development and/or enhancement of the child care program that successful applicants offer to the children in their care. Grant funding may be used for all approved items related to program enhancement.

The grant funding limit is **\$7,500** per approved facility. Funding will be issued in one installment.

Applicants **must** contact their regional Early Childhood Development Officer (ECDO) to review their application prior to submission. The ECDO will assist the applicants with their Program Enhancement Grant applications. Eligible items that are approved for purchase through the Program Enhancement Grant are listed on the Program Enhancement Grant application (Work Plan).

Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible to receive a Program Enhancement Grant, the applicant facility must be a licensed child care centre (non-profit, commercial, full-day, part-day and CDC's) or a licensed Family Home Day Care Agency.

The Program Enhancement Grant is only available to eligible Family Home Day Care Agencies and **not** their approved homes. Family Home Day Care Agencies may provide program enhancement related materials to their affiliated homes through a lending library.

A facility is not eligible for Program Enhancement Grant funding if:

- The facility's license to operate a day care has been suspended, cancelled or not renewed;
- The Department has issued a written directive to the facility due to compliance violations or deficiencies;
- The facility has failed to comply with the *Day Care Act* and Regulations, which may result in the Child Care facility not being eligible for the Program Enhancement Grant.
- A court has granted a bankruptcy petition or appointed a trustee for the facility; or
- The facility is under a garnishment order from the Canada Revenue Agency.

Eligible / Ineligible Items

Grant funding is intended to enhance the applicant's capacity to offer a high quality early learning environment. A complete listing of eligible items that may be acquired with Program Enhancement Grant funding is included in the application (Work Plan). Only items listed in the Program Enhancement Grant application package are eligible for funding. Items not listed in the application package can be reviewed with the facility's ECDO to determine if the item may be acquired on an exception basis. All applicants **must** review their applications with their ECDO prior to submission. The ECDO will provide guidance regarding appropriate enhancements to the facility's individual program.

Application Process

Required Documentation

The submitted application package must contain:

- a complete, signed Application form; and
- a Work Plan detailing the items requested and the estimated cost.

Application Deadline

Applicants for this grant **must** ensure the completed application package is received by their regional ECDO on, or before, the deadline stated on the Application Form.

Contact Information

Applicants requiring additional information about the grant are requested to contact their regional ECDO. The grant application package will be available on the Department's web site for downloading.

Note: Applicants are reminded they must contact their regional ECDO before submitting an application package.

Submission of the Application package

Please ensure the application is complete and submitted in full. All documents must be forwarded to the facility's regional ECDO in order for the application to be considered for grant funding. The facility is advised to create a photocopy of the application and supporting documentation for their records.

Address the application packages to the attention of the '**Program Enhancement Grant Application**' and either mail, fax or drop it off to, the regional ECDO.

Note: Faxed applications will be accepted; however, a signed original must follow and be on file before any funding will be distributed.

The application package must be received by the regional ECDO on or before the application deadline. Application packages postmarked or stamped with a 'received' date on or before the application deadline will be considered to have met the deadline.

Grant Application Review Process

Applications Checked for Eligibility and Completeness

Once the application packages are received by the regional ECDO's, they will be checked to confirm the facility meets the basic eligibility requirements for the grant and to confirm the application package is complete. **Applications must be completed in full in order for the applicant to be considered for this grant.**

Review Process

Regional staff will evaluate each application based on the criteria described in this section. A facility may be contacted to provide additional information. Following the regional review, applications and recommendations for funding, will be forwarded to Head Office for consideration and approval.

Compliance Evaluation Criteria

The facility shall be in compliance with the *Day Care Act* and Regulations.

Facilities with a written directive are ineligible for funding consideration and will be eliminated from the review process.

Work Plan Evaluation Criteria

The Work Plan submitted with the application must be comprised of eligible items and have been reviewed with the facility's ECDO. The Work Plan will be evaluated based on the type of program enhancements proposed and the perceived value the items will achieve.

Notification of Application Status

Applicants will receive a letter from the Department of Community Services advising them of the status of their application. Successful applicants will be sent a notification letter advising them of the level of funding they will receive and the conditions under which it may be spent. Unsuccessful applicants will be advised that their application has been declined. Contact information contained in the decline letter will advise unsuccessful applicants whom they may contact should they wish to discuss their application in more detail.

Disbursement of Funds Process

The disbursement of funds can begin once the facility has been approved for grant funding and has received their Program Enhancement Grant funding approval letter. Funding will be disbursed to successful applicants in one installment.

Recovery of Funds Process

The following events will constitute a default of the Program Enhancement Grant:

- failure to fulfill the obligations of the grant as described in the Terms and Conditions;
- a bankruptcy petition filed in relation to the facility;
- a court of competent jurisdiction has appointed a trustee to manage some of all of the facility's assets;
- the facility has ceased to operate a licensed child care centre or the facility's license has been suspended, cancelled or not renewed by the Minister;
- If the facility is leased and the current lease for the facility is terminated or not renewed for any reason; or
- the sale of the facility.

If any of the circumstances listed above occur before funding is issued, grant approval will be deemed to be revoked and no disbursement of grant funds will be made.

If any of the circumstances listed above occur within **one year** of the disbursement of funding, the Department reserves the option to demand repayment of the disbursed Program Enhancement Grant funding and to offset monies which would otherwise be received from the Department.

Accountability Process

The Grant funding must be used in accordance with these Terms and Conditions.

Successful applicants must retain receipts for items acquired with Grant funding for a period of seven years. The Department has the right to request copies of these receipts in order to verify Program Enhancement Grant related expenditures.

Evaluation Process

For evaluation purposes, Facilities will be required to:

- Participate fully in evaluations of the Program Enhancement Grant and provide any information requested by the Department in respect of these evaluations; and
- Make staff available to participate in the evaluation process at mutually agreeable times for up to seven years after the end of the fiscal year in which the grant funding was expended.

Appendix A - Definitions

For purposes of the Program Enhancement Grant the following definitions apply:

“Department” means the Department of Community Services.

“ELCC” means Early Learning and Child Care.

“ECDO” means Early Childhood Development Officer and refers to regional staff of the Department of Community Services responsible for licensing child care centres and providing supported child care consultation.

“Facility” means a licensed full or part day child care centre, a licensed Family Home Daycare Agency or a Child Development Centre.