



Early Childhood Development Services

Early Childhood Education Assistance Program

Terms and Conditions

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Terms and Conditions Overview

The objective of the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) is to enhance the ability of child care programs to recruit and retain staff by:

- providing affordable training to individuals wishing to pursue a career in child care; and
- increasing the number of early childhood trained educators (ECE diploma/undergraduate degree) working in licensed child care.

Program Description

The purpose of the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program is to enhance the ability of child care programs to recruit and retain staff by providing financial support to individuals interested in pursuing a career in Early Childhood Education (ECE).

The intent of the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program is to provide assistance with the **cost of the tuition and course materials only**. Other costs such as living expenses and travel must be covered by the student.

The Early Childhood Education Assistance Program provides a debt reduction incentive to eligible graduates of an ECE diploma/ undergraduate degree program. Graduates must graduate from an approved ECE training institution and who have received a student loan through the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program for their education.

Applicants must be enrolled in the ECE program **full time** and their graduation date must be after 1 April 2008.

Each applicant can qualify for up to a maximum of \$5000 in funding for each year of attendance at the ECE diploma/ undergraduate degree institution for which a student loan was received up to maximum of four years. Applicants will be required to accumulate 1500 hours per year of reimbursement up to the numbers of years of the program (i.e. two year diploma or four year undergraduate degree). These hours must be accumulated working in a Nova Scotia licensed child care facility or Family Home Day Care (FHDC) agency.

Payment will be made by the Department of Community Services to the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program with the Department of Education on behalf of the successful applicant.

If the applicant received both Nova Scotia and Canada Student loans, the payment will be made to the Nova Scotia Student loan first. If there is no balance on the Nova Scotia Student loan for the years eligible, the remaining portion of the payment will made to the Canada Student loan.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program, applicants must have;

- obtained a loan through the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program;
- was enrolled as a **full-time** student in a full-time ECE diploma/ undergraduate degree program;
- graduated from an approved, **full-time** ECE diploma/ undergraduate degree program;
- obtained employment in a Nova Scotia licensed child care facility or FHDC agency;
- submitted an Early Childhood Education Assistance Program application **within four months** after graduation; and
- worked **1500 hours** in a licensed Nova Scotia child care facility or Family Home Day Care (FHDC) agency for each year of training for each year of reimbursement.

Approved Early Childhood Training Programs

The Early Childhood training must be taken from one of the following approved Nova Scotia ECE training institutions:

- Institute for Human Services Education (IHSE);
- Mount Saint Vincent University, Child & Youth Study;
- Nova Scotia Community College, Early Childhood Studies;
- Nova Scotia College of Early Childhood Education;
- Island Career Academy

Program Timelines

The Early Childhood Education Assistance Program was initiated April 1, 2008 and will end March 31, 2016.

Applications for reimbursement will be accepted until September 30, 2016 (four months after graduation).

Approved applicants who graduate in 2016 from a diploma program will receive reimbursement for two years of study, i.e. until 2018.

Approved applicants who graduate in 2016 from Mount St. Vincent University will receive reimbursement for 4 years of study, i.e. until 2020.

Application Process

Required Documentation

Applicants are required to complete an Early Childhood Education Assistance Program application form and attach the following supporting documents:

- Evidence from the training institution that the ECE diploma/ undergraduate degree was successfully completed. Evidence must be in a form of a letter or official transcript issued by the training institution.
- Confirmation that the applicant is working in a licensed Nova Scotia child care facility or FHDC agency. Confirmation must include the start date of the employment and must be in a form of:
 - a letter from the employer; or
 - a pay stub; or
 - the employer completes section 2 on the application.

Application Deadline

Applications for the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program must be submitted within **four months** of the applicant's graduation date.

Contact Information

The Early Childhood Education Assistance Program Application may be obtained from the Department of Community Services, Early Childhood Development Services website at <http://gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/EarlyChildhoodEducation.html>

Applicants requiring additional information about the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program are requested to contact the Coordinator, Family Home Day Care and Early Childhood Education (Coordinator), Department of Community Services, Early Childhood Development Services at 1-902-424-5460 or by email at creamek@gov.ns.ca.

Submission of the Application Package

Completed applications and supporting documents must be mailed to:

Coordinator, Family Home Day Care & Early Childhood Education
Early Childhood Development Services
Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
P.O. Box 696
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2T7

Application Review Process

Applications Checked for Completeness

After the application form and supporting documents are received, they will be reviewed to ensure that the application form has been properly completed and the supporting documents contain all required information.

If the application form or documents are incomplete, the applicant will be contacted by telephone or letter to request the missing information.

If the application is not complete within 30 days, the application will not be processed.

Application Eligibility

Applicants are considered eligible for the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program if they:

- Receive a loan through the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program for each year they are applying for the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program. Other commercial or personal loans will not be accepted;
- Graduate successfully from an approved ECE training program as listed in these Terms and Conditions;
- Are employed in a Nova Scotia licensed child care facility or FHDC agency;
- Submit an Early Childhood Education Assistance Program application **within four months** after graduation; and
- Commit to work in a Nova Scotia licensed child care facility of FHDC agency for 1500 hours for each year of reimbursement.

The reimbursement will be subject to the applicant fulfilling the commitment to work in a Nova Scotia licensed child care facility or FHDC agency upon graduation as outlined in the Reimbursement Process

Funding allocations are subject to Departmental budget.

Notification of Eligible Application

Following the review of the application, the applicant will be notified by letter if their application was eligible or not eligible for the program. The letter will provide details of the amounts for each eligible year and deadlines for accumulation of the required hours.

Eligible applicants will be required to begin accumulating the required hours of work in a licensed Nova Scotia child care facility or FHDC agency. Once the required hours are accumulated, the reimbursement process will begin as outlined in the Reimbursement Process.

Reimbursement Process

Applicants are directly responsible for the administration of the loan payments within the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program.

Applicants are also responsible for applying for any programs that the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program offers, e.g. interest relief.

Reimbursement will be made to the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program on behalf of the applicant after the required number of hours has been accumulated. For every **1500 hours** worked within a one year period, a payment of a lesser of **\$5000.00** or the amount of the loan will be made to the applicant's student loan for that year.

The Department of Community Services will provide the applicant with confirmation of the payments made on their student loan from the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program.

Accumulated Hours

Applicants will be required to accumulate 1500 hours per year of reimbursement.

If the applicant completed a full-time two year training program, they must work 1500 hours every year for two years to be reimbursed for the two year program.

If the applicant completed a full-time four year training program, they must work 1500 hours every year for four years to be reimbursed for the four year program.

Applicants are required to report their hours worked in a Nova Scotia licensed child care facility or FHDC agency using the Accumulated Hours Report (the Report). Template will be provided.

The Accumulated Hours Report must **only** be sent when 1500 hours are accumulated.

The Report should be sent to:

Coordinator, Family Home Day Care & Early Childhood Education
Early Childhood Development Services
Nova Scotia Department of Community Services
P.O. Box 696
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2T7

When the 1500 hours reported for that year are received by the Department, the loan reimbursement for that year will be sent to the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program. The Report must be sent by the 15th of the month for the payment to be made before the end of that month.

The applicant is responsible for keeping track and obtaining confirmation of completed hours of work from their employer if they change their place of employment.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify the Coordinator, Family Home Day Care and Early Childhood Education of any changes to their address or contact information.

Failure to Accumulate the Required Hours

If the applicant fails to accumulate 1500 hours within one year of the eligibility date, the following will apply:

- **Two year ECE diploma program**
 - an additional six months will be given to accumulate the required hours.
 - the applicant will have 18 months from the Application Eligibility date to accumulate 1500 hours.
 - only one reimbursement will be paid instead of the two reimbursements for two years of the loan.

Applicants who fail to meet the accumulated hours requirements, forfeit a year of Early Childhood Education Assistance Program eligibility.

Example:

Accumulated Hours Report deadline	Report received by deadline	Reimbursement applied to loan	Report received at 18 months	Reimbursement applied to loan
July 15, 2011	No	None	January 15, 2013	Only one payment for 1 st and 2 nd year

- **Four year ECE undergraduate degree program**
 - an additional 6 months will be given to accumulate the required hours.
 - the applicant will have 18 months from the Application Eligibility date to accumulate 1500 hours.
 - only one reimbursement will be paid for the first and second year of the loan.

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- if the applicant fails to accumulate 1500 hours in the third year of the program an additional 6 months will be given.
- the applicant will have 18 months from the last reimbursement date to accumulate 1500 hours.
- only one reimbursement will be paid for the third and fourth year of the loan.

Applicants who fail to meet the accumulated hours requirements, forfeit up to two years of Early Childhood Education Assistance Program eligibility.

Example:

Accumulated Hours Report deadline	Report received by deadline	Reimbursement applied to loan	Report received at 18 months	Reimbursement Applied to loan	Report received by January 15,2014	Report received at 18 months	Reimbursement Applied to loan
July 15, 2011	No	None	January15, 2013	Only one payment for 1 st and 2 nd year	No	July 15, 2014	Only one payment for 3 rd and 4 th year

Cancellation of Participation in the *Early Childhood Education Assistance Program*

The Department will cancel the applicant's enrollment from the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program if:

Two year ECE Diploma program:

- The applicant fails to send the Accumulation Hours Report within 18 months from the Application Eligibility date.
- The applicant fails to accumulate 1500 hours within 18 months from the Application Eligibility date.
- The applicant fails to send any communication to the Department regarding their participation status in the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program within 18 months of the Application Eligibility date.

Four year ECE Undergraduate Degree program:

- The applicant fails to send the Accumulation Hours Report within 18 months from the Application Eligibility date or within 18 months from any anniversary date of the eligibility date.
- The applicant fails to accumulate 1500 hours within 18 months from the Application Eligibility date or within 18 months from any anniversary date of the eligibility date.
- The applicant fails to send any communication to the Department regarding their participation status in the program within the 18 months of the Application Eligibility date or within 18 months from any anniversary date of the eligibility date.

Reminder Letters

Two Year Program:

6 Month Reminder

The Department will send the applicant a reminder letter six months after the application eligibility date. This letter will remind the applicant to continue to accumulate hours and to send the Accumulated Hours Report when they reach the required 1500 hours of work within one year of the Application Eligibility date.

1 Year Reminder

One year after the Application Eligibility date, a reminder letter will be sent to the applicants who have not sent the Accumulated Hours Report within one year of the Application Eligibility date. This letter will remind them that they will have only additional six months to report the required hours to receive partial reimbursement as stated in the Reimbursement Process under the Accumulated Hours section.

Four Year Program:

6 Month Reminder

The Department will send the applicant a reminder letter six months after the application Eligibility date. This letter will remind the applicant to continue to accumulate hours and to send the Accumulated Hours Report when they reach the required 1500 hours of work within one year of the Application Eligibility date.

1 Year Reminder

One year after the Application Eligibility date, a reminder letter will be sent to the applicants who have not sent the Accumulated Hours Report within one year of the Application Eligibility date. This letter will remind them that they will have only an additional six months to report the required hours to receive partial reimbursement as stated in the Reimbursement Process under the Accumulated Hours section.

18 Month Reminder

The Department will send the applicant a reminder letter 18 months after the eligibility date. This letter will remind the applicant to continue to accumulate hours and to send the Accumulated Hours Report when they reach required 1500 hours of work within one year of the last Accumulation Hours Report.

2 Year Reminder

Two years after the Application Eligibility date, a reminder letter will be sent to the applicants who have not sent the Accumulated Hours Report within one year of Application Eligibility date. This letter will remind them that they will have only an additional 6 months to report the required hours to receive partial reimbursement as stated in the Reimbursement Process under the Accumulated Hours section.

Applicant's Loan Payments

Payment will be made to the Student Assistance program on behalf of the applicant. In a situation where the outstanding loan amount is less than the amount reimbursable, the Department will issue a cheque to the applicant for the difference.

Taxable Benefits

Depending on the applicant's situation, Early Childhood Education Assistance Program may or may not be a taxable benefit.

For more information, please contact the Student Assistance program at the Department of Education at: <http://studentloans.ednet.ns.ca> and Canada Revenue agency at: www.cra.gc.ca

Appendix A – Definitions

“**Accumulated hours**” refers to the number of hours accumulated while working in a licensed Nova Scotia child care and FHDC agency care;

“**Application Deadline date**” refers to the date four months after applicant’s graduation date;

“**Application Eligibility date**” refers to the date application was received by the Department;

“**Coordinator**” refers to Coordinator Family Home Day Care and Early Childhood Education;

“**Department**” refers to the Department of Community Services

“**Director**” refers to the Director of Early Childhood Development Services at the Department of Community Services;

“**Fiscal Year**” refers to the provincial government business year which runs for the twelve months from 1 April of any given year until 31 March of the following year;

“**Full-time training ECE diploma/ undergraduate degree program**” refers to course load which is at least 60% of a full course load an applicant must take during the regular academic year. For example: If 5 courses are considered a full course load, then 3 courses are 60 per cent ($3/5 \times 100 = 60$);

“**Reimbursement**” refers to the payment made by the Department of Community Service to the Nova Scotia Student Assistance on behalf of the applicants;

“**Student loan**” refers to the loan obtained from the Nova Scotia Student Assistance.