

## EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE CIRCULAR

**Date:** May 23, 2025

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** ELCC-2025-03

**To:** All funded child care centres and nursery schools

**Subject:** 2025/26 ELCC Wage Grid and Rate Increases for Wage Grid Supplement / Base Operating Grant - CENTRES

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2025

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<b>Type:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> All Facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Required
	<input type="checkbox"/> Procedure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Centres	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Only
	<input type="checkbox"/> Licensing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nursery Schools	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial	<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Group Homes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Subsidy		

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This circular is to advise all funded early learning and child care (ELCC) centres (including nursery schools) about:

- 1) The ELCC Wage Grid for 2025/26 (see Appendix A)
- 2) An increase to Wage Grid Supplement that will be applied to the operating grant amount effective April 1, 2025, and the next steps for implementing the 2025/26 ELCC Wage Grid
- 3) An increase to the base operating grant rates effective April 1, 2025

Manitoba and Canada recognize that access to child care is a priority for Manitoba families. Investing in the growth and stability of the ELCC workforce is critical to increasing access to more affordable, high-quality child care spaces across the province.

As announced on May 23, 2025, the Wage Grid Supplement is being increased effective April 1, 2025 by \$60.4 million with \$56.2 million from Canada and \$4.2 million from Manitoba to support facilities with increasing wages. A further joint investment of \$4.55 million from the federal and provincial governments will support a two per cent increase to the base operating grant amounts effective April 1, 2025 for funded infant, preschool, school age and nursery spaces.

The Wage Grid is a key initiative of the larger workforce strategy. The increases to the ELCC Wage Grid are designed to improve recruitment and retention efforts for a qualified child care workforce.

**The annual operating grant rates are made up of the base operating grant amount and the Wage Grid Supplement amount.**

### 1) Base Operating Grant Rate

A two per cent increase to the base operating grant rates will be provided retroactively to April 1, 2025. It is targeted for use towards operational expenses including staff wages, administrative costs and programming support, and will help support the board of directors of non-profit centres in their efforts to balance their facility's budget.

### 2) Wage Grid Supplement to the Operating Grant

Funded facilities receive a Wage Grid Supplement as additional funding included as part of their operating grant to support increased wages. This supplement increase will be provided retroactively to April 1, 2025. It was calculated based on the unit funding model to provide a 12.17 per cent increase to the overall revenue per space (base operating grant, Wage Grid Supplement, Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant and parent fees).

### Maximum Annual Operating Grant Rates by Space Type in Centres

(Base Operating Grant + Wage Grid Supplement = Total Operating Grant)

Annual Amount per Approved Funded Space *		
Type of Space	As of July 1, 2024	Effective April 1, 2025
<b>Centres</b>		
Infant	\$16,610	\$19,916
Preschool	\$6,667	\$8,260
School Age	\$2,940	\$3,767
<b>Nursery School</b>		
1 to 5 sessions per week	\$1,966	\$2,566
Each additional session up to 10/week	\$393	\$513

\* Amounts based on 12 months of operation

### Operating Grant Payments

- The retroactive payment for the April 1, 2025 increases to the base operating grant and the Wage Grid Supplement will be issued by mid-June 2025.
- The new operating grant rates will be used to calculate grant funding for centre operating budgets submitted and assessed after the mass re-assessment of grants has been implemented.

### Reporting Requirements

The revenue from the increases to the base operating and the Wage Grid Supplement amounts and the increased expenditure for staff wages must be demonstrated in your next annual operating budget submission and your annual financial statements.

## ELCC Wage Grid Overview

In July 2022, Manitoba released an initial ELCC Wage Grid with the aim of developing equitable and common wages across the province for each employee classification and position. A Wage Grid Supplement is provided and applied to the operating grant for funded facilities to help them achieve the wages on the Wage Grid. On July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024, the rates on the Wage Grid and the Wage Grid Supplement amount were increased with joint federal and provincial funding.

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning recognizes the critical importance of continuing to improve wages for the sector to support recruitment and retention. The increases to the *Target* wages in the 2025/26 Wage Grid were developed to support the ELCC workforce at all classification levels and positions, and to provide greater incentives to engage in education and career development opportunities.

In response to specific sector feedback and to provide greater clarity, the structure of the Wage Grid has undergone several key changes for 2025/26:

- The *Starting Point* hourly wage column has been removed.
- The categories for *Position/Classification* under Frontline Staff have been modified to include only one category for an ECE II and a new category for a “CCA-in-ECE II Training” to acknowledge and support CCAs who are actively pursuing education leading to an ECE classification.
- The Target wage is increased for all positions and classifications, with a focus on increases for front-line Early Childhood Educator (ECE) positions, to reflect new expectations for the amount staff should be paid effective April 1, 2025.

The *Target* wages for all classifications and positions now provide closer alignment with the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) Market Competitive Salary Guidelines Scale. The largest increases in the 2025/26 Wage Grid are to the *Target* wages for frontline ECE IIs and ECE IIIs. These increases are made to recognize the importance of frontline staff in Manitoba’s child care system.

The Wage Grid provides guidance to the licensed and funded ELCC sector in developing equitable and competitive salary scales across employee positions/classifications. As the legal entity and authority for a non-profit child care centre, the board of directors is responsible for establishing wages.

The increased Wage Grid Supplement will assist facilities in meeting or exceeding the increased *Target* wages for all classification/position levels on a facility’s salary scale. This approach preserves the authority of boards of directors while ensuring consistent and better wages are provided to the ELCC workforce.

## Next Steps for Boards of Directors

As the employer, the board of directors is responsible for the development of the facility’s salary scale for employees, from frontline staff to directors. The 2025/26 ELCC Wage Grid provides a new *Target* wage an employee of that position/classification should receive in a funded facility, while providing the board of directors the flexibility to implement their own salary scale.

To implement the Wage Grid increase, boards of directors should:

- Review position descriptions, roles and responsibilities to account for and include positions not specified on the ELCC Wage Grid, e.g. administrative roles.
- Review and compare your facility's current salary scale to the hourly wages listed on the 2025/26 Wage Grid.
- Review the increased Wage Grid Supplement being provided as part of the Operating Grant effective April 1, 2025 to confirm the increased amount of funding that is to be applied to increasing wages in your facility.
- Adjust your salary scale accordingly.
- Adjust your budget to reflect the increased operating grant revenue and increased costs for proposed staff wages.
- Review and approve your revised salary scale and budget according to your facility's bylaws, policies and procedures.
- Provide payment to employees at your facility's new salary levels retroactively to April 1, 2025.

### Implementation Resources

- For additional information, see [2025/26 ELCC Wage Grid and Rate Increases for Wage Grid Supplement / Base Operating Grant - Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- Register for one of the following webinars. Registration links are provided in the covering email for this circular.
  - 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 4, 2025
  - 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 4, 2025
- The 2025/26 Wage Grid, effective April 1, 2025 is available at: [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students\\_workforce/wage\\_grid.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/wage_grid.html).
- Online Tool-Kit for Board of Directors - Wage Grid Implementation: [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/centres\\_homeproviders/centrebased\\_childcare/financial\\_management.html#toolkit](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/centres_homeproviders/centrebased_childcare/financial_management.html#toolkit).
- For a copy of circulars, FAQs or to view past webinar sessions, visit: [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare\\_news/current\\_circulars.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare_news/current_circulars.html).
- Learn more about ELCC initiatives, and Manitoba's action plans under the agreements with Canada at: [www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/actionplan.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/actionplan.html).

If you have any further questions regarding the information in this circular, please email Child Care Information Services at [cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca) with the subject line "Increased Rates for Wage Grid Supplement and Base Operating Grant" or call 204-945-0776 (toll free: 1-888-213-4754).

## Appendix A

2025/26 Early Learning and Child Care Wage Grid*	
Position/Classification	Target Hourly Wage
<b>Director ECE III</b>	
151-200 Spaces	\$39.41
51-150 Spaces	\$36.91
50 Spaces or Less	\$34.66
<b>Director ECE II</b>	
151-200 Spaces	\$37.56
51-150 Spaces	\$35.06
50 Spaces or Less	\$32.81
<b>Assistant Director</b>	
ECE III	\$32.66
ECE II	\$30.81
<b>Supervisor</b>	
ECE III	\$30.97
ECE II	\$29.06
<b>Frontline Staff</b>	
ECE III	\$29.41
ECE II	\$27.56
CCA-in-ECE II Training	\$22.37
CCA (with 40-hour course)	\$19.40

\* Effective April 1, 2025

### Definitions:

To view the sections of the Child Care Regulation referred to below, visit <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/current/pdf-regs.php?reg=62/86>

**CCA (with 40-hour course):** a person who has been issued a certificate as a Child Care Assistant under Categories of Certificates Section 3.1 and has completed a 40-hour course related to early childhood education, as required under Staff Qualifications Section 7(11.1) for centre employees or under Licence Application Section 22(1)(g) for family child care homes and Licence Application 35(2)(m) for group child care homes.

**CCA-in-ECE II Training:** a person who has been issued a certificate as a Child Care Assistant under Categories of Certificates Section 3.1 and is completing approximately six courses/18 credit hours per year in a recognized ECE program or is a participant in the ELCC ECE II Assessment Program (formerly called Competency Based Assessment/Prior Learning Assessment).

**ECE II:** a person who has been issued a certificate as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) II under Categories of Certificates Section 3.1.

**ECE III:** a person who has been issued a certificate as an ECE III under Categories of Certificates Section 3.1.