

**Early Learning and Child Care
2025/26 ELCC Wage Grid and Rate Increases for Wage Grid Supplement / Base
Operating Grant - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Circular # ELCC-2025-03**

Increase to Wage Grid and Wage Grid Supplement - Effective April 1, 2025

1) Why is Manitoba increasing the Wage Grid and Wage Grid Supplement?

Wages for early learning and child care (ELCC) staff in Manitoba need to continue to increase to improve recruitment and retention of staff. Providing additional funding to facilities to support increasing wages for ELCC staff is critical for supporting the growth of the sector.

2) What is changing in the 2025/26 Wage Grid and Wage Grid Supplement?

Effective April 1, 2025, multiple changes have been made to the ELCC Wage Grid:

- The *Starting Point* wage has been removed.
- The *Position/Classification* levels have been modified to provide greater clarity to facilities when determining staff wages. In response to recommendations from the sector, a new level has been added for Child Care Assistants (CCA) in Early Childhood Education training.
- 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 increased Wage Grid Supplement will support facilities to increase wages for staff.

3) Why is Manitoba increasing the existing Wage Grid?

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 addition, the new *Target* wages were also developed in response to concerns raised by the child care sector, and to 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, and with the goal of attracting new professionals to the field.

4) Why is the *Starting Point* wage removed?

The purpose of the Wage Grid is to ensure fair and equitable wages across facilities throughout the province. In 2022, the *Starting Point* wage was implemented to set a baseline for all facilities to meet with the additional funding provided through the Wage Grid Supplement, recognizing that some facilities would need more time and support to raise wages for staff. The *Target* wages outlined average wages for all positions and classifications that facilities were recommended to work towards within their budgets.

Financial data suggests that most facilities have successfully met and exceeded the *Starting Point* wages across classifications and positions. As such, the *Starting Point* wage is no longer necessary.

The *Target* wage will now set the standard for wages for all facilities to meet. *Target* wages will be supported through the increase to the Wage Grid Supplement, while providing flexibility for facility boards of directors to implement a wage scale that builds from these wages, if their budget allows.

5) What changes have been made to the *Position/Classification* column on the 2025/26 Wage Grid?

To help provide greater clarity when facilities are determining the correct *Target* wage for staff, the 2025/26 Wage Grid has been modified to include only one category for ECE II under Frontline Staff. *Target* wages for all frontline staff will now be determined based on the classification level (CCA, ECE II or ECE III) of the staff member.

To recognize the dedication and hard work of CCAs who are working towards completing education that will lead to an ECE classification, a “CCA-in-ECE II Training” position/classification has been added to the 2025/26 Wage Grid.

To be considered a CCA-in-ECE II Training, the employee must be:

- Completing approximately six courses/18 credits per year in [an approved ECE post-secondary training program](#) or;
- Meeting the designated target dates and completing the responsibilities of the assessment in a professional manner as a participant in one of the four streams in the [ELCC ECE II Assessment Program](#) (formerly called Competency Based Assessment/Prior Learning Assessment).

6) If the *Target* wage has increased, can all employees expect their wages to increase?

All facilities are expected to use the increase in funding to increase wages for staff. This does not necessarily mean that everyone will receive a wage increase, depending on what the current wages are. If a facility’s budget allows, facilities can pay staff above the *Target* wage.

7) Are facilities in receipt of the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) Staff Enhancement Grant expected to submit a new ISP Staffing Grant Application?

No, approved grant amounts for staff hired under the ISP Staff Enhancement Grant will be automatically adjusted by the department based on the *Target* wage on the 2025/26 Wage Grid for a CCA (with 40-hour course), which will be \$19.40 effective April 1, 2025.

For the April 27 to May 24, 2025 Reporting Period, facilities can submit Staffing Grant Payment forms reflecting the new approved wage of \$19.40 for staff hired under the ISP Staff Enhancement Grant.

The department will advise facilities regarding the steps for retroactive payment adjustments for the March 30 to April 26, 2025 Reporting Period in the coming weeks.

8) Is there going to be an increase to the salaries supported by the *Staff Replacement Grant* for staff hired to replace an employee enrolled in a Workplace Training Program?

The substitute (replacement staff) should be paid at the CCA level on the centre's salary scale.

To increase a replacement staff's wage to align with revisions to the CCA level on your centre's salary scale based on the 2025/26 Wage Grid, facilities are expected to submit a new *Staff Replacement Grant Application*. Updated applications are required to meet departmental financial and reporting requirements.

9) When should new/revised salary scales based on the 2025/26 Wage Grid be implemented?

Boards of directors require time to review and implement the 2025/26 Wage Grid increase. The expectation is that wage increases will be provided to staff, retroactively to April 1, 2025, including staff hired under the ISP Staff Enhancement Grant.

10) Who will receive the Wage Grid Supplement to support increasing wages?

All Manitoba licensed centres, nursery schools, and family and group child care homes receiving operating grant funding (funded facilities) will receive the Wage Grid Supplement increase.

In facilities that employ staff, the Wage Grid Supplement increase is to be used to increase staff wages. In child care homes that do not employ staff, it will increase the provider's income.

11) Does the Wage Grid apply to private, for-profit facilities or non-funded facilities?

No. The Wage Grid only applies to funded facilities.

Licensed for-profit centres and unfunded non-profit centres may wish to examine their current fee rates to see if increases are feasible in their current market, to increase their staff wages and stay competitive. For-profit facilities may also want to reach out to their Child Care Coordinator if they would like information about becoming a non-profit organization or need help to complete a revenue comparison.

12) Why did the government not use the Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA) Market Competitive Salary Guidelines Scale?

The goal of the ELCC Wage Grid is to develop a framework for wages in the sector that will ensure the sector staff are fairly compensated to help with recruitment and retention. The ELCC Wage Grid provides a foundation to build on and provides wage targets, rather than prescribed steps.

The ELCC 2025/26 Wage Grid was developed with greater alignment with the MCCA Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale in mind. The MCCA Market Competitive Salary Guideline Scale provides a suggested wage scale that facilities can be used if the facility's budget allows, and the wages meet or exceed the standards set in the ELCC 2025/26 Wage Grid.

13) Does the Wage Grid establish mandatory wage rates for staff in ELCC facilities?

Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning expects facilities to use the additional Wage Grid Supplement funding to increase wages to at least the Target wages on the Wage Grid.

ELCC facilities are responsible for establishing wages for their employees and may pay more than the Target wages. The Wage Grid Supplement is additional funding that must be used to increase wages to levels set by the facilities.

14) How is the Wage Grid implemented in unionized facilities?

Unionized facilities who receive the Wage Grid Supplement are expected to use this funding to increase wages. Facilities will need to work with the unions, where applicable, to integrate wage increases into collective agreements.

15) How was the increase for the Wage Grid Supplement calculated?

The supplement increase 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).

16) What is the unit funding model?

The unit funding model is based on the regulated child-to-staff ratios: a unit is 4 infant, 8 preschool, or 15 school age spaces. It helps to generate similar revenue from Operating Grant, Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant and parent fees for different types of spaces.

17) Why are CCAs who have not yet completed the required 40-hour ECE-related training not included on the Wage Grid and what do we pay them?

Wages for a CCA **without** their 40-hour training are at the discretion of the board of directors. Facilities may pay more than the provincial minimum wage if the operating budget permits.

18) Many CCAs are university students who meet the 40-hour course requirement and are hired full time under summer job grant programs. Should they be paid at the *Target* wage?

Staff hired under summer grant programs should be paid the wage rates that were indicated on the approved grant application. If a summer grant employee becomes a regular employee after the summer, they should be placed on your new/revised salary scale. They would be eligible for retroactive pay as of the date when they become a regular employee, not while working under the summer grant program.

19) Did the operating grant increase take into consideration the extra costs associated with payroll, such as Employment Insurance, Workers Compensation, Canada Pension Plan and health benefits?

The increased operating funding may be used to support other salary-related costs that have increased due to higher wages, such as Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Workers Compensation and health benefits.

The exception would be employers' pension plan contributions as these continue to be funded separately under the [Pension Plan Contribution: Reimbursement Application Program](#).

20) Can the Wage Grid Supplement be used for expenditures other than wages?

All funded facilities receiving an operating grant are required to use the Wage Grid Supplement to increase staff wages.

All funded centres and nursery schools must ensure that the increased revenue from the Wage Grid Supplement to the operating grant and increased expenditures for staff wages are demonstrated in the annual operating budget submissions and annual financial statements.

The Wage Grid Supplement may be used to support other salary-related costs that have increased due to higher wages, such as Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Workers Compensation and health benefits.

21) How much of the total operating grant amount is the Wage Grid Supplement and how much is the base operating grant?

See [Appendix A](#) (pg. 9) for a table showing the base operating grant, Wage Grid Supplement and total operating grant amounts by facility type and space type.

22) How can I learn more about the Wage Grid Supplement increase to the operating grant and 2025/26 Wage Grid?

- Register and attend a webinar.
- For a copy of the Circular, FAQs and past Webinars, visit:
www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare_news/current_circulars.html.
- Review the 2025/26 Wage Grid:
www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/wage_grid.html.
- Review the Online Tool-Kit for Board of Directors - Wage Grid Implementation:
www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/centres_homeproviders/centrebased_childcare/financial_management.html#toolkit.
- Learn more about ELCC initiatives and Manitoba's Action Plans under the agreements with Canada at: www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/actionplan.html.

Increase to Base Operating Grant Rates - Effective April 1, 2025

1) Who will receive the two per cent base operating grant funding increase?

All centres, nursery schools and family and group child care homes that receive operating grant funding will receive a two per cent increase to the base operating grant for the facility's funded spaces.

2) What is the effective date for the two per cent base operating grant funding increase?

The two per cent increase to the base operating grant rates will be retroactive to April 1, 2025.

3) How was the two per cent increase to the base operating grant calculated?

It is a two per cent increase to the base operating grant rates that were in effect July 1, 2024.

4) What is the purpose of the two per cent base operating grant funding increase?

The two per cent increase to the base operating grant amounts will help support facilities to address cost pressures they have been experiencing, such as increasing operational expenses for utilities, rent, programming, food and supplies.

This increase will also help support the board of directors of non-profit centres and nursery schools in their efforts to balance their facility's budget.

5) What is included in the total operating grant rates for a centre, nursery school or child care home?

The annual operating grant rate is made up of the base operating grant amount and the Wage Grid Supplement amount.

The base operating grant is targeted for use towards operational expenses including staff wages, administrative and programming costs.

The Wage Grid Supplement is targeted to increase wages in facilities that employ staff and to increase the provider's income in child care homes that do not employ staff.

6) When will my facility receive the base operating grant and Wage Grid Supplement increases?

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 and family and group child care home operating grant applications submitted and assessed after the mass re-assessment of grants has been implemented.

7) How much of the total operating grant amount is the base operating grant and how much of it is the Wage Grid Supplement?

See Appendix A for a table showing the base operating grant, Wage Grid Supplement and total operating grant amounts by facility type and space type.

8) How is the total operating grant amount calculated for centres, nursery schools and child care homes?

To calculate an annual operating grant for a facility, the number of funded spaces is multiplied by the grant rate for that space type. The grant amounts for each type of space are added together for the grant total for 12 months of operation. If a facility does not operate 12 months per year, divide the annual amount by 12 and multiply by the number of open months to calculate an estimated grant amount.

For a nursery school, the number of sessions offered per week affects the annual amount per approved funded space.

9) Do centres or nursery schools need to submit a Supplemental Budget Schedule form that outlines changes to revenue and expenditures that differ from our current Annual Operating Budget submission?

No. Centres and nursery schools do not need to submit a Supplemental Budget Schedule form. Information related to increased revenue received due to the operating grant funding increase should be reflected in your facility's annual financial statements and then future annual budget submissions.

10) Will the increase to the base operating grant affect the amount of the Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant?

No. The Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant continues to be the difference between the previous parent fee rates and the current reduced parent fee rates that were effective on April 2, 2023 and December 8, 2024.

See [Total Parent Fee Revenue Tables for Facilities effective Dec. 8 2024](#).

For more information, see [ELCC-2023-03 - Circular - New Regulated Parent Fees and Reduced Parent Fee Funding](#), [ELCC-2023-03 \(r\) - FAQs for Facilities](#), [ELCC-2024-09 - Circular - Extension of \\$10-a-Day Parent Fees to Non-School Days](#), and [ELCC-2024-09 - FAQs - Extension of \\$10-a-Day Parent Fees to Non-School Days](#).

11) Who can I contact for more information?

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

Appendix A

The annual operating grant rates include the base operating grant amount and the Wage Grid Supplement amounts.

The table below outlines the base operating grant, Wage Grid Supplement and total operating grant amounts for centres, nursery school spaces and family and group child care homes.

Maximum Annual Operating Grant Rates by Space Type Annual Amount per Approved Funded Space (based on 12 months of operation)						
Type of Space	July 1, 2024			April 1, 2025		
	Base Operating Grant	Wage Grid Supplement	Total Operating Grant	Base Operating Grant	Wage Grid Supplement	Total Operating Grant
Centres						
Infant	\$12,183	\$4,428	\$16,610	\$12,426	\$7,490	\$19,916
Preschool	\$4,477	\$2,190	\$6,667	\$4,566	\$3,693	\$8,260
School Age	\$1,782	\$1,158	\$2,940	\$1,818	\$1,949	\$3,767
Nursery Schools						
1 to 5 sessions per week	\$1,119	\$847	\$1,966	\$1,142	\$1,424	\$2,566
Each additional session up to 10 per week	\$224	\$169	\$393	\$228	\$285	\$513
Family/Group Child Care Homes						
Infant	\$2,884	\$1,918	\$4,802	\$2,942	\$3,227	\$6,169
Preschool	\$2,215	\$1,539	\$3,754	\$2,259	\$2,589	\$4,848
School Age	\$942	\$972	\$1,915	\$961	\$1,632	\$2,593