

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE CIRCULAR

Date: March 26, 2026

CIRCULAR NUMBER: ELCC-2026-01

To: Funded Family and Group Child Care Homes

Subject: 2026/27 ELCC Wage Grid and Rate Increases for Wage Grid Supplement / Base Operating Grant - HOMES

Effective Date: April 1, 2026

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

This circular is being sent to advise all funded early learning and child care (ELCC) family and group homes about:

- 1) The 2026/27 ELCC Wage Grid (see Appendix A)
- 2) An increase to Wage Grid Supplement that will be applied to the operating grant amount effective April 1, 2026, and the next steps for implementing the 2026/27 ELCC Wage Grid.
- 3) An increase to the base operating grant funding rates effective April 1, 2026

Manitoba and Canada recognize investing in the growth and stability of the ELCC workforce is critical to increasing access to more affordable, high-quality child care across the province.

Effective April 1, 2026, the Wage Grid Supplement is being increased by \$14.3 million (\$13.4 million from Canada and nearly 1 million from Manitoba) to support facilities with increasing wages to at least the Target Wages on the 2026/27 ELCC Wage Grid. Base operating grants will also increase by one per cent for an increase of \$4.7 million (\$2.5 million from Canada and \$2.2 million from Manitoba) in operating funding for all licensed and funded early learning and child-care facilities.

The Wage Grid is a key initiative of the [Higher Wages, Good Jobs, More Child Care Early Learning and Child Care Workforce Strategy](#). The increases to the ELCC Wage Grid are designed to improve recruitment and retention efforts for a qualified child care workforce, supporting our commitment to expand the child care system in Manitoba.

Home-based child care providers play an essential role in providing quality child care services to Manitoba families. In recognition of this, increases to the operating grant rates for family and group child care homes are also being implemented to increase the revenue for funded home-based providers.

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 one per cent increase to the base operating grant rates will be provided effective April 1, 2026. It is targeted for use towards operational expenses, administrative costs and programming support and will help support family and group child care providers 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 in their operating grant to support increased wages. This supplement increase will be provided effective April 1, 2026. It was calculated based on the unit funding model to provide a 2 per cent increase to the overall revenue generated per space (base operating grant, Wage Grid Supplement, Reduced Parent Fee Revenue Grant and parent fees).

The additional funding provided through 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.

Maximum Annual Operating Grant Rates by Space Type in Child Care Homes
(Base Operating Grant + Wage Grid Supplement = Total Operating Grant)

Annual Amount per Approved Funded Space *		
Type of Space	As of April 1, 2025	Effective April 1, 2026
Infant	\$6,129	\$6,449
Preschool	\$4,848	\$5,071
School Age	\$2,593	\$2,727

* Amounts based on 12 months of operation

Operating Grant Payments

- The new operating grant rates will be used to calculate grant funding for family and group child care home operating grant applications submitted and assessed after the mass re-assessment of grants has been implemented.

Child Care Homes with Employees

Since 2022, a wage grid supplement has been provided and applied to the operating grant for funded facilities to support increases to wages. Each subsequent year, the wage grid supplement and target wages have been increased.

In response to sector feedback and to provide greater clarity, the structure of the Wage Grid underwent several key changes for the 2025/26 iteration and included the largest increase to wages for front-line ECEs in Manitoba's history:

- The *Starting Point* hourly wage column was removed.
- The *Target Hourly Wage* became the expected amount to be paid to staff based on their position/classification.
- The categories for *Position/Classification* under Frontline Staff were 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 Wage Grid provides guidance for the licensed and funded ELCC sector in developing equitable and competitive wage scales across employee classifications and positions. In family and group child care homes that employ staff, the licence holder is responsible for establishing wages and may choose to pay wages higher than the target wages on the Wage Grid.

If you have employees, review the following for additional information:

- [ELCC-2026-01-Circular - 2026/27 ELCC Wage Grid and Rate Increases for Base Operating Grant / Wage Grid Supplement - CENTRES.](#)
- [2026/27 ELCC Wage Grid and Rate Increases for Base Operating Grant / Wage Grid Supplement – Frequently Asked Questions.](#)

If you have employees, register for one of the following webinars. Registration links are provided in the cover email for this circular:

- 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2026
- 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2026

Implementation Resources

- The 2026/27 Wage Grid, effective April 1, 2026 is available at: www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/students_workforce/wage_grid.html.
- For a copy of circulars, FAQs or to view past webinar sessions, visit: www.manitoba.ca/education/childcare/childcare_news/current_circulars.html
- Learn more about Manitoba's early learning and child care action plans under the agreements with Canada at: 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 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

2026/27 Early Learning and Child Care Wage Grid*	
Position/Classification	Target Hourly Wage
Director ECE III	
151-200 Spaces	\$40.56
51-150 Spaces	\$37.99
50 Spaces or Less	\$35.67
Director ECE II	
151-200 Spaces	\$38.65
51-150 Spaces	\$36.08
50 Spaces or Less	\$33.77
Assistant Director	
ECE III	\$33.61
ECE II	\$31.71
Supervisor	
ECE III	\$31.87
ECE II	\$29.91
Frontline Staff	
ECE III	\$30.27
ECE II	\$28.36
CCA-in-ECE II Training	\$23.02
CCA (with 40-hour course)	\$19.97

* Effective April 1, 2026

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.