

February 19, 2026

Dear Childcare Provider:

RE: 2026/27 Affordability Grant and Wage Top-up/Professional Development Grant Agreements

There are important updates to the 2026/27 Affordability Grant and the Early Childhood Educator Workforce Supports Grant Agreement (replacing the Wage Top-up/ Professional Development Grant Agreement).

On December 12, 2025, the governments of Alberta and Canada announced the signing of a one-year, \$1.17 billion extension of the Canada-Alberta Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. This important step forward ensures continued stability and support for early learning and childcare across Alberta.

Your 2026/27 childcare grants will be available to sign in the childcare portal in mid-March. Here are some of the changes you will see.

Affordability Grant Changes

Daycare, Group Family Child Care and Family Day Home Programs

Starting April 1, 2026, a 2 per cent inflationary increase will be applied directly to full and part-time Schedule A childcare fees for eligible licensed daycares and family day homes. This inflationary increase means programs will receive an additional 2 per cent in grant funding while families continue paying the same flat monthly fee.

Family day home agencies will be required to pass along this 2 per cent increase to their educators when administering the affordability funding.

- **ACTION REQUESTED:** If you are a family day home agency, a letter is attached to forward to all your educators.

Families with children using a licensed, eligible daycare or family day home will continue to pay \$326.25 per month for full-time care (100 hours or more per month) and \$230 per month for part-time care (50 to 99 hours per month), excluding eligible supplemental fees for optional services.

Preschool Programs

Eligible licensed preschool programs will continue to receive a maximum of \$100 per registered child per month in affordability funding to reduce parent fees. They will also continue to be permitted to set their childcare fees without restrictions or caps.

Out-of-School Care Programs

Out-of-school care programs with a signed 2025/26 Affordability Grant Agreement serving kindergarten-age children requiring childcare during school hours will also receive a two per cent inflationary increase for eligible children while retaining the same flat monthly parent fee for this age group.

Affordability Grant Agreement (access in the online portal)

Programs with a signed 2025/26 Affordability Grant Agreement will be able to view the draft 2026/27 agreement along with the draft Schedule A in advance of receiving your program's agreement for signing. You will receive an email notifying you when the agreements are ready to view in the Child Care Licensing Portal. The draft 2026/27 Funding Guide will also be available at that time. You can expect the terms and conditions of 2026/27 Affordability Grant Agreement to be similar to the 2025/26 agreement.

By mid-March, you will be notified by email when the final 2026/27 Affordability Grant Agreement is available for you to digitally sign in the portal. To be eligible to sign, your program must have submitted the 2024/25 financial reporting requirements. Programs with overdue reporting have been, and will continue to be, reminded of this requirement.

Please note, affordability funding eligibility remains limited for new programs that have not previously signed an Affordability Grant Agreement. As part of the one-year extension, Alberta successfully negotiated flexibility within the overall space cap set in the federal agreement to create up to 5,000 additional funded for-profit spaces in communities where they are needed most. Alberta's approach to allocating spaces will be shared in the coming months. For more information on for-profit and non-profit eligibility please go to [Alberta.ca](https://alberta.ca).

Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program - Changes

To better reflect government's commitment to recruiting and retaining a qualified and stable workforce, the Alberta Child Care Grant Funding Program is being renamed the **Early Childhood Educator Workforce Supports Program**. The program which includes wage top-ups, mandatory employer contributions, professional development and release time funding, is being updated to ensure it remains effective, continues to provide targeted learning opportunities for educators, while maintaining current policy and grant rates related to wage top-ups and mandatory contributions.

Effective April 1, 2026, the professional development and release time components of the program will shift to focus learning supports on strengthening workforce capacity in early learning and childcare principles, enhancing certification levels, and building the key skills and competencies needed to continue providing high quality childcare.

The updated program maintains funding for Early Childhood Educators at \$4,387.50 for professional development and release time. However, new eligibility criteria mean that some post-secondary courses, workshops and conferences may no longer qualify for grant funding. To help ensure training remains eligible, childcare providers are encouraged to pause booking professional development for 2026/27 until the approved workshop/conference list is released. This will support providers in making thoughtful decisions and effectively planning professional learning for their Early Childhood Educators. Additional information will be shared with you shortly.

**Early Childhood Educator Workforce Supports Grant Agreement
(access in the online portal)**

Programs with a signed 2025/26 Alberta Child Care Grant Agreement will be able to view the draft 2026/27 Early Childhood Educator Workforce Supports Grant Agreement and the corresponding funding guide in the Child Care Licensing Portal in advance of receiving your program's agreement for signing. You will receive an email when it is available.

The newly named program will take effect on April 1, 2026. Professional development and release time funding requests for 2026/27 will open on that date, when the new funding request form becomes available.

Reminder that only programs that have submitted the 2024/25 financial reporting for the Affordability Grant will be eligible to sign the upcoming agreements.

Thank you for your dedication to early learning and childcare in Alberta, and for your unwavering commitment to providing quality childcare.

If you have questions related to your grant agreements, please email the program areas noted below:

- Affordability Grant Agreement: ccaffordgrant@gov.ab.ca
- Financial Reporting Affordability Grant: affordgrantreporting@gov.ab.ca
- Wage Top-up/Professional Development Agreement: childcarefunding@gov.ab.ca
- General Inquiries: childcare@gov.ab.ca.

Best regards,

Laura Lowe
Assistant Deputy Minister
Child Care Delivery