



Notice of Funding Availability #746 – Early Learning Scholarship: Family Child Care Questions & Answers, Part 2 (Released February 15, 2017)

Below are answers to questions submitted in written form during its Information Sessions and questions submitted via email to Steve.Kim@sfgov.org. This document only captures some of the questions submitted to date. OECE will publish additional answers to questions in the coming days.

Questions that share an answer were grouped together by OECE. Questions and answers are organized around the following headings:

Minimum Qualifications:

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):

Early Learning Scholarship:

Preschool for All:

Target Populations:

Other:

Minimum Qualifications:

- 1. Question:** What happens if a provider is accepted but does not have any vouchered children?
Answer: *You are still eligible to apply. All FCC's who are seeking to serve an average of at least 2 low-income children per month are encouraged to apply. The minimum requirement for an FCC to receive Early Learning Scholarship funding is to maintain a monthly average of at least 2 low-income children ages 0 to 4. If you are currently a Preschool for All provider, you may apply for Preschool for All 9-month or Preschool for All 12-month to serve 4-year olds of any income level.*

- 2a. Question:** Can I still submit a NOFA even if I only work with one low-income child? Do I need to complete the same NOFA application if I only have private payers? Do I qualify?
- 2b. Question:** Can I fill out the application (NOFA) if I only have one private paying child and I have not been evaluated by the quality scale (QRIS)?
- 2c. Question:** If I have a small license will you finance all my children? What does it depend on?
Answer: *All FCC's who are seeking to serve an average of at least 2 low-income (at or below 70% of the State Median Income) children per month are encouraged to apply. The minimum requirement for an FCC to receive Early Learning Scholarship funding is to maintain a monthly average of at least 2 low-income children ages 0 to 4. If you are currently a Preschool for All provider, you may apply for Preschool for All 9-month or Preschool for All 12-month to serve 4-year olds of any income level. If an FCC has not yet been assessed or scored on the QRIS or has a QRIS score lower than 3, the FCC can definitely apply for ELS funding. OECE is asking*

applicants to agree to work toward achieving a score of 3 or higher on the QRIS no later than June 30, 2020. OECE will work with selected FCCs to schedule training and technical assistance regarding the QRIS assessment after July 2017. FCCs without a QRIS score will be paid at the Tier 3 rates through June 30, 2020.

3. Question: How can I enroll 2 low income children?

Answer: Being able to enroll low-income families is dependent on multiple factors including your program's location, quality, marketing and promotion efforts, history serving low income families, rates, and other factors. If you are interested in serving an average of at least 2 low-income (at or below 70% of the State Median Income) children per month we encourage you to apply, regardless of your current enrollments. The minimum requirement for an FCC to receive Early Learning Scholarship funding is to maintain a monthly average of at least 2 low-income children ages 0 to 4. If you are currently a Preschool for All provider, you may apply for Preschool for All 9-month or Preschool for All 12-month to serve 4-year olds of any income level.

4a. Question: How do you know how many low income children you will be able to help and will receive an ELS?

4b. Question: What number should I put in the boxes if I am not working with low-income children yet?

Answer: If you do not have a history of serving low-income families you may not know precisely how many you will serve next year. All FCC's who are seeking to serve an average of at least 2 low-income (at or below 70% of the State Median Income) children per month are encouraged to apply. The minimum requirement for an FCC to receive Early Learning Scholarship funding is to maintain a monthly average of at least 2 low-income children ages 0 to 4. If you are currently a Preschool for All provider, you may apply for Preschool for All 9-month or Preschool for All 12-month to serve 4-year olds of any income level.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):

5a. Question: Although I have been participating in QRIS since 2014, I do not have a QRIS score from First 5. I know what my likely score would be, since I have had an ERS and I have a matrix. I was told by my consultant that only a small fraction of FCCs have a score given to them by First 5, which means that the large majority of us will not qualify for the additional funds.

5b. Question: If we don't have the most recent QRIS score where can we get it?

5c. Question: What if we have never done a QRIS, are we eligible to apply?

Answer: If an FCC has not yet been assessed or scored on the QRIS, has an expired QRIS score, or has a QRIS score lower than 3, the FCC can definitely apply for ELS funding. OECE is asking applicants to agree to work toward achieving a score of 3 or higher on the QRIS no later than June 30, 2020. OECE will work with selected FCCs to schedule training and technical assistance regarding the QRIS assessment after July 2017. You do not need to call anyone at this time. FCCs without a QRIS score will be paid at the Tier 3 rates through June 30, 2020.

6. Question: If you are saying that we have until June 1st, 2020 to be assessed (QRIS) will we need to wait until then to receive the 300 per child grant?

Answer: Yes, you must have a QRIS rating of Tier 4 or 5 to be eligible.

7. Question: For the QRIS score do you want the number out of 35 points or the tier?

Answer: Please list the QRIS Tier e.g., 1-5.

8. Question: How can we qualify for a higher tier (QRIS) considering everyone qualifies at Tier 3?

Answer: Currently OECE offers annual quality grants if you are at Tier 4 & 5. Over time the hope is to garner more resources to have a Tier 4 & 5 higher rate.

9. Question: The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) of my Childcare center is not available yet, and we don't know what will happen in the future. Can I apply?

Answer: If your current QRIS score is under Tier 3 or you have not assessed yet, you still can apply. However, you must agree to actively work with the QRIS technical assistance and training to achieve a Tier 3 rating no later than June 30, 2020 to be selected to receive OECE funding.

10. Question: What happens if I do not receive my QRIS rating by the March 3rd deadline?

Answer: You can still apply.

11. Question: If my family child care current QRIS score is Tier 4, would my FCC receive more funding by July 1, 2017?

Answer: Yes, your FCC would receive more funding by July 1, 2017.

Early Learning Scholarship:

12. Question: What does OECE consider low income?

Answer: Income at or below 70% of the State Median Income (SMI). Please refer to Appendix C on page 25 of the FCC NOFA.

13. Question: With a license for 14, if all children are subsidized, will the providers receive the scholarship for all or just a few?

Answer: All families on July 1, 2017 who are state or locally subsidized and receiving care in an FCC approved through this NOFA process will continue receiving a subsidy under the new ELS system. Any new families seeking an ELS subsidy must be enrolled off of the Centralized Eligibility List, currently SF3C.

14a. Question: 15 FCC providers serving 40 Early Head Start children in priority Target Populations are not included in current or future enrollment projections. Where should providers include these children?

14b. Question: How are EHS-FCC able to make projections? How many children will you finance?

Answer: Please note that this NOFA is to qualify family child care homes for enhanced rates from local funding. FCCs serving Early Head Start children should enter those children in the "Other funding sources not listed above" row in Section 5 for Current Enrollments and in the "Other funding sources not listed above - possibly funded through ELS-Gap" row in Section 6 for Projected Peak Enrollments in FY 2017-2018. OECE aims to maximize state and federal

funding in its ELS-Gap funding type.

15. Question: If my employee is going to obtain their Associate's degree in child development at the end of May, can I include my employee in the application (NOFA)?

Answer: Yes. The Peak Enrollment Form asks for the Teacher Permit level of the lead teacher in the classroom for the purposes of determining the PFA 9 month/12 Month program rates only. The NOFA application form does not ask for employee education levels.

16. Question: Can you clarify the difference between state and local funding?

Answer: State early care and education funding is from the California Department of Education or the California Department of Social Services. Local early care and education funding (Early Learning Scholarships and Preschool for All) is from local revenue generated by San Francisco taxpayers.

17. Question: Can I still take CalWORKs/State voucher children if I'm not part of the system?

Answer: Yes, CalWORKs and CAPP State vouchers allow parents to choose any licensed or approved license-exempt provider that will accept their voucher. FCC's who don't apply or are not approved through this NOFA process will not be eligible to receive ELS funding that enhances (increases) the state voucher rates to the Tier 3 rates, and are not approved to serve ELS-City (Voucher, Reserved, or Bridge) families.

18. Question: Will the percent of infants be affected if we have the same payments?

Answer: FCC's may determine, independently of OECE, their mix of age groups served.

19a. Question: How will you decide which providers to accept into the ELS? Will there be a vetting process or site visit to gauge quality and commitment to quality?

19b. Question: Who is going to qualify for the ELS? What will you base your decision on?

Answer: The Selection Criteria for determining which FCCs will be qualified through this NOFA are listed on pages 12-13 of the NOFA. OECE reserves the right to conduct site visits as part of the selection process.

20. Question: Do you have the ELS slide with the preschooler ELS rate available?

Answer: The PowerPoint presentation from the Information Sessions is available at www.sfoece.org/fundingopportunities.

21. Question: Is the ELS NOFA similar to the CWAGES application in that rates increase or decrease based on the age of a child enrolled?

Answer: Yes, there are ELS rates for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Please see page 7 of the FCC NOFA.

22a. Question: How many FCCs participated in the Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis? How did you choose who to interview? What were the neighborhoods of the FCCs that were selected? What was the license size of the FCCs that were interviewed?

22b. Question: How many providers participated in the fiscal analysis? How were they chosen?

Answer: The CFA team created 8 FCC profiles with variations primarily pertaining to ages of

children, revenue sources, and size of home.

23. Question: On the current peak enrollment form where do we put homeless families funded by HSA (not ACCESS)?

Answer: ELS-City (Voucher).

24. Question: For the current peak enrollment can we choose the month?

Answer: Yes, you can choose the month for peak enrollment.

25a. Question: How likely is that the rates change? Will there be an increase in the ELS according to the cost of living?

25b. Question: How likely is it that the rates will increase or change in the future?

25c. Question: How likely is it that these rates will change? Does it increase with the cost of living?

25d. Question: Will there be a cost of living increase? Who will be evaluating the situations?

25e. Question: Will there be an increase in cost of living every year? Will the payment come in one check or two separate checks?

Answer: OECE's intention is to have the rate represent the cost of quality over time, and therefore we hope to make adjustments, subject to fund availability.

26. Question: I'll do my projections form but I want something completely different for the following year. Do I do two projections using both forms?

Answer: You would indicate your projected enrollments for next year on the Peak Enrollment Form. If you are referring to projected changes for Fiscal Year 18-19 you would indicate that at a later date/process to be determined.

27. Question: How will families be able to qualify for an ELS slot, what should we tell them if they call us?

Answer: In order to be eligible for ELS-City (Voucher and Reserved) families must earn at or below 70% of the State Median Income (SMI), but can remain subsidy eligible until they reach 110% of the Area Median Income. For ELS-City (Moderate) families can earn over 70% of the State Median Income and remain eligible until they reach 110% of the Area Median Income.

28. Question: In your example ELS –Gap is paying for the gap cost of care for a child in CalWORKs e.g., for an infant you would pay \$4,286? Is this the gap for the cost of child care for an infant in full time/full year care?

Answer: Yes, this is the gap for the cost of child care for an infant in full time/full year care.

29. Question: The "common date" for private preschools is the week after the ELS NOFA is due. The private preschools won't know who to accept until the following week. How do we fill out our application?

Answer: Complete your application in full and submit along with the appropriate Peak Enrollment Form which indicates your best estimates of projected enrollments for fiscal year 2017-2018.

- 30. Question:** How did you get to this number knowing that it is very difficult for FCCs to have four infants per day?
Answer: The examples in the FCC-NOFA are scenarios with less than four infants. Please apply based on your preferred enrollment model.
- 31. Question:** If I work with PFA and I want to work with the other programs, do I have to complete both application?
Answer: Complete one application and an Early Learning Scholarship Peak Enrollment Form. Do not complete the PFA ONLY Peak Enrollment Form if you are seeking to also serve ELS funded families.
- 32. Question:** Will the Early Learning Scholarship be effective this year, or next?
Answer: The ELS will start July 1, 2017.
- 33a. Question:** What will happen with children with scholarships that are already in care? If the provider is accepted, will the children be converted to ELS automatically?
- 33b. Question:** What happens to vouchered children who are already at an FCC that are accepted into ELS? Will this voucher convert to ELS?
Answer: Families with existing State and Local subsidies will be converted to ELS funding starting July 1, 2017.
- 34a. Question:** On the “projected peak enrollment spreadsheet” under the section “enrollments-current”, C-Wages is not shown as a funding source. Do I need to input C-wages?
- 34b. Question:** Do the FCCs who only turn in the application to use PFA cease to access C-Wages funds?
- 34c. Question:** How is C-Wages being accounted for in the new ELS?
- 34d. Question:** In this new scholarship, can we still get c-wages or will it stop? Can I participate in both (ELS+C-WAGES)?
Answer: You do not need to input C-Wages information on the Peak Enrollment Form. The C-Wages program will end June 30th, 2017 and the C-Wages funding will be incorporated into the new Early Learning Scholarship rates. The enhanced ELS rates reflect the San Francisco Citywide Plan for Early Care and Education’s strategy to expand access to quality ECE services for low-income and Target Population families and pay FCC’s higher rates to support a Tier 3 QRIS baseline of quality, which factors in staff costs.
- 35. Question:** In the information I’ve received, there is a specific amount, is it fixed or variable?
Answer: The ELS rates are fixed.
- 36. Question:** On the peak enrollment form what type of paperwork is required for ELS City Reserved? How do we predict that? (Vouchers vs CalWORKs contracts)
Answer: The forms and related documents to determine need and eligibility, as is typical for any family with a State or Local voucher, will be determined by the ECE Integrated Services grantee(s).

37. Question: If a provider has a large license (14 children) will the FCC receive the ELS payment for all 14 children or just for some?

Answer: If you are determined eligible, you would receive ELS funding for all eligible children ages 0-5 only. Families who are homeless or involved in the child welfare system (FCS) can receive ELS funding for older siblings through age 12.

38. Question: If I hold a slot for the ELS-City Reserved does that mean I would be holding a slot only to be used for those particular children? Would I be receiving payment for the slot even if I do not get a child to fill it? If not why would I as a provider hold this slot open only for these children?

Answer: FCC's who indicate ELS-City (Reserved) funding are requesting OECE subsidy funding be assigned to an FCC to ensure space is held for eligible families enrolled off the SF3C list. The FCC will be paid on enrollments only and, of course, if that space cannot be quickly filled by an ELS-City (Reserved) eligible family the FCC may fill that space with any other family (fee paying or otherwise) without penalty. FCC's who have been awarded ELS-City (Reserved) slots will work directly with the ECE Integrated Services Grantee to fill their specific "Reserved" openings.

39. Question: Is there a minimum or maximum amount of low income vouchered children an FCC can receive?

Answer: The minimum requirement is two low income children and there is not a maximum.

40. Question: Will there be any funding for ELS-City Moderate this year?

Answer: It will depend on funding availability and the number of applicants. The hope is to fund ELS-City Moderate if possible.

41. Question: If you have a Voucher Bridge child for a 3 year old who will turn 4 in a private program, should they apply for ELS anchor, bridge or PFA 4 for that child? If the parent cannot pay for tuition as a PFA enrollment, should they tell the parent to get certification from the CEL so that they know if they need to find a placement in another program in case the site does not receive an ELS bridge?

Answer: All existing PFA Bridge families will transition to the new ELS-Bridge in Fiscal Year 17-18. You do not need to indicate that group in your Projected Peak Enrollments for next year. All new families in Fiscal Year 17-18 who lose eligibility for their State or Local subsidies will be determined ELS-Bridge eligible by OECE on a case-by-case basis.

42. Question: Are regular FCC providers qualified to enroll at risk children?

Answer: FCC providers are "qualified" as eligible to receive Early Learning Scholarship funding through the NOFA process. At risk children will be referred to FCC's who have been qualified. There is no special qualification, outside of the NOFA, to serve at risk children.

43. Question: How much funding is available for the ELS?

Answer: The total funding amount for ELS subsidies and administration is approximately \$48 million.

44. Question: How will the CACFP “applicable rate” be determined?

Answer: The CACFP (food program) rate was averaged for FCC’s. The FCC rate is \$996 per child.

Preschool for All:

45. Question: Is the option for families in PFA to give back tuition credit no longer an option for 2017-18?

Answer: PFA 9-month and PFA 12-month are a continuation of PFA funding for existing PFA 9-month and PFA 12-month FCCs and will include all existing components of that program, including tuition give back.

46. Question: If an FCC only applies for PFA only are we tied to the funding level that we request in the application for 3 years?

Answer: PFA-9 month and PFA-12 month are a continuation of PFA funding for existing PFA-9 month and PFA-12 month FCCs for two fiscal years, 2017-18 and 2018-19. OECE has the sole discretion to extend that term. OECE funding received by an FCC will be based on actual enrollments. Enrollment projections can be adjusted annually.

47. Question: It sounds like the city will continue to provide PFA for two years without income qualifications. For PFA sites that accept children at younger ages that will not be age 4 during the next two years should we inform families not to expect PFA rebates when their child turns 4?

Answer: PFA-9 month and PFA-12 month are a continuation of PFA funding for existing PFA-9 month and PFA-12 month FCCs for two fiscal years, 2017-18 and 2018-19. OECE has the sole discretion to extend that term. OECE would not recommend guaranteeing the availability of PFA tuition credit to families enrolled after June 30, 2019.

48. Question: Are you trying to PFA? Can we anticipate that PFA will time out in 3 years?

Answer: PFA-9 month and PFA-12 month are a continuation of PFA funding for existing PFA-9 month and PFA-12 month FCCs for two fiscal years, 2017-18 and 2018-19. OECE is charged with evaluating how to best invest local funding to create a high quality continuum of care for children 0-5, and changes in programs including PFA are under consideration.

49. Question: If an FCC applies for just ‘PFA only’ this time are we locked out of applying for an ELS in later years?

Answer: A PFA only FCC would be eligible to apply for ELS through future funding opportunities. At this stage, OECE does not anticipate future applications within the next three years but this may change depending on demand and funding availability.

Target Populations:

50. Question: What happens to those families who are paying a family fee but are not the Target Population?

Answer: Family fees will continue to be collected in accordance with the relevant fee schedule for all families.

51. Question: There is a big mistake in how the target populations were presented. Latinos and African Americans of any socio economic status should be included and not just those who are low income.

Answer: OECE envisions a day where all children regardless of race or socioeconomic status have universal access to high-quality early education experiences ages birth through five. Unfortunately, funding for early care and education in San Francisco has not reached near a sufficient level to execute on this vision. Therefore, OECE has had to make difficult choices on how and where to allocate local resources. Several decades of research now show that targeting early education and care resources to low-income families demonstrate large returns on that public investment in a multitude of individual and societal indicators of well-being. That is, the children who need early care and education the most, also seem to benefit the most from it. We are hoping that as funding permits we can expand the ELS-City (Moderate) funding to assist low-moderate income families struggling to afford the spiraling costs of living in San Francisco, as well as target population families regardless of income.

52. Question: I have a client based program. I would love to work with homeless mothers by assisting them as well as their children but I do not have any now.

Answer: We encourage providers to let us know through their application that they are interested in serving the target populations.

Other:

53a.Question: Is there any help to complete the application in case I have any questions?

53b.Question: I have no idea how to use Excel. I have to complete it by hand. Is there technical assistance to help complete the NOFA?

53c.Question: Will the coaches help complete the application (NOFA)

Answer: OECE is not allowed to provide technical assistance to applicants. OECE is aware that several organizations, including the Family Child Care Quality Network and First 5 San Francisco, plan to provide technical assistance workshops for assistance. Applicants can email questions to Steve.Kim@sfgov.org by Feb. 14 at 12 pm, and responses to questions will be posted at <http://sfoece.org/funding-opportunities/>.

54. Question: Is the information shared at the presentation final?

Answer: No. OECE may make updates to the NOFA documents, and encourages applicants to check <http://sfoece.org/funding-opportunities/> for notices of updates and updated materials.

55. Question: Is there a minimum of applications that will be accepted?

Answer: No.

56. Question: Please clarify if FCCHN is the same as FCCHEN?

Answer: Yes – Family Child Care Home Network is the same as a Family Child Care Home Education Network.

57. Question: Are FCCs required to take care of a certain age group?

Answer: There is no requirement to serve any specific age group. However PFA-9 month and PFA-12 month is only available for 4 year olds. Intent to serve infants and toddlers from low-income families is worth 5 points in the selection process.

58a.Question: When is the earliest that I can submit my application?

58b.Question: How early can I submit my application?

Answer: You can submit your application any time before March 3, 2017 at 5 pm.

59. Question: When can I pick up the application and find someone that can help me?

Answer: You can pick up a hard copy of the application at the Human Services Agency Contracts Office, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA on Monday – Friday, from 8am-5pm. Staff from OECE and HSA are not allowed to provide applicants with any technical assistance on their application, nor answer any questions. All questions must be emailed to Steve.Kim@sfgov.org by Feb. 14 at 12 pm.

60. Question: Are all the links on OECE translated or only the NOFA's?

Answer: At this time, only the Family Child Care NOFA documents posted on www.sfoece.oeg are translated into Spanish and Chinese.

61. Question: What happens if you get accepted but don't have any voucher children?

Answer: It doesn't mean you're not eligible to apply for ELS. If you've applied and you've indicated to serve voucher children, you will have the opportunity to serve them and receive ELS rates for doing so.

62. Question: Can you make all the excel formulas available so that people who are filling the form by hand can use them to calculate amounts? I am worried about providers who are computer illiterate.

Answer: Click on the boxes to see the formulas. You can also refer to the rates tab to be able to guide your calculations.

63. Question: How is the state standard reimbursement rate (SRR) determined?

Answer: These are set by the State. ELS-Gap funding is additional on top of the State rates up to the tier 3 amount.

64. Question: What will happen to those families who are currently looking for care and who were pulled from SF3C?

Answer: If a family was pulled and received a voucher, they would look for slots with the assistance from the ECE Integrated Services grantee.

65. Question: I have not renewed my site supervisor permit for two years, will this impact me with the NOFA funding.

Answer: It will impact you if you are a PFA 9-month or PFA 12-month provider. PFA rates are based on teacher permit level.

- 66. Question:** What is the address to drop off the application forms?
Answer: 1650 Mission Street SF, CA. 94103, 3rd floor across the hall from OECE office. The address is also listed on the NOFA.
- 67. Question:** Will there be an opportunity for new providers to apply in FY 18-19 and FY 19-20.
Answer: OECE currently does not have plans to accept more applications in FY 18-19 or FY 19-20; however this could be an option depending on funding availability.
- 68. Question:** If our enrollment changes every year for the next three years will our funding level also fluctuate?
Answer: Yes because OECE will pay on actual enrollments.
- 69. Question:** Is the Children's Council funding still going to be available for families or will OECE take place of that as well?
Answer: Children's Council will continue to provide funding through its direct State contracts: CalWORKs Stage 3, CAPP, and its Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN). The ECE Integrated Services Grantee(s) will administer on behalf of OECE other State and Local funding sources. The awarded Integrated Services agency or agencies have not yet been determined.
- 70. Question:** Does the online application have a print feature so once all the data is entered it can be printed for review by Executive Leadership?
Answer: No, however once you submit the application it will be emailed to you so you can print the email.
- 71. Question:** Is OECE prioritizing State or Federal funded programs before other non-profit programs?
Answer: Yes, State or Federal funded programs will be prioritized before other non-profit programs.
- 72. Question:** Do we submit an enrollment form for new sites?
Answer: Yes submit an enrollment form per site
- 73a. Question:** How often do we submit an application?
73b. Question: If my FCC qualify the ELS, do I need to submit any update application next three years?
Answer: Only submit your application one time for the next three years
- 74. Question:** We are expecting to open two new sites within 1-2 years. Should we submit an enrollment form for those sites?
Answer: Yes, please submit an enrollment form for those sites.
- 75. Question:** Must we use Cocoa for electronic sign in/out? We currently use a third party App that we use for family communication, to sign in/out, etc. We do not want to switch as it would affect our relationship with parents.

***Answer:** OECE wants to work with providers to streamline and make reporting requirements work for you and the Office. We are open to exploring how to work with providers using other data systems.*