



Notice of Funding Availability #746 – Early Learning Scholarship: Family Child Care Questions & Answers, Part 3 (Released February 17, 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: I don't have low-income children enrolled in my family child care currently. Can I apply?
Question: Can we apply for the ELS if there are no low-income children in my family child care now?
Question: I have two children at my childcare center. Does it mean those two children must come from low-income families?
Answer: Yes, you can apply. To qualify for the ELS, you must plan to have at least 2 low-income children enrolled in your family child care during any given year.
Answer: Yes, you must enroll a minimum of 2 low-income children.

- 2) Question: What if I have one child is from a low-income family, and a second child is private pay family but also from a low-income family. Do I qualify for the ELS in this case?
Answer: In this situation, you have to look at the family income of the private pay child. If the family income is below 70% of State median income, you can count the child as a low income child.

- 3) Question: Our FCC enrollment for FY17-18 is static (no change in families due to returning families and entering siblings and no room for new families) making it difficult to figure out how to apply for FY18-19. This is when we will have open spots. Does our current population shut us out of an ELS enrollment?

Answer: Not necessarily. You must serve an average of 2 low-income families a month to be eligible for ELS funding. If you expect/desire to meet that obligation prospectively as new spaces become available (through attrition and otherwise) for FY 18-19, please apply.

QRIS:

- 4) Question: If a FCC's QRIS is in Tier 3, does the FCC need to be assessed again? What will happen to the FCC if the new QRIS score is below Tier 3?

Answer: If an FCC's QRIS score is Tier 3, the FCC should list that score in their application and they will meet the minimum qualifications for ELS funding. All providers will be assessed regularly on a schedule to be determined by OECE and First 5 SF. If an FCC scores lower than a 3 during the term of the funding cycle, they will be offered technical assistance to improve their score to reach a Tier 3 by June of 2020.

- 5) Question: Where do I get the QRIS rating?

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: First 5 San Francisco provides QRIS rating. If you do not receive your rating, you are still eligible to apply the ELS as long as you agree to be rated in the future. If your current QRIS score is under Tier 3 or you have not been 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.

- 6) Question: What happens if I do not receive my QRIS rating by the March 3rd deadline?

Answer: You can still apply.

- 7) Question: Is funding guaranteed for sites at tier 4 or 5?

Answer: FCC's will be approved for funding through the NOFA process. The QRIS rating is not a qualifying factor for FCC's until year 2020.

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

Answer: Yes, you would receive a once a year payment for each low income child enrolled. Tier 4 payments are \$300 for each low income infant enrolled, and \$200 for each low income preschooler.

EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIP:

- 9) Question: According to the NOFA, ELS FCC rate is it the annual rate based on per infant/toddler/preschooler?

Answer: Yes, the rates in the NOFA are annual rates for each age group.

- 10) Question: The NOFA page 9, enrollment section 4, Child Attendance Recordkeeping section states that OECE will provide start-up funding. How can we apply for the start-up funding? And what are the requirements for this funding?
Answer: OECE will share details about the start-up funding available to adopt electronic sign in/out procedures in Spring 2017.
- 11) Question: According to NOFA page 9, enrollment section 4, Child Attendance Policy section mentions the program year. Please clarify the definition of program year.
Answer: Program year is defined by the FCC, but should be at a minimum at least 175 days long.
- 12) Question: The NOFA page 9, enrollment section 6 mentions the consent form. Where can I get the consent form?
Answer: OECE will share templates of the consent form in English, Spanish and Chinese in Spring 2017 with providers who are qualified through this NOFA.
- 13) Question: Under other requirements, the NOFA mentions brochures. Where can I get the brochure?
Answer: The last program assurance states that FCCs shall be required to use an approved OECE logo in all materials used to market OECE-funded programs, including brochures, websites, flyers, banners, and advertisements. OECE will provide copies of the logo to all providers qualified through this NOFA.
- 14) Question: According to Appendix B, how can I know which zip codes have the priorities?
Answer: The columns labeled “CSPP LPC Priority 2016” and “CCTR LPC Priority 2016” in the table in Appendix B indicate whether the zip code listed is a priority 1 (highest), priority 2, or priority 3 (lowest).
- 15) Question: According to Appendix E, example 1 states the total projected OECE funding agreement amount is \$66,407. Is the annual amount from the OECE?
Answer: Yes.
- 16) Question: If children with ELS-City funding enrolled in my FCC, can they stay in my FCC until they go to kindergarten?
Answer: All ELS funded children who lose their eligibilities for local, Federal, or State subsidies will remain funded through the end of the program year. Target Population families who lose eligibility will be funded until the child reaches kindergarten, funding permitting. See page 3 for a description of Target Populations.
- 17) Question: My FCC qualifies to receive the ELS. If I don't have any children with vouchers enroll in my FCC, I will not receive ELS-Voucher funding. Is it right?
Answer: Yes, that is correct. ELS-City (Voucher) payments will only be made to providers based on actual enrollments of eligible children.
- 18) Question: Who will calculate the actual funding to the FCCs?

Answer: ELS funding/payments are based on actual enrollments, which will be calculated and issued by the ECE Integrated Services Grantee(s) on behalf of OECE.

19) Question: ELS-City (Reserved) slots are serving target populations. If I project my enrollment in Reserved, I cannot choose to serve other families that are from different categories, correct?

Answer: Target Populations families are prioritized for ELS-City (Reserved) slots. If there are no Target Population families available then other low-income families may be enrolled in the Reserved slot.

20) Question: My FCC is serving two low-income children, but I am not participating in FCCQN now, or the QRIS rating. Can I apply for the ELS? How can I apply to the FCCQN?

Answer: A provider does not need to currently be participating in the FCCQN nor have a QRIS rating in order to be eligible. Please apply.

21) Question: Currently I enroll children with City subsidies. If I choose not to apply for this NOFA, can I still serve these children after June 30, 2017? If not, what will happen to these children?

Answer: If you do not apply or do not get approved through this NOFA process, any existing city subsidized families in your program after June 30, 2017 will continue to be subsidized, but you will not be eligible to enroll any new ELS-City funded families nor receive an enhanced rate for State vouchered families who select your program.

22) Question: If we choose one of the funding sources, can we enroll the children from other funding sources? Currently, I am serving children from different funding sources?

Question: In the past, we have accepted any types of vouchers, and we received payment from either Children's Council or Wu Yee. To fill out the Projected Enrollment form, do I need to know what types of the vouchers, State Voucher or Local Voucher?

Answer: FCC's approved through this NOFA process can accept any ELS vouchered family or receive an enhanced rate (ELS-Gap) for State vouchered children. All of the previous city funded voucher programs will convert automatically to ELS-City (Voucher). The voucher enrollments you are projecting next year on the FCC-Projected Peak Enrollment form is simply an estimate and does not limit your ability to enroll more vouchered children than you had originally projected. All ELS payments are based on actual enrollments and not projections.

23) Question: Do families need to complete an application to prove their income level?

Question: How will families income be verified?

Question: Do we use the same C-wages form to verify if families are low income?

Question: Do all families need to be SF residents? How will this be verified?

Question: How do you know the SES of our current families? Does OECE have a guide on how to identify the SES?

Answer: Families will submit an application and other supporting documents to the ECE Integrated Services Grantee(s) to verify subsidy eligibility and need, including verifying family income, and residency in San Francisco, except for Preschool for All 9/12 Month in which family income is not a factor of eligibility.

24) Question: Is the rate for the quality grant at tiers 4 & 5 secure for three years?

Answer: Yes, approved FCCs will receive the Annual Quality Grant amount for each of the three years of the funding term.

25) Question: How did OECE calculate the rates? How many providers were interviewed and what were the postal codes that were taken into account?

Question: How did you calculate the rates? Why are the infant and toddler rates the same? Did OECE take into account the FCC's that have assistants versus those that do not have assistants when calculating the rates?

Question: What did you base on to make the decision about the same rates for infants and toddlers?

Question: In the fiscal analysis what type of provides were taking into consideration and what was the percentage?

Answer: As part of the San Francisco Citywide Plan for Early Care and Education, a Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis was commissioned to study and recommend local rates that would pay providers enhanced rates to cover the cost of operating a quality program (as defined as meeting Tier 3 of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System). More than 100 local stakeholders participated in the process. The Early Learning Scholarship rates were derived from this analysis. The Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis accounted for some of the FCCs who have assistants and some that do not. You can learn more about the Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis by going to www.SFOECE.org.

26) Question: Why is the rate the same for Infants and Toddlers?

Question: Why are ELS rates the same for infants and toddlers?

Answer: For FCC's, the rate categories are based on the California Department of Education's (CDE), Regional Market Rate (RMR) survey given that families primarily receive subsidies for care in FCC's through State and Local vouchers aligned with the RMR rates. In the RMR, they use the following age categories: Birth - 24 months, 2 through 5 years, and School Age. Given the lack of a toddler category for the RMR, OECE decided to provide a more generous interpretation for FCC's and align the Early Learning Scholarship rate with infants (higher) than simply the 2-5 category, which is basically a preschool rate (lower).

27) Question: Which subsidy programs will qualify for the ELS? Will previous funding programs no longer be available with this streamlined funding?

Answer: All local subsidy programs (C-WAGES, Preschool Plus, City Child Care for example) will convert to ELS funding July 1, 2017 for FCC's approved through this NOFA process.

28) Question: Why are Annual Quality Grants higher for infants than for preschoolers?

Answer: Generally, the cost of care associated with infants is higher, due to staff ratios.

29) Question: What will happen with our advances - will we be able to get one or two advances?

Answer: FCC's will not receive advances as they are paid monthly.

30) Question: Excel current projections. There is no space to do that?

Answer: Indicate your current peak enrollments in the Current Peak Enrollment section of the FCC Peak Enrollment Form.

- 31) Question: How do you know to apply for ELS Gap funding? Does it calculate automatically when you put in ELS City funding if you are at a Tier 4 or above?
Answer: When you fill out the enrollment form and enter your QRIS tier level, the ELS gap funding will be automatically calculated by age group.
- 32) Question: Can private sites (including FCC) apply for transitional supports to cover the costs of ELS slots and their actual costs (tuition or demonstrated expenses)?
Answer: Sites (private or otherwise) that are currently receiving city funding (i.e., C-Wages or PFA 9/12-month) may qualify for Transition Funding only if they are expecting a loss of city funding under the new ELS system. FCC's not currently receiving C-Wages or PFA funding are ineligible for Transition Funding.
- 33) Question: Is the food program money included or will I receive a separate check for the food program?
Answer: The food program funding is separate from the ELS funding.
- 34) Question: On the Projected Enrollment form, should the total number of children be the same on section 6 & 7? In other words, should the ELS-City (reserved) total reflect the children I input from Local and State vouchers. I am not sure how these numbers should be represented?
Question: On the Projected Peak Enrollment form, what's the difference between section 6 and 7?
Answer: Sections 6 and 7 on the FCC Peak Enrollment form is where FCC's project their enrollments for next year. The information entered into Section 6 is specifically to project your enrollments from vouchers (State/Local) and other funding sources that support child enrollments. This information is not used to calculate a "Total Requested Annual Quality Grant and ELS/PFA Funding Amount," but rather to assist you and OECE in determining the potential amount of ELS funding that may be generated from non-contracted sources. For Section 7, you are entering your projected enrollments for locally contracted slots via ELS-City (Reserved) and PFA 9/12 month (if a current PFA provider). These enrollments will be used to calculate a requested funding amount from OECE.
- 35) Question: I just got my FCC license, and I don't have any children enrolled in my FCC. Can I apply? If I don't have QRIS score, can I apply?
Question: My FCC will get the license either in April or May. Can I apply the ELS now?
Question: If a FCC qualifies to receive the ELS funding, but the FCC moves to a new location, will the funding be continued?
Answer: FCCs that just recently opened or are planning to open before July 1, 2017 are encouraged to apply for funding. If your FCC does not yet have a license, please indicate that in your application. FCCs need to indicate that they are willing to work toward achieving a Tier 3 on the QRIS by June 2020 to be eligible for ELS funding. OECE will work with FCCs who move to new locations during the funding term to try to ensure continuity of funding.
- 36) Questions: If a FCC qualifies for the ELS funding, doesn't it mean the FCC will receive the funding based on how many low-income children are enrolled? Can all the low-income children

enrolled in the FCC be funded by ELS?

Answer: Yes, ELS funding is made per eligible child. Yes, all of the low-income children enrolled in an FCC could be funded by ELS.

37) Question: What are the definitions of Full Day Full Year, Full Day Part Year, and Part Day Part Year?

Answer: Please refer to page 5 of the NOFA.

38) Question: I know the ELS-City (voucher) is parent's choice. Does this type of funding include the private pay low-moderate income families?

Answer: No, to be eligible for ELS-City (Voucher) a family must be at or under 70% of the State Median Income.

39) Question: Do I need to fill out the FCC FY 2017-18 Project Enrollment form if I want to apply for the ELS?

Answer: Yes and it needs to be submitted together with your application form by the March 3, 2017 at 5pm deadline.

40) Question: I am the FCC owner, and I am the low-income family with a 2 years old. Can I count my child as one of the two low-income children?

Answer: Yes.

41) Question: To qualify for the ELS, do all FCCs have to meet the same minimum requirements regardless the license types?

Answer: Yes.

42) Question: What are the basic requirements of ELS? Do I receive more funding if my childcare center has Tier 4 or 5 rating?

Answer: The basic requirement is to serve at least 2 low-income children. If you are in Tier 4 or 5 rating, you may qualify the Annual Quality Grant only if you serve at least 2 low-income children.

43) Question: Does the ELS-City (Reserved) include City Voucher and City Moderate?

Answer: No, ELS-City (Reserved), ELS-City (Voucher), and ELS-City (Moderate) are three different types of EL-City funding. ELS-City (Reserved) means the slots are assigned to support the "Target Population." To enrolled children in this type of funding, FCC providers must enroll the families from the Centralized Waiting and Eligibility List. For definitions of ELS-City (Voucher) and ELS-City (Moderate), please see the NOFA Page 3-4.

44) Question: What is the Early Learning Scholarship?

Answer: The Early Learning Scholarship streamlines multiple local funding programs into one funding agreement. The C-Wages, PFA Plus, PFA Bridge, and PFA enhancement, city child care and others local funding programs are under Early Learning Scholarship now.

45) Question: This application is mainly for children who receiving government funding, correct?

Answer: This application is to be qualified to receive funding from the City of San Francisco. Children from low-income backgrounds have priority to get the ELS funding. All four year old children are eligible to receive Preschool for All funding.

46) Question: Currently, I have one child with city subsidy and one child with private pay enrolled in my family child care. Can I apply the NOFA?

Answer: Yes, you can apply. If you want to receive funding, you must enroll at least 2 low-income children.

47) Question: Will I receive more ELS funding if a teacher assistant has a teacher permit?

Answer: If you are the PFA provider currently, you will receive PFA funding base on the lead teacher's teaching permit level. If you are not the PFA provider, you will not qualify for the PFA funding.

48) Question: Some children in my family child care are receiving other supports from the Government. Will this situation affect my ELS? What will happen to these children if I don't apply ELS or my FCC does not qualify for the ELS?

Answer: No, this situation won't affect your ELS. If your family child care does not qualify for the ELS, you will still get the funding for the existing children with a state voucher at the current rate, or the local voucher until they graduate from your program. But you cannot enroll any new families with local voucher unless you are qualified through this NOFA.

49) Question: For the projected peak enrollment can the funding types overlap? For example, we currently get PFA enhancement for our CSPP 4 year olds, will we still get that ?

Answer: No. PFA enhancement on State funded subsidies will become ELS-Gap. You would simply indicate the number of CSPP enrollments (and other State Title 5 and Voucher enrollments) and an ELS-Gap amount will be calculated on those enrollments for providers approved through this NOFA process.

50) Question: Do I need to reapply for the ELS later?

Question: Will ELS provide the same amount of funding for 3 years?

Answer: The ELS is good for 3 years. If your application is approved, you will receive the ELS funding until June 30, 2020.

Answer: Yes, it will remain the same.

51) Is the government going to fund according to the budget that I submit?

Answer: The amount of funding you receive is based on how much funding you are requesting, how much funding is available, and how many low income students you have enrolled.

52) Question: What is the ELS-City (Reserved)?

Answer: ELS-City (Reserved) is like you are going to sign a contract with OECE. It is reserved for the "Target Population," and we have to verify if your child care center qualifies for providing services.

53) Question: What is the ELS-Voucher? How can I apply for this funding?

Answer: ELS-Voucher is a City-funded voucher for low-income children under the age of 4 whose families need ECE services but who are not eligible for other state or federal subsidies. ELS-Voucher is the parent's choice. If a child receives a voucher from State, Federal, or the local ELS - Voucher, parents will be able to choose any childcare that accepts the voucher.

54) Question: Would the Low-Moderate families be eligible for the ELS funding?

Question: Can a low-income private pay family apply for this funding?

Question: What is the ELS-Moderate?

Answer: If funds are available, OECE would like to offer similar vouchers to support low-moderate income families not eligible other state or federal subsidies. Approved families verified as low-moderate-income - defined as above 70% of State Median Income and less than 110% of Area Median Income (for example, between \$42,215 and \$106,656 for a family of 3) could receive support.

55) Question: How does the Transition Funding work? Is it a one-time funding?

Answer: Yes, it is one-time funding. You can choose to apply for the funding and, if awarded, receive it in one or two payments. Comparing the old and new funding models, if you find out your FCC will receive less funding next year compared to this year, you may apply for funding to make up the difference.

56) Question: What is the ELS-Gap? How can I apply for this funding?

Answer: This funding provides an enhanced rate to close the gap between State and /or Federal rates and the cost of operating at Tier3 on the QRIS. This funding is for children ages 0-5. So, if the FCC serves a child with a state voucher, and is qualified, the FCC will receive a higher rate than what the State pays to serve that child.

57) Question: Regarding Title 5 government funding, where do you put the estimated enrollment numbers?

Answer: Please include this type of funding in the Other Funding Sources section of the Peak Enrollment form.

58) Question: How does the ELS calculate the funding amount, by per child?

Answer: The ELS will be calculated by the actual monthly enrollment.

59) Question: The ELS funding is an annual funding or monthly funding? If my FCC is serving the children with State Voucher, will I get the ELS-Gap funding monthly?

Answer: The funding will be allocated based on how many students you serve each month.

60) Question: If a FCC enrolls a low-income child without any referrals, can this child receive the ELS funding?

Answer: If the child attends your family child care currently and your FCC qualifies for the ELS funding, the child can continue to receive ELS funding.

61) Question: How can I receive the Transition Funding? And how much can I get?

Answer: FCCs who project losing money under OECE's new funding approach qualify for Transition Funding. FCCs must apply for Transition Funding to be awarded this funding. The amount of Transition Funding for each FCC will not exceed the FCC's projected loss under the new funding approach, as determined by OECE.

NETWORKS

62) Question: With a current CDE contract with CCTR that we provide for center and FCC which application do we submit?

Answer: If you are a Title 5 center operating a Family Child Care Network and using a California Department of Education, General Child Care and Development Contract (CCTR) to fund your participating FCCs please apply for funding through the Center NOFA.

TARGET POPULATION

63) Question: For low income children NOT in the target populations, if they are pulled from SF3C for an ELS city voucher, is the voucher only good for one year? Does the family need to go back on SF3C to maintain care for subsequent years?

Answer: Low-income children (not in the Target Population) will be funded for a minimum of one program year. Annually, they will be need to be redetermined as subsidy eligible by the ECE Integrated Services Grantee(s). A family who continued to be ELS eligible (or receiving ELS-Bridge funding) would not need to go back on SF3C. Only families who eventually lost eligibility for ELS-Bridge and continued to need early care and education services would need to re-enroll on SF3C.

64) Question: Can we still apply if we currently don't have underserved family/children?

Answer: Yes. You must serve an average of 2 low-income families a month to be eligible for ELS funding. If you expect/desire to meet that obligation next year as new spaces become available (through attrition and otherwise) for FY 18-19, please apply.