Early Learning San Francisco Program:
Early Learning San Francisco and Preschool for All Program Operating Guidelines
Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Every child in San Francisco from birth to age five has access to high quality and affordable early care and education.

Mission

The San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education leverages federal and state funding, aligns local resources, supports the early care and education workforce and increases capacity to build a high-quality, affordable, data driven and streamlined early care and education system for children 0-5 and their families.

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DEC PROGRAM PHILOSPHY

The San Francisco Department of Early Childhood (DEC) is committed to ensuring all children are ready for kindergarten. We believe in-person educational experiences are essential for young children to develop the cognitive, social-emotional, and physical skills they need to succeed. Children who attend high-quality early care and education (ECE) gain the skills to become better prepared for school and life-long success.

All DEC funded programs should embrace a philosophy that supports all families and children in San Francisco, and polices aligned with DEC vision for positive outcomes for all children. These Program Operating Guidelines provide a framework for programs funded for child enrollment services by the city and county of San Francisco.

Introduction

In July 2017, the Office of Early Care and Education launched San Francisco's Early Learning Scholarship (now called Early Learning San Francisco, ELS) Program. The ELS provides eligible San Francisco families with young children under five years of age with financial assistance to access quality early care and education. More than 320 Early Care and Education Centers and Family Child Care Programs across San Francisco are qualified to participate in the city's early learning system.

Purpose of Operating Guidelines

These Operating Guidelines provide guidance to city-funded qualified programs with general information for administering public funds. This information reflects current enrollment program policies and procedures, yet is subject to change and update by DEC. These guidelines and addendums are available at OECE FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.

In addition to the information contained in these guidelines, DEC funds two organizations to provide additional support and services to city funded ECE programs. The Integrated Services Agencies (Children's Council of San Francisco and Wu Yee Children's Services) are able to share Program and Family handbooks with detailed information regarding the policies and procedures outlined in these operating guidelines.

Who are the Integrated Services Agencies?

The Integrated Service Agencies (ISAs) are contracted non-profit, community based organizations (CBO's), who leverage local, state and federal child care funds to assist eligible families with locating, enrolling in, and maintaining care with early care and education providers. The ISA's focus on helping families obtain quality early care and education experiences. . Children's Council of San Francisco and Wu Yee Children's Services are the DEC contracted ECE Integrated Services Agencies. Their services include but are not limited to

- Child Care Subsidy payments administration
- Helping families determine if they are eligible for subsidized ECE

- Use of state and federal child care funding to support families
- Supporting families and child care programs through Resource and Referral services

What is the role of Compass Family Services in ELS?

Compass Family Services is a community service partner contracted by DEC to assist San Francisco families with children under five years of age who are experiencing homelessness obtain quality ECE services. The Homeless Early Care and Education Case Management program at Compass provides families who are homeless and/or living in a domestic violence shelter with enhanced child care enrollment support in collaboration with the ISA's.

Early Learning San Francisco Guidelines

Current Priority Populations

Our Early Care and Education (ECE) system focuses on serving the needs of San Francisco's birth to five-year-olds. DEC increases access to *Priority Population* [1] families, which includes Black/African American, Latino, Native American/Indigenous, immigrant, homeless, and children at risk of abuse and/or neglect or involved with the child welfare system and children with identified special needs or disabilities.

What is an ELS Qualified Program?

ELS qualified programs are Centers and licensed Family Child Care Programs approved through the 2022 Continued Funding application process. Qualified programs are committed to a process of continuous quality improvement and fully meeting the requirements of the ELS Participation Agreement Programmatic Assurances and aligned Quality Standards. Qualified programs are eligible for city-funded training and technical assistance through DEC/SF Quality Connections.

ELS Funding Types

Below is a description of the Early Learning San Francisco funding types. Funding of Child enrollment is through one funding type at a time and is subject to funding availability.

ELS Voucher

This type of funding provides a portable parent/guardian-based city-voucher to eligible/income-based families ineligible for other state or federal subsidies. Programs with an ELS Voucher enrollment receive full tuition reimbursement at the ELS rates for centers and FCC's. ELS Voucher enrollment continues until the child reaches kindergarten-age and is subject to funding availability.

ELS Voucher funded enrollments may not supplant state/federal funded spaces. The Integrated Services Agencies select families for ELS Vouchers through DEC's Early Learning SF (ELSF) data-system throughout the year based on funding availability. When ELS Voucher funding is available, Wu Yee or Children's

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[1] **SF Public Health: Prioritizing Populations with Structural Barriers**

Council identifies the next most-eligible family, according to DEC's enrollment prioritization policies. The ISA will contact the family with instructions for funding eligibility and enrollment certification. Once the ISA certifies eligibility, the ISAs refer the family to ELS qualified programs with openings that matches the family's preferences and needs.

ELS Enhancement on State Voucher

This funding provides an enhanced, locally funded rate for state-funded child care vouchers to eliminate any gaps between the state's reimbursement rates and DEC's ELS reimbursement rates, should one exist. The local enhancement amount varies depending on the state voucher rate, the full-time/part-time status, and age of the child receiving a state or federal voucher.

ELS Participation Agreement

All programs qualified through the 2022 Continued Funding Application Process are required to sign an ELS program Participation Agreement between DEC, the program, and both of DEC's Integrated Services Agencies. This Agreement stipulates the requirements and programmatic assurances to receive city funding including, but not limited to: Grants, ELS Voucher, and ELS Enhancement on State funding, MRA, Preschool for All, and other local ECE funding. Agencies must have a fully executed Participation Agreement in order to receive City-funded enrollment reimbursement.

What are the ELS Center and Family Child Care Rates?

For FY 2022-2023 ELS rates please go to the San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education website. The ELS rate sheets for both Family Child Care and Centers are located in the Funding Requirements and Forms section.

What is a Maximum Reimbursable Amount (MRA)?

The Maximum Reimbursable Amount (MRA) calculates the total funding the program can earn by enrolling Center-MRA, PFA, and/or Title 5 CSPP enrollments. It does not include state and local voucher enrollments in the total contracted amount.

MRA-funded programs have flexibility to use their MRA funding for three enrollment types: ELS-Enhancement for Title 5 enrollments, center-MRA and Preschool for All. The MRA rates calculate earnings based on current ELS rates, referenced earlier in this document.

The MRA is fungible across the three funding types described above and programs may enroll families to maximize their MRA earnings, as long as the amount of funds expended across the MRA funding types **does not exceed the amount awarded.**

ELS GAP on Title 5: This funding provides an enhanced, locally funded rate for state contracted Title 5 enrollments to eliminate any gaps between the state's Title 5 reimbursement rates and DEC's ELS reimbursement rates, should one exist. Currently, only CSPP enrollments receive this local enhancement, since CCTR contracted spaces are funded at a rate higher than the local ELS rate.

Center-MRA: These are fully funded enrollments at the ELS rates for children 0-5.

Preschool for All: Provides a tuition discount for 4 year olds at qualified PFA programs.

Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Ages
All City-funded reimbursements use the following age definitions:

- Infant: ages 0 to 24 months
- Toddler: more than 24 months to less than 36 months
- Preschool: ages 3 until the child is eligible for kindergarten

Family Eligibility

What are the Family's entry Income Eligibility Requirements?

For ELS Voucher, State Rate Enhancement, and center-MRA funding
A family's gross income must be at/or below **110%** of the Area Median Income (AMI) at the time of their eligibility determination. The link below shows the maximum monthly gross income by family size for both 85% of the State Median Income and 110% of the Area Median Income.

Click here to access the Family Income Eligibility table.

For Families Enrolled in Preschool for All (PFA) there is no income eligibility requirement to received PFA Funding. PFA funding aims to create a universal preschool system increasing access to all San Francisco 4-year-olds regardless of family income.

How is Family's Income Eligibility Certified?
The ECE Integrated Services Agencies perform family's eligibility certification for ELS Voucher and ELS Enhancement funding for State vouchers. Agencies administering Title 5, Center-MRA, and Early Head Start/Head Start enrollments are solely responsible for determining and documenting a family's eligibility for these funds.

Is Recertification of income required?
ELS Voucher and center-MRA subsidized families are not required to recertify eligibility after their initial income determination. Locally funded enrollments are eligible until the child reaches kindergarten-age.

How and when do Family Fee requirements apply?

Homeless families, families with children at risk for abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and/or connected to the child welfare system (i.e., Family and Children's Services) are exempt from any income eligibility requirements or family fees.

What are Co-Payments and Enrollment Fees?

Co-payments and enrollment fees are not permissible for ELS-funded enrollments or center-MRA. Co-payments are the difference between the program's private-pay rate (higher) and the ELS reimbursement rate (lower).

What is a 2 Weeks Early Termination Notice Payment?

If the two-week period continues into the second month and the child is attends the program during the two-week period, the second month will not be prorated. If an ELS Voucher funded family withdraws (no longer attends) from a program prior to their certification end date, the program will receive a "two weeks early termination notice payment." If the two-week period starts and ends in the same month, the payment will not be prorated and the provider will receive the full month's payments for that enrollment. If the two weeks early termination notice payment period **continues into a second month and the child is no longer attending the program, payment for the second month will be prorated.** The proration of payment for the second month is determined by the number of days into the second month the two weeks early termination notice payment period ran.

What are the Child's Age Requirements?

For ELS Voucher and Center-MRA

ELS Voucher eligibility and/or center-MRA are for children under 5 years old at the time of enrollment. ELS funded children may continue receiving an ELS subsidy until they reach kindergarten-eligibility. An additional year of preschool is available for children that do not meet the September 1st cutoff for kindergarten and whose families have elected not to enroll their child in Transitional Kindergarten, based on funding availability. If a locally funded child is kindergarten eligible yet wants to continue in their current Center or Family Child Care Program setting for an additional year, DEC will make a case-by-case determination depending on the unique developmental situation of the child provided.

Note: For ELS funded *homeless families,* all children ages birth - until they reach kindergarten are eligible. Older siblings up to age 12 are eligible for ELS-funded enrollments if families are homeless. For ELS funded children in the child welfare system, all children through age 12 are eligible. The ELS reimbursement rate equals the California Department of Education's Regional Market Rate for children over 5 years old.

For ELS Enhancement on State Voucher

Eligible children are between birth and until they reach kindergarten, typically at 5 years old.

For Preschool For All (PFA) Tuition Credit

Eligible children must be four (4) years of age on or before December 2nd of the Program Year in which they are eligible (see the definition of Program Year in the section on *Preschool For All Specific Guidelines).* PFA-eligibility is for one Program Year, but children whose date of birth excludes them from enrolling in Kindergarten, or children who are eligible for Transitional Kindergarten (TK) but access is limited or the family does not want a TK program, will be funded until they reach kindergarten. When a child's developmental needs require an additional year of preschool, the program must submit a request to DEC in writing and supporting documentation by a qualified individual may be required.

San Francisco Residency Requirement

To be eligible to receive an **Early Learning San Francisco** or **Preschool For All** tuition credit, children must be a San Francisco resident during the time that they are enrolled in the funded program, except for Title 5 funded enrollments and families involved in the children welfare system (FCS). Proof of residency must contain the name and address of at least one parent/guardian, and be collected by the program at the time of enrollment. Programs must keep a copy of proof of residency in each child's file.

How does the Residency Requirement apply to Homeless Families?

Homeless families self-report homelessness in San Francisco. ELS-eligible homeless families receiving Compass' Child Care Case Management services who subsequently relocate outside of San Francisco to obtain permanent/stable housing will continue to receive their ELS for up to 3 months from the date of their move. The ELS will provide funding, up to the Regional Market Rate (RMR) ceiling, to obtain care with a licensed child care program. This funding acts as a bridge to maintain families' continuity of care and to assist families in finding and obtaining other available subsidized child care services in their new county.

What is Sibling Priority?

DEC will provide priority for ELS Voucher or center-MRA funding to siblings between the ages of birth and Kindergarten of currently enrolled children (0-12 years if child is involved in or at risk of being involved in the child welfare system or homeless), subject to funding availability.

Programs or parents should contact their Integrated Services Agency when they know a family would like to enroll a sibling and indicate sibling priority on their ELSF profile. If funding is available, a sibling may receive ELS voucher or center-MRA funding at the same program as their sibling or another ELS qualified program depending on available space and family preference. If funding is not currently available, the sibling will be prioritized on ELSF for when funding does become available.

Note: ELS funding for homeless families with at least one child under 5 may serve older siblings through age 12. For ELS funded children in the child welfare system, all children through age 12 are eligible. The ELS funding rates for children over 5 years old will be set at the California Department of Education's Regional Market Rate.

Child Enrollments

What is the process for Filling Child Vacancies?

It is critical for programs to share any current and/or planned vacancies on ELSF. Programs can report vacancies by logging into the [ELSF website](#) and following the guidelines for posting a vacancy. For questions or technical assistance, please contact the Children's Council Help Desk at mailto:support@childrenscouncil.org or 415-343-4669.

ELS Voucher enrollments occur when funding is available. Children's Council and/or Wu Yee enroll families from ELSF according to the DEC enrollment priorities and provide the family with referrals to ELS qualified centers and family child care programs that have indicated openings on ELSF and meet the preferences and needs of the family.

MRA funded (PFA, ELS GAP, and center-MRA) enrollments are program initiated and administered. Programs may list vacancies in ELSF and solicit the assistance of the ISA's to enroll children in those funding categories (except PFA).

What are DEC's Enrollment Priorities?

The San Francisco Department of Early Childhood (DEC) is committed to ensuring all children are ready for kindergarten. During the public health order due to COVID-19, we encourage in-person educational experiences, as we believe they are essential for young children to develop the cognitive, social-emotional, and physical skills they need to succeed. Children who attend high-quality early care and education (ECE) are better prepared for school and life-long success.

The COVID-19 pandemic has prevented thousands of young children in San Francisco from attending their early care and education in person since the middle of March 2020. While programs continue to adjust to changing pandemic guidelines for child care programs, DEC requests that its funded programs take action to preserve in-person ECE experiences for children who need it most. As programs enroll children for the 2022-2023 program year, DEC strongly recommends that programs apply the following guidelines to prioritize enrollment for all Early Learning San Francisco and/or Preschool for All spaces. DEC's priorities are aligned with recent City [public health guidance](#) that takes into account structural oppression and aims to focus attention on people experiencing marginalization, systemic inequity, and health inequities.

General Provisions
- If your program is subject to enrollment priorities attached to federal/state funding/subsidies, then apply those priorities before local priorities.
- Younger siblings of a previously enrolled child may be enrolled before applying the DEC enrollment priorities.
- We ask that you reserve open spaces for children in the DEC enrollment priorities to the extent that your funding from DEC allows.

- DEC expects programs to make a good faith effort enrolling children according to the DEC enrollment prioritization outlines in this document. DEC reserves the right to monitor ELS programs to ensure enrollment prioritization compliance.

Is there Preference for Children in their Pre-Kindergarten Year?
- If you have openings in your program for preschool-age children, we ask that you enroll priority children who will enter kindergarten in the next year before you enroll younger children (i.e., three-year-olds).
- We do not mean that you should stop offering care to infants and toddlers, especially if your program is tailored to meeting their specific care and learning needs.

Enrollment Priorities (Updated)

Category 1 (Top Priority)

We ask that you grant the following groups top priority for enrollment in in-person ECE, regardless of age (in no particular order):

- Children who are clients of Family and Children's Services (FCS) or are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
- Children eligible through the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children
- Children experiencing homelessness
- Children of domestic violence survivors

Category 2 (Second Priority)

We ask that you grant the following groups second priority for enrollment according to lowest income first, for families earning up to 110% of the AMI:

- Black/African American children
- Latina/o/x children
- Native Americans/Indigenous children
- Pacific Islander children
- Immigrant children
- Children with disabilities or special health care needs whose individualized education programs (IEP) and/or individual family support plans (IFSP) include ECE services
- Children from low-income families, including those who receive or are eligible for free or reduced meals, Medi-Cal, SNAP (food stamps), WIC, CalWORKs, and other public assistance programs.

Category 3 (third Priority)
We ask that you grant the following groups third priority for enrollment for families earning up to 110% of the AMI:

▪ Families not represented in Category 1 or 2

Provider Referral Enrollment
Programs can refer potentially eligible families to Children's Council and Wu Yee for enrollment. Programs who identify interested families for their vacancies should perform a brief check for their eligibility (must be income eligible and a SF resident or case managed at Compass).

If the family appears to be income eligible or case managed at Compass, programs should share the required documentation with the family for enrollment preparation (preparing all required documents can expedite the enrollment process), then send the family's name, email and phone number to HelpDesk at support@childrenscouncil.org or 415-343-4669.

Either Children's Council or Wu Yee will contact the family and match them to the program's open vacancy, An and an enrollment specialist will contact the family to conduct the enrollment certification, confirm the vacancy is within allowable ratios, and inform the program when that has been completed. If everything goes smoothly, it should take no longer than two weeks and programs will be paid for the entire first month of enrollment per ELS payment policies.

What is DEC's Nondiscrimination Requirement?

All city-funded programs must have written policies that include language about not discriminating against any child, and his/her parent(s). The parent's activities, and practices shall be free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on:

- Actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability,
- Sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression; or
- Based on a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Written enrollment policies must be available to parents/guardians upon request.

Program requirements for Children with Identified Disabilities or Special Needs

DEC defines children with identified disabilities or special needs as children with an assessment from a professional that has determined the child has special needs or the child has an existing Individualized

Education Program (IEP), Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), and Regional Center Report or is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Programs receiving DEC funding will make reasonable accommodations for children identified as eligible for special education and/or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The child's Individualized Education Program will determine appropriate special education and related services placement. All DEC funded programs must comply with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Recordkeeping and Data Reporting

Child Attendance Requirement
A quality early childhood program prepares children for Kindergarten, as well as develops the social and emotional foundation children need to thrive in school.

Programs must establish their own policies for recording excused absences consistently across all enrollment types, and provide information to families to support their full utilization of early learning services. This family engagement strategy allows programs to have a vital role in promoting the benefits of consistent attendance while identifying attendance patterns that may jeopardize enrollment eligibility.
Programs are responsible for informing families and the ECE Integrated Services Agencies of all terminations of DEC funding due to excessive absences. Prior to any enrollment termination, programs and/or the ISAs must engage the family in order to assist with resources needed in order to prevent disenrollment.

How is Child Attendance Reported?
Accurate records of child enrollments are an important part of maintaining eligibility to participate in ELS and Preschool for All programs for both programs and parents. Attendance is reported as follows based on the program type:

- MRA funded enrollments (center-MRA, ELS enhancement, PFA)
  Programs are required to enter enrollment data entered into DEC Data Tracking System (TBD) with the correct funding type for continued reimbursement. Daily Attendance may be tracked by the program in DEC Data Tracking System or otherwise.

- State funded voucher enrollments (CAPP and CalWORKs)

  In accordance with state policy, programs are required to report attendance in order to receive payment. Children's Council will provide attendance guidelines to programs serving state vouchered children.

- ELS Voucher funded enrollments
  Programs are required to track daily attendance for payment purposes using the DEC Data Tracking System (TBD) or paper timesheets provided by the ISA agency funding the enrollment.

What is Limited Term Service Leave?

Limited Term Service Leave (LTSL) is available for enrolled children at an ELS program when the family does not need services for an extended period, yet anticipates a need for child care services following the LTSL. The maximum length of LTSL is 12 weeks or 16 weeks (for maternity or a medically related leave of absence). The ISAs assist families to determine the best LSTL that meets their needs.

Requirements for Enrollment and Recordkeeping

DEC-funded programs must establish and maintain a basic file for Early Learning San Francisco or Preschool for All enrollments. Each enrollment file should include the required DEC documentation (refer to list below). Programs must retain all records, whether hard copy (paper) or electronic format, for a minimum of five years and programs must maintain a recordkeeping system readily accessible to individuals conducting audits or reviews.

The basic data file for locally funded programs must contain:

- Enrollment Form that includes information about the child and family. (Note: For ELS funded children, this form must include information about the family income level, such as CD 9600 or Head Start Application, if applicable)
- Documentation of Home Residence
- Family Agreement Form (For PFA Only)
- ***Data Acknowledgement form:*** The program must have the family sign this form at intake and maintain a copy in the program's family file.
- Copies of Child's Developmental Screenings and Assessments (ASQ & DRDP – if not already entered into DEC Data Tracking System (TBD).
- Documentation of two Parent-Teacher Conferences per program year

State funded voucher enrollments (CAPP and CalWORKs) are required, in accordance with state policy, to use paper attendance sheets to track daily attendance in order to receive payment.

Programs should enter MRA funded enrollments (center-MRA, ELS GAP, PFA) for into DEC Data Tracking System (TBD) with the appropriate funding type to receive payment. Daily attendance may be tracked by the program in DEC Data Tracking System or otherwise.

For ELS Voucher funded enrollments, programs should track daily attendance for payment purposes. ISA's will certify enrollments as either full time or part time and pay accordingly based on the ELS rates.

What are the DRDP Reporting Requirements in DEC Data (TBD) reporting System for Center Based Programs?

California Department of Education (CDE), Desired Results Developmental Profile System or a researched and approved tool, which addresses attitudes to learning (self-regulation), social emotional, language and literacy, English language, Cognition (including Math and Science) and Physical Development. Please continue to report DRDP to the state if applicable.

ELS Qualified Program Quality Requirements

Staff Compensation
All paid staff in licensed Centers and Family Child Care Programs must meet the San Francisco Minimum Wage Ordinance (http://sfgov.org/olse/minimum-wage-ordinance-mwo)unless stipulated in a Workforce Compensation grant agreement.

California Early Care & Education Workforce Registry

The California ECE Workforce Registry is a state, regional, and local collaboration designed to track education, training and work history of the early care and education workforce. Agency ECE staff must have up-to-date profiles in the California Early Care & Education Workforce Registry. Additionally, educators are required to update their California ECE Workforce Registry profiles to be eligible for DEC Workforce Development and Compensation Grants or CARES 3.0 stipends.

Programmatic Assurances and Quality Standards

The Department of Early Childhood have a set 10 quality standards for early childhood programs that can assure families that they can make a good choice when they are looking for a child development program for their children. The standards build a strong foundation for the *Early Learning San Francisco* program, a system of early care and education and help programs understand how to implement the

Programmatic Assurance Requirements. Most importantly, they give children a strong start at a crucial time of their development.

Qualified programs are committed to a process of continuous quality improvement and fully meeting the requirements of the ELS Participation Agreement's Programmatic Assurances and aligned Quality Standards. Please refer to these Program Operating Guidelines and Quality Standards for the Early Learning SF Program for further guidance additional programmatic, enrollment, and funding guidelines located on the DEC website: SFDEC.org.

What are Programmatic Assurances Requirements?

As stipulated in the ELS Participation Agreement, programs are responsible for meeting the following Programmatic Assurances in order to remain an ELS qualified program and serve city-funded children:

PROGRAMMATIC ASSURANCE	
	Child Observation: Conduct observations and developmental assessments with each child using the California Department of Education (CDE), Desired Results Developmental Profile System or a researched and approved tool, which addresses attitudes to learning (self-regulation), social emotional, language and literacy, English language, Cognition (including Math and Science) and Physical Development.
	Developmental Screenings & Links to Early Intervention Supports: Work with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ and ASQ-SE (as needed) within 45 days of entry and as indicated by results thereafter. Document results and linkage to services as needed in each child's file/record.
QUALIFICATIONS – Please check applicable section	
For Centers Only	

	Center Director Qualifications: Associate's degree with 24 units ECE/CD +/with 6 units management/administration and 2 units supervision or Site Supervisor Permit, and 21 hours professional development annually.		*Center Lead Teacher Qualifications:* classroom led by a teacher holding a minimum Teacher Permit (or higher), according to the State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

For Family Child Care (FCC)	
FCC Owner or Full-time Teacher Qualifications: 12 ECE units, including nine units of core classes (CDEV 53; CDEV 66; CDEV 67) & three ECE elective units for educator providing instruction and supervision to the children in progress with approval by DEC or completed by June 2023.	**PFA FCC Qualifications (for current PFA programs only):** group led by a teacher holding a minimum Teacher Permit (or higher), according to the State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Continuous Quality Improvement – develop a Quality Improvement Plan annually and participate in continuous reflection and learning to increase the quality of child learning and teaching. Participate in program quality validation visits.

Curriculum – Adopt and implement a curricula, which aligns with either the California Department of Education *Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Foundations*, California Department of Education *California Preschool Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks (Volumes 1-3)* as appropriate to ages served, or the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* **by July 1, 2023.**

Environment - Provide indoor and outdoor environment that demonstrates a culture of caring, competence and excellence in learning.

Interactions – Provide nurturing, responsive, language and cognitive rich interactions between adults and children, as demonstrated by CLASS observations.

Ratio and Group Size:
Age category ratio and maximum class size for child care centers:

Age Category	Ratio	Maximum Class Size*
Infant (Birth -15 months)	1:4	8
Toddler (12-36 months)	1:6	12
Preschool (30 months-5 years)	1:10	20

*CSPP programs must follow Title V guidelines, which allow for a 1:8 ratio with class size of 24 children.

	Family Child Care (FCC) programs often care for mixed-age groups, which makes child-to-adult ratios and groups sizes vary. FCC programs in Early Learning SF (ELS) should follow California Community Care Licensing guidelines for ratios and group size.
	Parent Partnership & Parent-Teacher Conferences--Implement an intentional approach to engage families, including but not limited to a minimum of two individual parent-teacher conferences each program year to discuss each child's developmental progress.
	Professional Development (PD) – Each educator must complete (once) 6 hours of training on each of the following topics: Child Development / Learning Foundations (0-5), Inclusion and Meeting the Needs of Young Children with Disabilities or Other Special Needs, and Family Engagement and Support/Strengthening Families. College units may be applicable.
	Anti Bias/Equity PD Standard – Each Educator must complete (once) 6 hours of training to implement an anti-bias, antiracist curriculum framework. Educators may choose from a menu of content, which includes but is not limited to: Understanding Implicit Bias, Anti Bias Curriculum, Supporting Dual Language Learners or the Black Joy Series.
	Non-Denominational Teaching Sites may not deliver any direct faith-based instruction during program time supported with DEC funds.

Quality Improvement Plan

DEC-funded programs must develop and implement an annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that incorporates analysis and reflection on child assessments, observations, and other data about the program. The QIP aims for continuous improved program quality, including aspects of curricula, staff interactions with children, and classroom practices. DEC will   provide technical assistance, coaching, training and other supports to assist programs in developing and implementing their Quality Improvement Plans.

Community Care Licensing Requirements

Centers and FCC Homes must have a current license with Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) of the California Department of Social Services, and be 'in good standing' (per the Health and Safety Code Sections 1596.773 and 1596.886), which means they do not currently have any of the following:

- An administrative action taken or in the process of being taken (denied application, denied exemption, temporary suspension order, expedited revocation action, revocation action, non-compliance conference, or exclusion action that is being initiated, in process, or already taken place)
- A license in probationary status

DEC-funded Centers and FCC Programs are required to inform DEC and the appropriate ECE Integrated Services Administrator of Type A violations noted during a licensing visit. The DEC-funded Centers and FCC Programs shall forward, upon receipt, to DEC any licensing report, any licensing documents that document noncompliance conference between CCLD and the licensee, and/or a copy of an Accusation

that indicates CCLD intent to revoke the facility's license. A full copy of the CCLD report must be forwarded within three (3) calendar days to DEC for review. Failure to provide this information may result in suspension or termination of DEC funding. DEC reserves the right to review an DEC-funded site's licensing records at any time during the terms of the Participation Agreement.

City-funded programs are responsible for compliance with Community Care Licensing (CCL) regulations including those around license capacity as a minimum level of quality. Programs are responsible for tracking and maintaining capacity and ratios of all children (private pay and those receiving funding) at any given time.

Intentional Approach to Family Engagement & Parent-Teacher Conferences

DEC requires all DEC-funded programs to have an intentional approach to engage families and to develop relationships that foster children's development. While there are many strategies to engage families, DEC encourages programs to, at a minimum, hold at least two (2) individual parent-teacher conferences each program year to discuss child progress. DEC may request to review documentation of these conferences during site visits.

Program Evaluation

All DEC-funded programs shall participate in DEC-sponsored evaluation activities aimed at better understanding the impact of City-funded programs. Programs may be asked to provide data, administer surveys, participate in focus groups or interviews, allow observation of classrooms, and conduct outreach to identify parents interested in participating in evaluation activities or other activities to support evaluation efforts.

Program Validation and Monitoring

Programs will participate in validation and monitoring activities to demonstrate their implementation of the Programmatic Assurances and Quality Standards.

Faith-Based Teaching Limitation

Programs may not deliver any faith-based instruction during program time supported with DEC funds. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that public funding of religiously affiliated programs violates the Establishment Clause if it has "the effect of advancing religion."[2] Faith-based organizations are precluded from using any part of government funds to support religious content or activities, including religious worship, instruction, and proselytizing. Faith-based organizations may use public funds only to support the non-religious services they provide. They may not require DEC-funded program participants to engage in religious practice or activities.

How are Programs Reimbursed?

Method of Payment

Agencies receive child enrollment reimbursement for all ELS funding types via direct deposit only. All agencies are required to submit proof of an account that can receive payment deposits. ISAs assist Agencies with setting up the checking or savings account to receive payments. Whenever necessary and with the purpose of avoiding delays, DEC may request ISAs to issue paper checks to programs affected by error.

ELS Reimbursement Process

DEC has established monthly reimbursement for early care and education programming categorized by full-time, part-time, age groups and program types. Refer to ELS Rates section in this document for rate details. Payment calculations are based on enrollment status.

Families are eligible for full time ELS funding (30 or more hours per week) or part-time (17.5 to 29.9 hours per week) services depending on the parent's and program's desired program schedule.

Note: The above policy does not apply for agencies with a Maximum Reimbursement Amount (MRA) Agreement.

What is a Payment Proration for ELS Vouchers and ELS GAP?

Payment proration **does not apply to ELS Vouchers and GAP payments,** except in the following scenarios:

- o Limited Term Service Leave (LTSL): when the family takes a leave of absence (16 weeks for medical reasons and 12 weeks for other reasons) (see pg. x for more details regarding LTSL.

- o Unpaid closure days for ELS Voucher when program closure days exceed 15 days/fiscal year.

- o A two-week early termination payment where the two week period straddles two months and the child is no longer attending the program. The second month's payment would be prorated.

Prorated payments, when necessary, are calculated based on the number of payable days per month, divided by the number of certified days in a month.

What are Program Closure Days?

DEC will allow programs to take up to 15 paid closure days per fiscal year. These flexible paid closure days off can be any 15 days in the fiscal year. Programs should note the closure days on their

brochure and provide the Integrated Services Administrator with their program calendar at least 30 days in advance of the start of their program year. Programs are not required to use all of their paid closure days.

All paid closure days are reimbursed at the same rate. There is no increased reimbursement rate for federal holidays, for example. The program is responsible to report to their Integrated Services Administrator any days off beyond their allowable holiday/closure days.

What are Unauthorized Uses of Funding?
DEC prohibits the use of its funds to cover expenses not directly related to the delivery of quality early education and care services for children and families. Prohibited expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Purchase of vehicles or other transportation equipment;

- Bad debts, including losses arising from uncollectible accounts and any related legal costs; Costs of amusement or entertainment that does not benefit children in the Program; Cost of idle facilities unless those costs are related to the Program and the costs of the idle facilities have been approved by DEC;

- Costs incurred after the Contract has been terminated;

- Fund-raising costs;

- Investment management costs;

- Costs of organization of a nonprofit corporation such as incorporation fees or consultant fees;

- Public relations consultant fees;

- Costs of legal, consulting and accounting services incurred in prosecution; and

- Compensation to the members of the board of directors, if applicable.

- Fees used to offset unpaid or uncollected family fees and/or family co-payments.

What is Misrepresentation or Fraud?
Any fraudulent, false or misleading information and documentation provided will be grounds for immediate termination of participation in any locally or State-funded child care programs, and for DEC to pursue the recoupment of funds for child care payments received by the program.

Some examples of fraud include, but are not limited to the following:

- False or misleading reporting of actual attendance days on the child care attendance form. This includes signing for hours of care that were not provided.

- Falsified, misleading or inaccurate documentation regarding licensing. Any program terminated for any of the above reasons may request an appeal from the Office of Early Childhood (DEC). If the appeal is lost, it may be required that DEC be reimbursed for any funds for child care during the time the appeal was being heard.

Annual Financial Audits Requirements

Agencies receiving over **$750,000** of public funds are required to submit a financial audit to DEC on an annual basis.

Programs agree to maintain and make available to the City, its employees and authorized representatives, and its Federal and State funders, during regular business hours, accurate books and accounting records. Programs will permit City to audit, examine and make excerpts and transcripts from such books and records, and to make audits of all invoices, materials, payrolls, records or personnel and other data related to all other matters covered in Participation Agreement, whether funded in whole or in part by DEC.

Programs shall maintain such data and records in an accessible location and condition for a period of not less than five years after final payment under the Early Learning San Francisco and/or Preschool For All Program and Participation Agreement, or until after final audit has been resolved, whichever is later. The State of California or any federal agency having an interest in the subject matter of this Agreement shall have the same rights conferred upon the City by this Section.

Preschool For All (PFA) Tuition Credit Guidelines

PFA Tuition Credit Rates

Below is a table of the per child rates for Preschool for All Tuition Credit 9/12 Month funding. The rates are dependent on the permit level of the lead teacher in the Preschool For All-funded classroom. Proration is applied based on the number of days of enrollment on an average week, as indicated in the table below. For example, 4-day-a-week enrollment will earn PFA funding at 4/5 (80%) of the full applicable reimbursement rate according to the Agreement in place at the time the enrollment is eligible and claimed by the program. The same proration will apply to calculation of Tuition Credit.

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL TUITION CREDIT RATES			
PERMIT LEVEL OF LEAD	5 DAYS/WEEK	4 DAYS/WEEK	3 DAYS/WEEK
PROGRAM DIRECTOR	**$6,982**	**$5,585**	**$4,189**
MASTER TEACHER/SITE SUPERVISOR	**$6,691**	**$5,353**	**$4,014**

TEACHER	$5,760	$4,608	$3,456

Each PFA classroom must have at least one Lead Teacher with a minimum of a CDE-EESD Teacher level permit at all times during PFA operation.

What is the PFA Program Year?

For the purposes of administering the Preschool For All Tuition Credit Program, the Program Year is defined as the period on the annual school year calendar defined by the program in which the preschool provides enrollment to eligible children. The start of the Program Year is typically August or September for both 9 and 12-month programs.

Documentation of the program's Program Year typically consists of each participating site's published operational calendar – the document shared with enrolling families stating all holidays, in-service, and other closures or non-enrollment days – with "Start" and "End" dates clearly indicated. The number of child enrollment days in-between "Start" and "End" plus any qualifying in-service days, total the days of enrollment for that Program Year (see below).

Each participating program must establish its Program Year in advance of executing Participation Agreement with DEC.

PFA Tuition Credit payments are reimbursed through advanced quarterly payment.

PFA Days of Enrollment

The program must offer a minimum of 175, and up to 246 Days of Enrollment per each Program Year, with up to 15 paid, flexible closure days (counted toward the days of enrollment).

Program Hours: "PFA Portion of the Day" & Minimum Service Hour Requirement

Preschool For All 9-month and 12-month funding covers a minimum of 2.5 hours and up to 3.5 hours per day for instructional programming. The 2.5-to-3.5 hours per day define the "PFA Portion of the Day", and the exact number depends on the program's days of enrollment (see above). Enrollments that are funded by Preschool For All 9-month and 12-month funding must meet the minimum service hours requirement of 612.5 hours per year during the program's self-defined Program Year.

> **Example of PFA 9-Month Program:** 3.5 PFA hours per day x 175 days per year = 612.5 hours per year

> **Example of PFA 12-Month Program:** 2.5 PFA hours per day x 245 days per year = 612.5 hours per year

Eligible children enrolled for less-than the minimum service hours period based on either part-year or part-week enrollment may still qualify for Preschool For All 9-month and 12-month funding on a prorated basis.

What is the Limitation against Charging Tuition for the PFA Portion of the Day?

Programs *must not charge tuition or any other enrollment fees* during the PFA portion of the day to families of any eligible child(ren) enrolled at a participating PFA site who verify that they meet the residency and age requirements. Programs may charge parents fees associated with extended (or "wrap-around") care, registration, activities, field trip, and administrative fees that are required by the program. These other fees must be applied consistently to all similar enrollments, and not solely to City funded enrollments.

How is the PFA Tuition Credit Amount for Families Calculated?

For information on calculating the PFA tuition credit amount for families, please refer to the PFA Tuition Credit Schedule located in the Funding Requirements and Forms section of the DEC website.

Preschool For All (PFA) Tuition Credit Family Agreement Form

Programs must complete page 2 of the PFA Tuition Credit form.

Programs need to calculate the monthly preschool cost for the family, which is:

[Preschool monthly tuition] – [PFA tuition credit amount] = [Family's monthly preschool cost]

Programs can always offer a higher amount of tuition credit to families than the minimums.

Once programs complete page 2 of the *Preschool For All Tuition Credit Family Agreement Form,* they should give the forms to their families to complete the other sections and to sign each section. Programs should keep the completed Family Agreement form in each child's file on-site, and give the family a copy as well. If you have questions or need assistance completing Page 2 of the *Preschool for All Tuition Credit Family Agreement Form,* please contact Children's Council's Help Desk at support@childrenscouncil.org or 415-343-4669.

The *Preschool For All Tuition Credit Family Agreement Form* can be downloaded in English, Spanish and Chinese from our website in the Funding Requirements and Forms section.

What are the PFA Tuition Credit Donation Options?

PFA families can choose to donate their PFA Tuition Credit Amount to their PFA program. There are two distinct "Donation Options" available to families:

- A Credit Donation of any amount up to 100% of the full Tuition Credit, or
- No Credit Donation, and the family utilizes the full PFA Tuition Credit as a discount for their family

Marking one of the percentage donation options allows the participating preschool to charge the family tuition accordingly, and retain the saved PFA Tuition Credit funds for scholarships or other financial assistance that increases access to families with demonstrated need. Monitoring of the use of donated Tuition Credit funds occurs during DEC site visits.

DEC Logo

We encourage OECE-funded programs to use an approved OECE logo in all materials used to market OECE-funded programs, including brochures, websites, flyers, banners, and advertisements. To download OECE logo in various formats and file sizes please go to http://sfoece.org/information-for-funded-providers and scroll to the bottom of the page.

Suspension and Termination

A. Non-compliance

Corrective Action Process & **Conditional Status Amendments:** The SF Department of Early Childhood staff routinely monitor city-funded early learning providers for compliance with these Program Operating Guidelines, Programmatic Assurances, and Quality Standards. When monitoring activities identify areas of non-compliance, DEC will endeavor to work collaboratively with the Provider through a defined Corrective Action Process (see Appendix A) to resolve identified issues and support the Provider's efforts to meet applicable early learning provider requirements. The Corrective Action Process seeks to remedy problems efficiently and amicably, but also provides a clear stipulation of consequences in cases where non-compliance is persistent. See Appendix A, Corrective Action Process Guidelines and Procedures, for more information.

The Conditional Status Amendment is an addendum to the Provider's Participation Agreement with Children's Council, Wu Yee and/or DEC, which is part of the Corrective Action Process, and used to document areas of non-compliance and identify specific activities with timelines for completion. DEC staff indicate the Conditional Status Amendment in collaboration with the funded agency's Program Director/Owner and/or other lead staff. These documents become part of the Participation Agreement and part of the contractual obligations.

Unresolved Issues: Programs with non-compliance areas not resolved through the Corrective Action Process may have their Participation Agreement suspended or terminated by DEC .

B. Suspension & Termination

Criteria for Suspension or Termination of Provider: The Department of Early Childhood reserves the right to suspend or terminate a Provider's participation in the city-funded initiatives for any of the following reasons:

1. Provider's license is suspended or revoked. DEC will immediately report a Provider to licensing authorities in cases where a serious care deficit exists or the health and safety of children is being endangered by the Provider;
2. A Provider is found to have committed a violation of licensing requirements, which is deemed by DEC to be a serious deficiency;
3. A Provider's teaching staff is found to have committed a violation of licensing requirements, which is deemed by DEC as a serious deficiency;
4. A report of child abuse by Provider is substantiated;
5. Provider is unable or unwilling to implement a Corrective Action Plan issued by DEC.
6. A Provider is repeatedly uncooperative with DEC (e.g., refuses unannounced visits, refuses quality monitoring or quality support, non-compliance with reporting requirements);
7. Provider provides false information to DEC staff or their representatives.
8. Provider makes fraudulent use of city funds;
9. Serious or repeated instances involving noncompliance with city-funded initiative program requirements;
10. City-funded initiative programming no longer exists or is insufficient;
11. Provider is unwilling to effect changes to the Operating Guidelines in violation of DEC policies or administrative and statutory guidelines issued by any state, federal or local governmental agency;
12. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Participation Agreement.

Provider receives in writing any basis for determining termination of the Participation Agreement, for such action, and effective date of such action. Review procedures outlined below.

Provider agreement status change or termination action is initiated by DEC per Action Process Guidelines and Procedures (see Appendix A). This process seeks to remedy non-compliance areas in cooperation with the Provider, and support Provider efforts to meet applicable Program requirements. This process includes a clear stipulation of the consequences for Providers' funding status in cases of persistent non-compliance.

Review Procedure for Suspended or Terminated Provider A review procedure will be available to any Provider whose Participation Agreement is suspended or terminated for the reasons stated in (1) through (12) above. The Provider may contest the suspension or termination by filing a petition to DEC

San Francisco by requesting a review hearing. This hearing petition submitted by Provider must be within ten (10) days of the notice of suspension or termination, and include:

(i)   A clear statement of the action being appealed;
(ii)   The reasons the action is unwarranted; and
(iii) Any written documentation in support of the appeal.

If the Provider requests a hearing of the petition, DEC will schedule a hearing within 30 days of receipt. The Provider will receive at least fourteen (14) days advance written notice and place of the review hearing. Subsequent to the hearing, DEC will issue a final and written decision to the Provider within 30 days. The written decision via registered mail to the Provider.

Obligations of Terminated Provider After receiving notice of DEC's decision to terminate the contract, the Provider will submit to DEC the following:
(i)   A current inventory of equipment purchased in whole or in part with City funds;
(ii) Names, addresses and telephone numbers of all families served through the Participation Agreement; and
(iii) Monthly enrollment and attendance reports until the final date of Participation Agreement

Appendix A

Corrective Action Process: Determination of Non-Compliance, Action Plans, and Conditional Status Amendments

Overview

The San Francisco Department of Early Childhood (DEC) routinely monitors early learning providers to comply with the Program Operating Guidelines, Quality Standards, and Participation Agreement. If monitoring activities identify issues of non-compliance, DEC endeavors to work collaboratively with the affected Provider to resolve identified issues and support efforts to meet applicable requirements. The corrective action process seeks to remedy problems efficiently and amicably, but also provides for consequences in cases of persistent non-compliance.
The guidelines provide an opportunity for affected providers to be successful early learning partners with the City and County of San Francisco.

Summary of Process

When reviews of program data or site visits identify areas of non-compliance, DEC will typically initiate the corrective action process and take the following actions:

1. **Initial Collaboration:** A DEC representative will discuss with the Program Director or FCC Owner particular areas of concern for needed action to meet programmatic requirements. DEC will also discuss suggestions and a timeline for resolution. Such communication may occur in person or by phone and documented by DEC staff for follow-up.

   Conditional Status: DEC may require amendment of the Program Participation Agreement to place the Provider on Conditional Status to address areas of non-compliance. Conditional Status begins when DEC staff work with the Provider to develop an Action Plan. This Action Plan becomes an amendment to the Provider's current Participation Agreement, and stipulates specific areas of non-compliance; actions for resolution; and timelines for completion and responsible parties. The Provider will be required to participate in special site monitoring with assigned DEC staff or representatives (e.g. Instructional Coach), including supplemental site visits, additional reporting, site support plans, or other conditions. Failure to meet the goals of the Action Plan will result in suspension or termination of the Agreement or no offer of continued funding.

DEC reserves the right to place a Provider on Conditional Status, require development and completion of Action Plans, withhold referrals of families with city funding, withhold funding, and terminate a Provider's funding eligibility at any time during the Participation Agreement period. Conditional Status may affect the program's eligibility for grants or stipends.

A Closer Look at the Process

The Conditional Status Action Plan
DEC may require collaborative development of an Action Plan to address areas of non-compliance.

1. DEC Program Officer and/or Technical Assistance staff will schedule an appointment with the provider's Program Director (and other appropriate staff) or FCC Owner to review in detail all non-compliance findings, and develop an Action Plan together.

2. The Action Plan will identify the needs of the Provider and itemize unmet programmatic requirements. It will include due dates and timeframes for progress where applicable.

3. Provider concerns discussed and documented, as appropriate, in the "Clarification" section.

4. The Provider and DEC assigned staff sign the Action Plan. Executed copies shall be made available to all parties, and will become an amendment to the Provider's Participation Agreement with Children's Council or Wu Yee by placing the provider on a Conditional Status.

5. If the Participation Agreement amendment to Conditional Status is during the last ninety (90) days of the program year, and the Provider is offered continued funding, the Participation Agreement for the subsequent contract period will include Conditional Status and the applicable Action Plan amendment.

6. If the Provider does not agree with the non-compliance findings, or disagrees with the area(s) of non-compliance per the Action Plan, the Provider's response is documented.. In these cases, DEC will proceed with suspension or termination actions.

Duration of Conditional Status
A Provider shall remain on Conditional Status until the Provider has corrected area(s) of non-compliance, and/or has met requirements identified in the Action Plan Amendment within the timeline stipulated in the Action Plan.

A Provider may request written verification from DEC of the corrected area(s) of noncompliance even if the Provider is not removed from conditional contract status.

Review Procedure for Suspension or Termination of PFA Funding

The aforementioned procedures used to resolve area(s) of programmatic and/or administrative noncompliance may arise regarding the interpretation and application of any term or condition of the Program Operating Guidelines and/or Participation Agreement.

DEC reserves the right to suspend or terminate a Provider's participation in city funding. Accordingly, a review procedure is available when a Provider is suspended or terminated. The Provider may contest the suspension or termination by filing a petition with DEC and request an administrative hearing.