



## **Early Learning System Program Operating Guidelines Fiscal Year 2023-2024**

Every child in San Francisco has the best start in life and our City is a great place to raise a family.

### ***Mission***

To weave together family, community, and system supports so that all children who grow up in San Francisco have a strong foundation of nurturing, health, and learning.

# The San Francisco Early Learning System (ELS)

## DEC Program Philosophy

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 lifelong success.

All DEC funded programs should embrace a philosophy that supports all families and children in San Francisco, and policies 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, at any time. These guidelines and addendums are available on DEC's Provider Portal at: <https://provider.sfdec.org/funding-requirements/guidelines-and-forms/> .

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.

## 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 for Fiscal Year 2023-24. Their services include, but are not limited to:

- Helping families determine if they are eligible for subsidized ECE
- Supporting families and child care programs through Resource and Referral services
- leveraging state and federal child care funding to support families
- Child Care Subsidy payments administration

## 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 Division Continuous Improvement Strategy

The Department of Early Childhood – The Early Learning Division is committed to “Continuous Learning and Improvement: To have our desired impact, we must consistently and frequently engage parents, providers and grantees in helping us understand what is working well and where improvement is needed –and use what we learn from shift and adapt our work”. (<https://sfdec.org/strategic-plan/>, 2023)

The Early Learning Division established a “Feedback” system by which we encourage parents, and providers to provide input on how to improve their experiences with the services they receive either directly from DEC or they receive services, from any other collaborating entity in our system of early care and education in San Francisco.

The “Feedback” system is a method to get new ideas and an easy to strengthen program and family's engagement and satisfaction. Families and Programs are always welcomed to use our “**Continuous Learning and Improvement**”.

## 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*<sup>1</sup> 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.

### ELS Qualified Programs

ELS qualified programs are Centers and licensed Family Child Care Programs approved through the 2022 Continued Funding application process and through an on-going application and validation 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 additional supports.

### 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [SF Public Health: Prioritizing Populations with Structural Barriers](#)

When ELS Voucher funding is available, Wu Yee or Children’s 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 match 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 and the State enrollments enhancement only applies to children 0-5 years old enrolled in the program.

### **ELS Participation Agreement and Liability Insurance**

All programs qualified through the 2022 Continued Funding Application Process or are approved through a validation 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.

In addition, all programs signing an ELS Participation or Funding Agreement are required to submit a copy of their liability Insurance certificate. Details regarding the different Insurance and Liability types and amounts of coverage required, programs need to consult their signed Funding or Participation Agreement.

### **ELS Center and Family Child Care Rates**

For FY 2023-2024 ELS rates please go to the [San Francisco Department of Early Childhood Provider Portal](#). The [ELS rate sheet](#) for both Family Child Care and Centers are located in the [Funding Requirements> Guidelines and Forms section](#).

### **Maximum Reimbursable Amount (MRA)**

The Maximum Reimbursable Amount (MRA) calculates the total funding the program can earn through ELS Fully-Funded, Preschool-for-All (PFA), and/or Title 5 California State Preschool Program (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: Title 5 (CSPP), Fully-Funded, and PFA . 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 Enhancement 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.

**ELS Fully-Funded:** These are fully funded enrollments at the ELS rates for children 0-5 until children reach Kindergarten.

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

### Applicable Rate Breakdown:

#### 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

#### 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.

### **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.

### **Sibling Priority**

DEC will provide priority for ELS Voucher for ELS Fully-Funded 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.

### **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, however the SF residence applies to these families.

### **Certification of Family's Income Eligibility**

The ECE Integrated Services Agencies perform family's eligibility certification for ELS Voucher and ELS Enhancement funding for State vouchers. Agencies administering Title 5, and Center-MRA, enrollments are solely responsible for determining and documenting a family's eligibility for these funds.

### **Recertification of income**

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.

### **Family Fee requirements (NOTE: Family Fees are waived for FY2023-2024. Do not charge Family Fees)**

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. DEC will follow state guidance regarding Family Fees and may apply this requirement to ELS and PFA funded enrolled families.

### **Co-Payments and Enrollment Fees, Deposits**

Voluntary or involuntary Co-payments, enrollment fees and deposits are not permissible for ELS-funded enrollments or center-MRA (Fully Funded enrollments). DEC provides a reimbursement rate to ELS participating programs that is competitive in the San Francisco County market, in addition, programs must recognize that ELS participating families may experience higher levels of economic pressures; therefore



co-payments, enrollment fees and deposits that programs may charge are not allowable and not applicable to ELS funded families.

Programs forcing an additional fee on families, can be subject to additional inquiry from Children’s Council or Wu Yee. Families may be counseled to consider alternate care if the program they first selected does not meet their needs and places on them an economic hardship.

### 2 Weeks Early Termination Notice Payment

The two weeks termination notice payment applies when the two-week period continues into the second month and the child is attending 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.

### Child’s Age Requirement 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **ELS Enhancement on State Voucher**

Following state guidelines eligible children are between birth and until they reach kindergarten, typically at 5 years old.

### **Preschool For All (PFA) Tuition Credit**

Eligible children must be four (4) years of age on or before December 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## **Child Enrollments**

### **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 [support@childrenscouncil.org](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).

### 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.

### 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 to 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 child according to the DEC enrollment prioritization outlines in this document. DEC reserves the right to monitor ELS programs to ensure enrollment prioritization compliance.

### Two-way 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](mailto:support@childrenscouncil.org) or 415-343-4669 and Wu Yee at [randr@wuyee.org](mailto:randr@wuyee.org) or 844-644-4300.

Either Children's Council or Wu Yee will contact the family and match them to the program's open vacancy, an enrollment specialist will contact the family to conduct the enrollment certification, confirm the vacancy is within allowable ratios, and inform the program when tat 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.

### 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)**

Second priority for enrollment should be given according to lowest income first for families earning up to 110% of the AMI.

### **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, or
- Based on the type of support received from local, state and federal funds and as result of this making on services provided to these funded families.
- Substantiated complains of discrimination will be grounds for immediate termination of a program’s participation in the Early Learning System.

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 Education 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 or any changes in the family's participation in the program within 5 program days. 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.

### Reporting Child Attendance

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, when available (with the correct funding type for continued reimbursement. Daily Attendance may be tracked by the program in DEC Data Tracking System or otherwise when available.
  
- State funded voucher enrollments (CAPP and CalWORKs)
  - In accordance with state policy, programs are required to report attendance to receive payment. Children’s Council will provide DEC approved attendance guidelines to programs serving state vouchered children.
  
- ELS Voucher funded enrollments.
  - Programs are required to track daily attendance for payment purposes using the approved DEC Data Tracking System (TBD) or paper timesheets provided by the ISA agency funding the enrollment.

### 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, and San Francisco residence.
- 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

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.

### **Center Base Programs -DRDP Reporting Requirements in DEC Data reporting System**

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. All ELS educators participating in CARES or Early Educator Salary Support Grant are required to be active in the Registry as they will need to complete the Employee Verification for their team.

## Programmatic Assurances and Quality Standards

The Department of Early Childhood has 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 Provider Portal](#).

## 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	
	<p><b>Child Observation:</b> 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.</p>
	<p><b>Developmental Screenings &amp; Links to Early Intervention Supports:</b> 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.</p>
QUALIFICATIONS – Please check applicable section	
<b>For Centers Only</b>	
	<p><b>Center Director Qualifications:</b> 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.</p>
	<p><b>Center Lead Teacher Qualifications:</b> classroom led by a teacher holding a minimum Teacher Permit (or higher), according to the State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.</p>
<b>For Family Child Care (FCC)</b>	
	<p><b>FCC Owner or Full-time Teacher Qualifications:</b> 12 ECE units, including nine units of core classes (CDEV 53; CDEV 66; CDEV 67) &amp; three ECE elective units for educator providing instruction and supervision to the children in progress with approval by DEC or completed by June 2023.</p>
	<p><b>PFA FCC Qualifications (for current PFA programs only):</b> group led by a teacher holding a minimum Teacher Permit (or higher), according to the State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.</p>

**QUALITY ASSURANCE**

	<p><b>Continuous Quality Improvement</b> – 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.</p>												
	<p><b>Curriculum</b> – Adopt and implement a curricula, which aligns with either the California Department of Education <a href="#"><i>Infant/Toddler Learning &amp; Development Foundations</i></a>, California Department of Education <a href="#"><i>California Preschool Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks (Volumes 1-3)</i></a> as appropriate to ages served, or the <a href="#"><i>Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five</i></a> by July 1, 2023.</p>												
	<p><b>Environment</b> - Provide indoor and outdoor environment that demonstrates a culture of caring, competence and excellence in learning.</p>												
	<p><b>Interactions</b> – Provide nurturing, responsive, language and cognitive rich interactions between adults and children, as demonstrated by CLASS observations.</p>												
	<p><b>Ratio and Group Size:</b> Age category ratio and maximum class size for child care centers:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="337 926 813 1182"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Category</th> <th>Ratio</th> <th>Maximum Class Size*</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Infant (Birth -15 months)</td> <td>1:4</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Toddler (12-36 months)</td> <td>1:6</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Preschool (30 months-5 years)</td> <td>1:10</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*CSPP programs must follow Title V guidelines, which allow for a 1:8 ratio with class size of 24 children.</p> <p><b>Family Child Care (FCC) programs</b> 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.</p>	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
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											
	<p><b>Parent Partnership &amp; Parent-Teacher Conferences</b>--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.</p>												
	<p><b>Professional Development (PD)</b> – 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</p>												

	Needs, and Family Engagement and Support/Strengthening Families. College units may be applicable.
	<b>Anti Bias/Equity PD Standard – Each</b> 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, noncompliance 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.

### **Programs Operating Multiple Shifts**

DEC supports programs in a variety of ways, so they offer a safe and healthy ECE experience to all children. Programs must ensure that children develop their cognitive, social/emotional, and physical skills so they set a strong foundation and are equipped to achieve better opportunities for success. For a child's proper development, it is imperative to keep them safe from an early age. When young children are learning how to recognize dangerous situations, a safe environment can help prevent and reduce their injuries. If a program decides to offer multiple service schedules, outside the customary hours of service, programs must be aware that health, safety, and nutrition for every single child in their programs remain of the utmost importance. Programs operating multiple shifts must:

- Notify Community Care Licensing of their program service hours. The Integrated Services Agencies (Children’s Council and Wu Yee) will collect information and documentation that supports this requirement,
- Notify Children’s Council and Wu Yee of their intent to open a multiple shift program and provide copy of their parent’ information sheets, copy of the program’s brochure and internal policies, along with the information posted in their website, if applicable.

DEC, Children’s Council and Wu Yee, at any time and as part of the approval of the multiple shift program may require additional information and or will conduct an unannounced program site visit to verify the information and make sure the program is equipped to operate multiple shifts program.

- Avoid at any time pressuring families to enroll in a shift offered and/or to suggest families misrepresent their eligibility or participation in the program to fill a vacant space. Misrepresentation is a reason for a program to be terminated from their participation in the Early Learning System.
- Avoid engaging in misrepresentation of hours of services provided, schedules, days of service and operation alone or in coordination with families will be immediately terminated from the Early Learning System.
- Administer the applicable ASQs, DRDP assessments for all and every child enrolled at minimum 11 hrs. per week in their program, regardless of the shift they are attending.
- Be aware that operating a multiple shifts program increases the complexities of “program transitions” and that in certain circumstances it may put the program in an “over-capacity” status. Consistent over-capacity is a violation of CCL regulations.
- Have documentation available to substantiate that the program follows elements of a clean, healthy and safe facility, documentation will include sanitation schedules followed at each season, bathroom, kitchen, play and program areas sanitation, etc. Programs that do not follow basic healthy and clean facilities incur a Type B CCL violation.

### **Program Validation and Monitoring**

Programs will participate in validation and monitoring activities to demonstrate their implementation of the Programmatic Assurances and Quality Standards. The Early Learning Division aims to use a blend of three major approaches to coordinating early care and education quality assurance; access and enrollment, and monitoring by focusing on: (1) programmatic assurances and quality standards that programs implement for quality care and education, (2) access and enrollment of children in the programs with single and multiple funding streams, and (3) guiding programs to use positive feedback and supports to improve their program for the benefit of children and families in San Francisco. The Early Learning Division conducts monitoring to:

- Examine the program assurances and results achieved by participating ELS, particularly their progress against the program dimensions and indicators.
- Review implementation of access and enrollment strategies with a focus on program and data quality and areas of improvements.
- Determine program compliance with applicable access and enrollment statutes/regulations; and
- Examine, with program's active participation, the resolution of findings from monitoring reviews.

For purposes of validation and monitoring activities, all ELS participating programs will grant access to their program and facilities to DEC staff, as needed. DEC will consider special circumstances and accommodate request, to obtain validation and monitoring information in alternate ways.

### **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.”<sup>2</sup> 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.

DEC has established monthly reimbursement for early care and education programming categorized by full-time, part-time, age groups and program types.

All families are eligible for full or part time Early Learning System (ELS) funding *and services* depending on the parent's preference and the selected program's published schedule. Full-time is a minimum of 30 hours per week and part-time is 17.5 to 29.9 hours per week. However, all **participating ELS programs must offer ELS funded families equal access to the program's hours of operation, including program's with staggered schedules. Programs cannot limit a family's access to care based on funding source. For example, a program with a published full-time schedule of 9am-5pm should not provide services from 9am-3pm to ELS funded families, unless this is the family's preferred schedule. Failure to comply with this policy, may be considered discriminatory and a violation of DEC policy.**

### Payment Proration for ELS Vouchers and ELS GAP

- When a family is approved for a limited term leave service leave. This leave is when a family takes a leave. Depending on the nature of the leave, it can be approved for 12 or 16 weeks.
- When a program closure days exceed the allowable 15 days per fiscal year. Note: Programs with state funded enrollments (vouchers) only allow 10 paid closure days. At the beginning of each fiscal year, programs must submit their updated closure days for the fiscal year to Children's Council and Wu Yee.
- 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.
- When a program is terminated from the Early Learning System and due to a CCL violation or any other Operating Guidelines violation. The prorating of the payment may be placed on hold for the duration of the adverse action appeal if the program chooses to use that option available to them.
- For back-up care provided for less than 11 days in a month. Back-up programs must be ELS qualified programs.

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.

### 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 "Program Closure Form", provided by the Integrated

Services Agencies 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. Paid closure days are not intended to be an payment enhancement on any closure days or federal/state holidays.

### **COVID-19 Closures**

Early Care and Education programs are an important part of our communities as they provide safe, supportive learning environments for children. As the COVID-19 infectious disease trends change, DEC's intent with this policy is to help ECE programs in San Francisco to remain open, but if needed, to help them reduce the spread of COVID-19. This policy will remain flexible to adapt to changing local situations, including periods of higher or lower community health impacts from COVID-19.

It is recommended that Programs put in place prevention strategies and always follow the directives of the local San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC); if there are differing requirements between the most current guidance from these entities, programs should follow the strictest requirements.

### **For purposes of ELS reimbursement Covid-19, including ELS-GAP, programs can expect reimbursement for ECE services for no more than 5 working days when:**

- The program director or FCC owner tested positive and notified as soon as possible CDSS (Community Care Licensing) regional office, parents, and staff.
- The program director or FCC owner is unable to continue operating the program due to following the recommended isolation period.
- The program director or FCC owner and staff tested positive for COVID-19, not necessarily simultaneously, but within the same incubation period, and therefore the program is unable to continue to remain open.

To be considered for an additional 5-day period-payment, programs with a second positive diagnose within a 12-month period will be asked to submit to the agency (Children's Council or Wu Yee) that is issuing the payments one of the following: a picture of a rapid or PCR test results, or a doctor's note only when proof of rapid or PCR test is not available.

### **COVID-19 payment is not allowable when:**

- The affected staff members can isolate at their own or different home, and program continues offering services to children and families.
- Positive cases only involve children or staff, and they follow isolation guidance at their own home and the program can continue operating.



- Days dedicated for facilities deep cleaning and sanitation.

### **Jury Duty Payment**

State law does not require compensation to individuals because of jury service.

The Department of Early Childhood encourages the participation of the civic obligation of performing jury service when called. This policy only applies to Family Child Care programs.

In cases where a program is unable to continue the operation of the program, a family child care provider will be granted an excused absence to perform this service and will receive payment for the time the provider actively participates in the service. If the provider does not have to attend the court, the program will continue operating regularly and the Service Excused Absence will not apply.

Jury Services Excused Absence payment is not an additional payment to the current rate or payment, but it will not count against the 15 paid closure days a program has per fiscal year.

To be eligible for a Service Excused Absence the program needs:

1. Upon receipt of a juror summons, the program must immediately present a copy of the notice to the Integrated Services Agency from where payments are received. Retroactive receipts are not accepted.
2. On completion of service, the program must obtain proof of documentation of time served and submit that information to the ISA that issues payments no later than 3 days after the service was completed.
3. Absence for jury service must be recorded on timesheets and match the document issued by the court.

The Service Excused Absent payment does not apply when:

- The program needs to call the service number to find out if the group has been selected.
- The program does not need to attend the court.
- The program attends the court, but the program operates regularly.

### **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.

### 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.
- Ask families to participate in completing forms, eligibility documents, attendance forms, or to report hours of service different from the actual hours of care 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

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 the 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.

## 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 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. 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 Corrective Action Process. 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

## 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:

**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 noncompliance. 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 noncompliance.

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 noncompliance, 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 Funding**

The 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.

### **Appeal Process**

Programs have the right to contest an action taken by the Early Learning Division and has 15 calendar days after the action is taken to submit a request for an appeal. Early Learning Division team member recommending the actions is required to inform programs about their right to appeal, the request must be in writing (email or letter) and must include the following:

- a. A clear, concise statement of the action being appealed; and
- b. The name, address, and telephone number of the program's authorized representative for the proceeding.
- c. Reason for the disagreement with the action that, under the circumstances, compliance with the requirements of a program standard, funding, or any other



violation, including a regulation enacted by another division of the Department of Early Childhood.

## 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	\$7191	\$5,753	\$4,315
MASTER TEACHER/SITE SUPERVISOR	\$6,892	\$5,514	\$4,134
TEACHER	\$5,933	\$4,796	\$3,560

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.

### 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.

### **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.

### Calculating PFA Tuition Credit Amount for Families

For information on calculating the PFA tuition credit amount for families, please refer to the PFA [Tuition Credit Schedule](#) located in the [Funding Requirements> Guidelines and Forms](#) section of the DEC provider portal.

### Preschool For All (PFA) Tuition Credit Family Agreement Form

Programs must complete page 2 of the [PFA Tuition Credit Family Agreement 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](mailto: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 the DEC provider portal in the [Funding Requirements> Guidelines 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 DEC-funded programs to use an approved DEC logo in all materials used to market DEC-funded programs, including brochures, websites, flyers, banners, and advertisements. To access DEC logo files in various sizes, colors, and formats please contact our communications team at [sfdec@sfgov.org](mailto:sfdec@sfgov.org).