2025-2026 DCYF EARLY CHILDHOOD EQUITY GRANT

Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

This manual provides guidance and policies for the 205-2026 Early Childhood Equity Grant.

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Section 1: General Information

Background

The [Fair Start for Kids Act](#) (FSKA) directs the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to distribute funds to support inclusive and culturally and linguistically specific early learning and early childhood and parent support programs across the state. The funds are distributed through the Early Childhood Equity Grant and are intended to serve as a step toward expanding access to early learning statewide and transforming Washington's early learning system to make it more inclusive and equitable.

The Washington State Legislature passed the FSKA in 2021. The total budget allocation for the grant is authorized by the Legislature and may change.

Purpose

The Early Childhood Equity Grant helps support culturally responsive programming so that children have access to diverse care that meets their needs.

Equity is all about working on and improving the fairness of how things are done, whether it's in the rules, the procedures, or how resources are shared. The goal is to make sure that every child has a fair chance, even though that doesn't mean every child gets exactly the same thing. **It's important to understand that equity is not the same as equality. Equality means treating every child exactly the same, no matter their different needs or situations. Equity, on the other hand, focuses on breaking down the barriers that have held back groups who have faced unfair treatment in the past, as well as those who are still facing challenges today.**

Children of color are currently underrepresented in the percentage of children entering kindergarten with the skills they need to be successful. DCYF has a strategic priority to achieve equity in kindergarten readiness.

Grant funds must be used to incorporate inclusive practices, culturally and linguistically supportive and relevant practices, or both into early learning program design, delivery, education, training, and/or evaluation.

What Has Changed?

The total amount of funding is subject to appropriation by the legislature. Some wording has been updated for clarity. Starting in the 2024-2025 round, DCYF began requiring grantees to attend a special technical assistance session before they can receive payment. DCYF provides this technical assistance session at no charge, and at a mutually-agreed-upon time after funding decisions are finalized.

Are You Ready to Apply?

The Early Childhood Equity Grant is a competitive grant. That means that not everyone who applies will receive funding, even if they complete the application correctly and meet eligibility

requirements. Applications will be selected based on prioritization and how well the proposed project meets the chosen goal.

Please evaluate your ability to plan and execute a project before deciding whether or not to apply. You should answer the following questions to determine whether you are a good fit for this grant:

1. Do you have an idea for a project that you want to carry out at your facility? That is, do you have a specific, connected set of activities, with a beginning and an end, clear goals, and an estimated cost? You should be able to describe:
    a. What your project will do
    b. How your project will meet your goal
    c. How you will know whether your project has met your goal. How will you evaluate your results?
2. Does your project address one of the following outcomes, or are you able to describe an alternative outcome that meets the purpose of the grant:
    a. Preventing racial disparities in disciplinary action, such as suspension and expulsion
    b. Increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices
    c. Increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom
    d. Offering ongoing child assessment and developmental screening
    e. Connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial, or other needs
    f. Or another project to incorporate inclusive practices, culturally and linguistically supportive and relevant practices, or both into early learning program design, delivery, education, training, and/or evaluation. You must describe the intended outcome of your project.
3. Do you know how your project will integrate with your current programming? Do you have the resources you need to carry it out? What will you need funding to do? Is this grant an appropriate way to get that funding?
4. Is your facility able to save receipts and fill out follow-up reporting? You should have:
    a. A way to track expenses associated with the grant
    b. A way to track what kinds of successes or challenges you have carrying out your project

How Are Grant Amounts Decided?

Providers can request the amount of funding needed to make the desired improvement(s) to their early learning program. Providers may request funds in any or all of these categories. All activities for which providers request funding must be related to their intended outcome.

Award amounts will vary by provider type. DCYF will accept requests within the following ranges based on provider type:

Provider Type	Minimum Award	Maximum Award
Licensed/certified/certified for payment only providers	$5,000	$100,000
Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers	$100	$2,000
Play and Learn Host Organizations	$5,000	$30,000
ECEAP/Early ECEAP contractors	$5,000	$100,000

Applications with requests outside of those ranges will not be considered.

DCYF has established budget categories and put separate limits on the amount that can be requested in each category. Those categories are described below.

Providers may receive an Early Childhood Equity Grant once every two years. The funding period is also two years. That means that providers have two years to spend the funds after receiving them. Providers may request funds for the entire two-year period.

Providers should evaluate the needs of the children in their care and their communities and how their current programming can be strengthened to meet those needs, and then use this information to make an informed request that allows them to improve their services.

DCYF will consider the requests in light of the services and/or materials requested. We reserve the right to award providers less than the total requested amount.

What Can the Funds be Used For?

Grant funds must be used for projects with one of the following goals:

- **Preventing racial disparities in disciplinary action, such as suspension and expulsion**. Some examples of project activities might include:
  - Establishing clear protocols for responding to challenging behaviors that prevent potential racial disparities in discipline and purchasing materials to implement those protocols
  - Increasing family partnership in supporting children with challenging behaviors (for example, bringing in an interpreter/translator when appropriate)
  - Offering staff training about reducing challenging behaviors and trauma-informed care
  - Providing access to a mental health consultant, coach, or other professional for staff to work with when responding to developmental or behavioral concerns
- **Increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices**. Some examples of project activities might include:

- Purchasing the materials and doing training to implement an evidence-based social-emotional learning program and/or a curriculum with a strong focus on social-emotional development
    - Training supervisors to implement a reflective supervision program for teachers
- **Increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom**. Some examples of project activities might include:
    - Hiring specialized staff, e.g., bilingual staff
    - Training teachers to work effectively with racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse populations
    - Providing opportunities for staff to learn about intentionally countering stereotypes and biases
    - Purchasing the materials and doing training to implement a curriculum with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion
    - Inviting family members to share cultural traditions with children and purchasing materials to help children engage with those traditions
    - Implementing a language policy that embraces children's home languages and that allows providers to set specific language goals for children in conjunction with parents' wishes, for example by purchasing new books in preferred languages or integrating preferred languages into lessons
- **Offering ongoing child assessment and developmental screening**
    - Purchasing any materials and/or training needed to implement assessments that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for the children being assessed
    - Tools that help teachers document child growth and development
    - Increasing ability of teachers to individualize programming for children
- **Connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial, or other needs**
    - Increasing the ability for staff to help families access services that address housing, mental health, substance abuse problems, and other challenges
    - Translating resources
- **Other: another project to incorporate inclusive practices, culturally and linguistically supportive and relevant practices, or both into early learning program design, delivery, education, training, and/or evaluation. You must describe the intended outcome of your project**.

All funding requested needs to be related to your chosen outcome/goal. You can request funding in the following categories for up to the listed amounts:

Category	What is included?	Maximum request

Hiring specialized staff	Costs for adding specialized staff needed to complete the project activities	$100,000
Child care materials and experiences	Materials needed to complete the project activities that will be used by children or by staff during care of children, or activities that will be carried out with children (e.g., culturally relevant toys, field trips)	$20,000
Office and business supplies	Materials needed to complete the project activities that will be used primarily by staff when not directly caring for children	$10,000
Staff training	Costs for training needed to complete the project activities and any associated costs	$50,000
Program evaluation and assessment tools	Tools to evaluate different aspects of your program, or your program overall	$10,000
Other services	Other services needed to complete the project activities (e.g., translation service)	$20,000
Other materials	Other materials needed to complete the project activities (e.g., educational materials about challenging behaviors for parents)	$20,000

Please note that your total request must still be within the minimum and maximum amounts described in the How are Grant Amounts Decided section above.

Grant funds may **not** be used for:

- Activities or materials that do not advance or inspire practices that promote inclusive and culturally responsive learning, environments, and enhanced language access
- Costs that are not explained in the project narrative (Question 9 on the application)
- Costs that are not explicitly related to the nature of the project and its goals, needs, and anticipated outcomes as described within the body of the application
- Religious activities or purposes, including worship or instruction
- Academic, professional, or vocational degrees or certificates, or classes in such programs
- Capital improvements, like major construction or renovation
- General program costs, like the basic expenses of owning and operating your business, are not allowed. This includes things like:
    - Regular payroll costs for existing staff
    - Costs of purchasing, owning, or maintaining a vehicle
    - Costs associated with the space out of which you operate, like rent or utilities
    - Insurance
    - Federal taxes
    - Indirect costs
    - Other business operating costs

- Raises or bonuses for existing staff
- Gifts for families

Applications that request funding for these costs will be removed from consideration. Remember that this grant will be used to fund projects, not lists of materials. Please see "Are You Ready to Apply?", above, if you have questions about what a project is.

Section 2: Eligibility

The Early Childhood Equity Grant is awarded through a competitive grant process. Applying does not guarantee that an eligible provider will receive a grant award. It is likely that there will be a large number of applications that DCYF is unable to fund. Eligible applicants may only receive an Early Childhood Equity Grant once every two years.

Eligibility is open to:

- Licensed, certified, or certified for payment only child care providers with an open license in good standing.
- License-exempt Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers serving children receiving state subsidies.
- Licensed ECEAP/Early ECEAP sites
- ECEAP/Early ECEAP contractors
- Play and Learn Group Host Organizations recognized by Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA of WA) and currently receive funding and/or direct programming support from CCA of WA to actively provide direct and virtual education and materials to parents and FFN caregivers. This is the result of a contractual agreement between CCA of WA and the State of Washington and applies to Play and Learn Groups.

For licensed, certified, and license-exempt FFN providers: grants are awarded to a specific licensed facility/site, not a larger organization. Providers with multiple licensed locations will need to submit a separate application for each licensed site that qualifies to apply for a grant.

Unlicensed ECEAP sites may not apply for this grant. ECEAP/Early ECEAP Contractors may submit a single application with information on all sites included in their project.

Facilities that are both licensed and serving ECEAP slots may apply on their own. Licensed sites cannot receive Early Childhood Equity Grant funding from both their contractor and directly from DCYF.

Play and Learn groups should submit a single application per host organization, with information on all sites included in their project.

Section 3: How to Apply

Different types of providers will have different ways to apply for this grant. Licensed, certified, certified for payment only providers and FFN providers should apply through WA Compass. ECEAP contractors and Play and Learn Group Host Organizations should apply through our

SmartSheet application. Links to both will be available on our [website](#) when the grant application opens.

The deadline to submit the grant will be May 27, 2025, at 5 p.m. PDT. DCYF highly recommends that providers not wait until the last minute to fill out the application. Submitting your application before the deadline will help to prevent any technical issues or last-minute complications that could potentially prevent you from submitting your application. DCYF is unable to accept applications after the deadline.

Application Criteria and Language Access

DCYF encourages applicants with no grant-writing experience to apply. We do not discriminate against applications written in languages other than English or applications with typos or grammatical errors.

DCYF will provide all materials in English, Spanish, Somali, Russian, Arabic, and Simplified Chinese. Providers are encouraged to submit their applications in the language they feel best able to express themselves: English, Spanish, Somali, Russian, Arabic, Mandarin, or some combination. To ensure that all applications receive equal consideration, applications submitted in languages other than English will be translated into English.

Procedure for Licensed/Certified Providers and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Providers

Before you apply, you must have a WA Compass Provider Portal account.
1. To set up a WA Compass account or reset your password, please contact dcyf.providerportal@dcyf.wa.gov or call 866-627-8929.
    a. Contact your licensor if you need to update your name, address, phone number, and/or email address.
    b. Access is granted to the director and primary contact. These roles assign additional designee access.

Application
2. Providers submit an application using the WA Compass Provider Portal.
    a. Before completing your application, please review the [Application Preview Guide](#), which contains all of the application questions and tips on how to answer them. DCYF strongly recommends you review this guide and the Prioritization Guide before completing your application. The Prioritization Guide is available in Appendix B.
    b. For detailed instructions and screenshots showing how to submit your application within the Provider Portal, please see the Guide for How to Submit an Early Childhood Equity Grant Application in WA Compass in Appendix C.
    c. To get started, log in to the [WA Compass Provider Portal](#), navigate to the Grant Information tab, select "Current Grants" and select the DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant application.

d. You will answer a series of questions, then submit the application. Please note that you only need to answer the questions that are relevant to your proposed use of funds. If you want to save your application and come back to it later, scroll to the bottom of the application and click "Save".

3. Once the application has been submitted, it will not be available to edit and you will not be able to make changes. Please review your application carefully before you submit.

Procedure for Play and Learn Groups and ECEAP Contractors

Application

1. The link to the application will be available on the Early Childhood Equity Grant webpage while the application is open. ECEAP contractors and Play and Learn Group Host Organizations have the option to apply online or by using a fillable PDF application. Choose the format that works best for you.

    a. Before completing your application, please review the Application Preview Guide, which contains all of the application questions and tips on how to answer them. DCYF strongly recommends you review this guide and the Prioritization Guide before completing your application. The Prioritization Guide is available in Appendix B of this manual.

    b. For detailed instructions and screenshots showing how to submit your application, please see the Application Step-by-Step Guide for How to Submit an Early Childhood Equity Grant Application in SmartSheet in Appendix D of this manual.

    c. You will answer a series of questions, then submit the application. You will not be able to save the application and return to it later, so plan to complete and submit it in one session. You can prepare your answers in another document if you want to take more time. Please note that you only need to answer the questions relevant to your proposed use of funds.

2. Once the application has been submitted, it will not be available to edit and you will not be able to make changes. Please review your application carefully before you submit.

Attestations

Before submitting the Early Childhood Equity Grant application, applicants must agree to the following terms and conditions:

The DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant must be spent within two years of the award and within the project scope described above. DCYF reserves the right to use information about your project proposals in a non-identifying way.

I certify that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct.

I will spend the Early Childhood Equity Grant funds, if awarded, on the purchases outlined in this grant application.

I will spend the Early Childhood Equity Grant within two years of receiving the funds.

I will report to DCYF on how I spend the Early Childhood Equity Grant. This will include keeping receipts and documentation from all purchases made with this grant money, and also completing and submitting reports every 6 months using a survey that DCYF will provide.

I understand that DCYF may ask me to provide receipts for purchases made with money from this grant, and if I cannot provide these receipts and documentation when asked, I will be required to repay part or all of the grant money to the State of Washington.

If I do not comply with DCYF reporting requirements or cannot show that the funds were spent in accordance with my application, I am in violation of the terms of the Early Childhood Equity Grant and I will return the grant funds to DCYF.

If I close my license before the two-year cycle ends, I will return any unspent grant funds to DCYF. I will still be responsible to provide reporting and receipts to DCYF detailing funds I did spend, regardless of open or closed status.

I understand that my application will be denied if I have requested funding for any disallowed costs.

I understand that if my project is selected to receive funding, I will need to attend a special technical assistance session and pass a check for understanding about the grant process before I receive any money. DCYF will provide this session at no cost to me. If I do not attend the technical assistance session and pass the check for understanding, I will not receive the funds.

I have reviewed my application and am ready to submit. I understand that once my application is submitted I cannot make any changes to my answers.

Section 4: Selection and Awards

Applicant Selection

The Early Childhood Equity Grant is awarded through a competitive grant process. All applications received within the application period will be reviewed. First, all applications will be screened for eligibility and completeness using the criteria described in the Application Preview Guide. To be considered, applications must be complete, for eligible facilities, and propose projects that are eligible for funding. If more eligible applications are submitted for funding than DCYF is able to fund, the agency will prioritize applications according to factors decided in collaboration with providers and other stakeholders during the design and refinement process. Once an applicant has been awarded grant funds, all funds must be spent within two years of receiving the grant award and within the scope of the proposed project.

Screening

Provider Eligibility

Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements described in Section 2: Eligibility will not be considered for funding.

Project Eligibility

Grant funds must be used for a project with one of the listed outcomes/goals described above. For more details, please see the "What Can Funds Be Used For?" section above and the Application Preview Guide.

Applications that do not meet this standard will not be considered for funding.

Completeness

To be considered complete, all necessary questions must be answered with relevant information, and the answers must be clear and understandable. Applications that do not meet this standard will not be considered for funding. For example, providers may request funding in multiple categories, and the funding requested in each category must add up to the total funding request.

Providers should review their applications carefully before submitting them to make sure each necessary question is answered and that their answers make sense. Providers are encouraged to review their applications with our Technical Assistance partners. Information on how to contact them is available in Section 6: Where to Find Assistance. Providers are further encouraged to check their answers using our Application Preview Guide.

Prioritization

After they are checked for eligibility and completeness, applications will be prioritized according to specific characteristics of the children and families served by the applicant.

DCYF worked with providers and other stakeholders to generate the following list of priority populations for the grant:

- Facilities serving children who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC)
- Facilities serving children enrolled or eligible for membership in one of Washington's federally recognized tribes
- Facilities serving children receiving state, tribal, or military subsidies
- Facilities serving children experiencing houselessness or homelessness
- Facilities serving children in out-of-home care due to child welfare involvement
- Facilities serving children who speak languages other than English at home

Applications can receive one priority point for each question. The full breakdown of points available and how the final priority score is calculated is available in Appendix B.

The highest priority applications will be given to a Community Review Panel to make the final funding determinations.

Community Review Panel

After applications are prioritized, the highest priority applications will be reviewed by the Community Review Panel. They will verify that the amount of funding requested is in line with the project proposed. This review will be done holistically by a group that may include

providers, parents, other external stakeholders, and DCYF staff. Applicants may be contacted to provide more information for the review panel. Applications will not be automatically disqualified if the funding request does not pass the review, if the application meets eligibility requirements and is otherwise complete. DCYF reserves the right to adjust the award total if deemed necessary. Applications will be rated by the Community Review Panel, and DCYF will award projects according to the panelists' ratings until funding is exhausted.

Receiving Payment

The application window will be open for approximately seven weeks. After the application closes, the prioritization team will meet, and decisions will be announced in the following weeks.

Providers who are selected for funding **must** attend a special technical assistance session and pass a check for understanding about the grant process before a specified deadline in order to receive payment. DCYF will provide this technical assistance session at no charge, and at a mutually-agreed-upon time after funding decisions are finalized. Providers who do not attend the required session and pass the check for understanding will not receive payment and will give up their opportunity to receive the 2025-2026 Early Childhood Equity Grant.

For the 2025-2026 Early Childhood Equity Grant, the dates are as follows:

Application opens	April 14, 2025
Application closes	May 27, 2025 at 5 p.m.
Applicants notified about whether they are finalists	Mid June 2025
Community Review Panel meets	June/July 2025
Finalists are notified of award decisions and required technical assistance session deadline	August 2025
Payments processed	2-4 weeks after technical assistance session deadline

Providers will receive the grant payment in one lump sum. Please understand that electronic payment processing and the U.S. Postal Service may take several business days, impacting the exact date providers receive payments.

For licensed, certified, and license-exempt FFN providers: DCYF will process payments through SSPS. Providers will receive the DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant payment in the same way they receive SSPS payments. Details for future rounds will be released at a later date.

Play and Learn Host Organization grant payments will be processed through Child Care Aware of Washington.

ECEAP contractors will receive funds in the manner indicated on their Statewide Vendor Payee (SWV) registration.

Section 5: Post Award

If you are awarded a grant, you must be prepared to submit your receipts for items and expenses you used the grant funding for. Once an applicant is awarded grant funds, all funds must be spent within two years of receiving the grant and within the proposed project's scope.

DCYF will send grantees a short survey approximately twice a year through the grant period to check in on the status of the project, as well as any successes and challenges implementing the project. This survey is required. Grantees must be prepared to report on the status of their project.

DCYF plans to ask recipients the following questions:
1 – Have you spent the full amount of your Early Childhood Equity Grant award at this time?
2 – Do you think you will need to make changes to your original Early Childhood Equity Grant spend plan?
3 – If yes, please describe.
4 – Is this grant funding helping you accomplish your chosen project goal?
5 – What are your results so far? Are the results so far different from your original goals?
6 – What has gone well with your project?
7 – Have you experienced any challenges?
8 – Do you require any additional help or assistance at this time?
9 – Have you learned anything that might help other facilities?

Tracking Receipts

Providers must keep all receipts from purchases made with Early Childhood Equity Grant funds for five years and may be asked to submit receipts to DCYF. If a provider is unable to submit receipts for purchases within the scope of the project on their grant application, they will be required to return part or all of the funds to the State of Washington.

DCYF will select a random sample of grantees to submit receipts for all purchases associated with the grant. Providers selected for receipt review will be notified after the two-year grant spending period closes.

DCYF recognizes multiple ways to track all receipts for your grant funds. Below are ideas to get you started:
1. **Keep all receipts**. This point cannot be overstated. Developing a systematic process of filing receipts can save you a lot of time if you are selected for receipt review.
2. **Scan receipts and keep them at least five years**. This is helpful if the ink on a receipt fades. If DCYF cannot read a receipt, they will not be able to accept it as part of receipt

review. DCYF allows electronically stored receipts. However, it is a good idea to back up stored receipts in case your hard drive crashes.

3. **Take a picture of receipts with your smartphone.** This is a great idea and there are a number of apps that can assist you. With today's technology, you can "make a note on the receipt and then take a picture of it." But remember to back up those app files too.
4. **Have your receipts emailed to you, if offered**. This is a great idea, and a number of vendors offer this as a service to you.
5. **Don't rely on bank statements, credit-card statements, or canceled checks.** These are important, yet insufficient without actual receipts. For recordkeeping purposes, bank statements, credit card statements, and canceled checks are excellent, but the detail of the transaction, which the receipt provides, is critical for a DCYF receipt reviewer. DCYF may see on the credit card statement that you spent $435 at Home Depot, but they have no idea what exactly you bought. It could be that you purchased a barbecue grill instead of the ADA handrails you listed in your grant application.
6. **Avoid cash.** This is very important. Cash is hard to track, easy to spend, and nearly impossible to reconcile with receipts. Use debit and credit cards; they provide you with monthly statements that can be easily matched to your receipts.
7. **Ask for help if you need to.** The receipt review process is not meant to be scary. Please ask if you have questions about what receipts and documentation are required. We are here to help.

Section 6: Where to Find Assistance

DCYF partners with the Imagine Institute to offer full technical assistance in multiple languages, both pre- and post-award.

- Technical Assistance and Language Access
  - If you need technical assistance, including assistance in your language, guidance with preparing for and accessing the application, or have questions on spending and saving receipts/documentation, you can contact the Imagine Institute.
    - Imagine Institute
      - Phone: 206-492-5249
      - Email: ta@imaginewa.org
- Application Questions
  - If you have questions about the application, the timeline of the grant, or other questions specific to the grant, please email dcyf.childcaregrants@dcyf.wa.gov.
- WA Compass Provider Portal Link
  - To access your account, use the login link here: https://wa-del.my.site.com/PP_LoginPage
- Can't Log In?
  - If you need help logging into your WA Compass Provider Portal account, please email dcyf.providerportal@dcyf.wa.gov or call 866-627-8929.

More Information

Please visit the [Early Childhood Equity Grant webpage](). The webpage has links to all of our available resources.

Appendix A: Early Childhood Equity Grant Questions

Prioritization Questions

The following questions will appear on the Early Childhood Equity Grant application. DCYF will use the information provided to prioritize awards, as described in the Prioritization Guide in Appendix B.

1. Question 1: Are any of the children in your care Black, Indigenous, or Children of Color? Please include any children who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Pacific Islander, or multiracial. **Yes / No**

2. Question 2: Are any of the children currently in your care enrolled or eligible for membership in one of the 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington? **Yes / No**

3. Question 3: Are any of the children currently in your care experiencing houselessness or homelessness? This includes children lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate place to stay overnight. They may be in sheltered situations (e.g., emergency shelter or transitional housing) or unsheltered situations (e.g., outside or in vehicles). **Yes / No**

4. Question 4: Are you currently claiming state, tribal, or military subsidies for any of the children currently in your care? **Yes / No**

5. Question 5: Are any of the children currently in your care in out-of-home care due to child welfare involvement? **Yes / No**

6. Question 6: Do any of the children currently in your care speak languages other than English at home? **Yes / No**

Project Questions

The following questions ask about how you will use the grant funds, if awarded. Your answers will be evaluated for eligibility and completeness.

Your project should have one of the following intended outcomes:

- Preventing racial disparities in disciplinary action, such as suspension and expulsion

- Increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices

- Increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom

- Offering ongoing child assessment and developmental screening

- Connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial, or other needs

- Other: another project to incorporate inclusive practices, culturally and linguistically supportive and relevant practices, or both into early learning program design, delivery, education, training, and/or evaluation. You must describe the intended outcome of your project.

For examples of project ideas, please see the examples earlier in this document.

You should request funds for a project with one of the above goals. You can request funding related to those goals in any or all of the following categories:

- Hiring specialized staff (maximum request $100,000)

- Child care materials and experiences (maximum request $20,000)

- Office and business supplies (maximum request $10,000)

- Staff training (maximum request $50,000)

- Program evaluation and assessment tools (maximum request $10,000)

- Other services needed to complete your project activities (maximum request $20,000)

- Other materials needed to complete project activities (maximum request $20,000)

Licensed, certified, and certified for payment only providers may request a minimum of $5,000 and a maximum of $100,000. FFN providers may request a minimum of $100 and a maximum of $2,000. Play and Learn Host Organizations may request a minimum of $5,000 and a maximum of $30,000. ECEAP and Early ECEAP contractors may request a minimum of $5,000 and a maximum of $100,000.

Before you begin, please make sure you have an idea for a project and have a description of the programs/services you will implement that includes goals and objectives, activities, any new staff members needed, and how the programs/services will be evaluated.

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Activities or materials that do not advance or inspire practices that promote inclusive and culturally responsive learning, environments, and enhanced language access
- Costs that are not explained in the project narrative (Question 9 on the application)
- Costs that are not explicitly related to the nature of the project and its goals, needs, and anticipated outcomes as described within the body of the application
- Religious activities or purposes, including worship or instruction

- Academic, professional, or vocational degrees or certificates, or classes in such programs
- Capital improvements, like major construction or renovation
- General program costs, like the basic expenses of owning and operating your business, are not allowed. This includes things like:
  - Regular payroll costs for existing staff
  - Costs of purchasing, owning, or maintaining a vehicle
  - Costs associated with the space out of which you operate, like rent or utilities
  - Insurance
  - Federal taxes
  - Indirect costs
  - Other business operating costs
- Raises or bonuses for existing staff
- Gifts for families

For each category that you request funding from, provide as much detail as you can. Please remember that the grant period is two years long. **You should request the amount of funding you need for the entire grant period. For complete instructions and further guidance, we recommend that you consult the Application Preview Guide, available on our website.**

7. Question 7: You may request funding for a project with one of the following outcomes. All activities you request funding for should be related to the outcome you select. What is the intended outcome of your project?

   a. Preventing racial disparities in disciplinary action, such as suspension and expulsion

   b. Increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices

   c. Increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom

   d. Offering ongoing child assessment and developmental screening

   e. Connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial, or other needs

   f. Other: another project to incorporate inclusive practices, culturally and linguistically supportive and relevant practices, or both into early learning program design, delivery, education, training, and/or evaluation. You must describe the intended outcome of your project.

8. Question 8: If you selected other, please briefly describe the intended outcome of your project and how it help support culturally responsive programming so that children have

access to diverse care that meets their needs. Your answer should be about 1-2 sentences.

9. Question 9: In 1-3 paragraphs, tell us what your project is. How will you use Early Childhood Equity Grant funding to make it happen? How will the project lead to the outcome you selected? Why is this a good project for your facility?

10. Question 10: If you are requesting funding to hire specialized staff, please fill out the table below with details. You can request up to $100,000 for specialized staff. If your project does not require funding to hire specialized staff, you can move on to the next question.

Describe the role you are hiring for, or other costs associated with hiring specialized staff.	Estimated cost. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For example, "25000" and not $25,000.32"	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost? Example – information based on an hourly rate of pay for a proposed staff person to meet this need. Please take payroll taxes and benefits into consideration.
TOTAL		

11. Question 11: If you are requesting funding for child care materials and experiences, please fill out the table below with details. You can request up to $20,000. This includes materials that will be used by children or by staff during care of children, or activities that will be carried out with children (e.g., culturally relevant toys, field trips). If your project does not require funding for child care materials and experiences, you can move on to the next question.

Describe the materials or experiences.	Estimated cost, including shipping/handling and tax. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost? Include cost information such as

	example, "15000" and not $15,000.32"	a product listing on a website or catalog.
TOTAL		

12. Question 12: If you are requesting funding for office and business supplies, please fill out the table below. You can request up to $10,000. This includes materials that will be used by staff when not directly caring for children. If your project does not require funding for office and business supplies, you can move on to the next question..

Describe the office and business supplies.	Estimated cost, including shipping/handling and tax. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For example, "5000" and not $5,000.32"	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost? Include cost information such as a product listing on a website or catalog.
TOTAL		

13. Question 13: If you are requesting funding for staff training, please fill out the table below. You can request up to $50,000. Remember that DCYF is unable to fund travel or hotel costs. If your project does not require funding for staff training, you can move on to the next question.

Describe the staff training.	Estimated cost, including shipping/handling and tax. Enter whole	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost?

	dollar amounts only. For example, "25000" and not $25,000.32"	Include cost information such as a quote or price on a website.
TOTAL		

14. Question 14: If you are requesting funding for program evaluation or program assessment tools, please fill out the table below. You can request up to $10,000. If your project does not require funding for program evaluation or program assessment tools, you can move on to the next question.

Describe the program evaluation or program assessment tools.	Estimated cost, including shipping/handling and tax. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For example, "2000" and not $2,000.32"	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost? Include cost information such as a product listing on a website or catalog.
TOTAL		

15. Question 15: If you are requesting funding for other services, please fill out the table below. You can request up to $20,000. This includes other services needed to complete your project (e.g., translation services). If your project does not require funding for other services, you can move on to the next question.

Describe the other services needed.	Estimated cost, including shipping/handling and tax. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For example, "2000" and not $2,000.32"	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost? Include cost information such as a quote or price on a website.

TOTAL		

16. Question 16: If you are requesting funding for other materials, please fill out the table below. You can request up to $20,000. This includes materials that do not fit into any of the above categories that are necessary to complete your project (e.g., educational materials for families). If your project does not require funding for other materials, you can move on to the next question.

Describe the other materials needed.	Estimated cost, including shipping/handling and tax. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For example, "2000" and not $2,000.32"	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost? Include cost information such as a product listing on a website or catalog.
TOTAL		

17. Question 17: How much total funding are you requesting? Please check to make sure your answer equals the total amount requested in the tables above.

Technical Assistance Questions

Technical assistance information is collected for reporting purposes and will not be used to evaluate your application.

18. Question 18: Did you receive any assistance in filling out the grant application? This information is collected for reporting purposes and will not be used to evaluate your application.
19. Question 19: If you received assistance, who provided you with that assistance? Please select all that apply.

20. Question 20: Do you have any feedback on the assistance you received? Is there anything you want to tell DCYF about why you did or did not access assistance?

Terms and Conditions

The DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant must be spent within two years of the award and within the project scope described above.

I certify that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct.

I will spend the Early Childhood Equity Grant funds, if awarded, on the purchases outlined in this grant application.

I will spend the Early Childhood Equity Grant within two years of receiving the funds.

I will report to DCYF on how I spend the Early Childhood Equity Grant. This will include keeping receipts and documentation from all purchases made with this grant money, and also completing and submitting reports every 6 months using a survey that DCYF will provide.

I understand that DCYF may ask me to provide receipts for purchases made with money from this grant, and if I cannot provide these receipts and documentation when asked, I will be required to repay part or all of the grant money to the State of Washington.

If I do not comply with DCYF reporting requirements or cannot show that the funds were spent in accordance with my application, I am in violation of the terms of the Early Childhood Equity Grant and I will return the grant funds to DCYF.

If I close my license before the two-year cycle ends, I will return any unspent grant funds to DCYF. I will still be responsible to provide reporting and receipts to DCYF detailing funds I did spend, regardless of open or closed status.

I understand that my application will be denied if I have requested funding for any disallowed costs.

I understand that if my project is selected to receive funding, I will need to attend a special technical assistance session and pass a check for understanding about the grant process before I receive any money. DCYF will provide this session at no cost to me. If I do not attend the technical assistance session and pass the check for understanding, I will not receive the funds.

I have reviewed my application and am ready to submit. I understand that once my application is submitted I cannot make any changes to my answers.

Appendix B: Early Childhood Equity Grant Prioritization Guide

Instructions: Use the guide below to calculate how many prioritization points an applicant qualifies for. To calculate the final score, add up the points scored.

Priority 1: Serving children who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC)

Answer	Yes	No
Points Earned	1	0

Priority 2: Children enrolled in or eligible for membership in one of the 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington served

Answer	Yes	No
Points Earned	1	0

Priority 3: Children receiving state, tribal, or military subsidy served

Answer	Yes	No
Points Earned	1	0

Priority 4: Unhoused or homeless children served

Answer	Yes	No
Points Earned	1	0

Priority 5: Children in out-of-home care due to child welfare involvement served

Answer	Yes	No
Points Earned	1	0

Priority 6: Children who speak languages other than English at home served

Answer	Yes	No
Points Earned	1	0

Total points earned: _____

Appendix C: WA Compass Application Step-by-Step Guide

We recommend using the Application Preview Guide to prepare your answers before inputting them into the WA Compass application.

Tip: You can save your application! If you would like to save your answers and continue working on them later, at any point, you may scroll down to the bottom of the application and hit "Save":
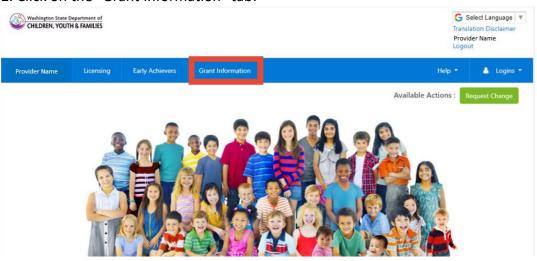

Then hit "Save" again to confirm that you would like to save your answers:
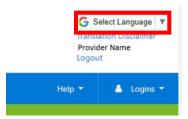

To complete the application:

1. Log in to the WA Compass Provider Portal.

2. Click on the "Grant Information" tab:

3. Select Language if you would like to view the page in a language other than English:

4. Click "Current Grants".
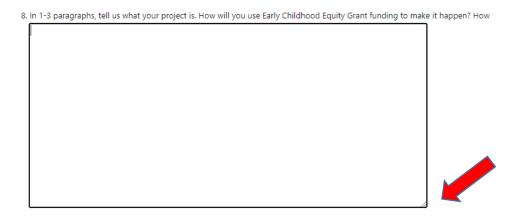
5. "Current Grants" shows all grant opportunities currently open, with a check box to show whether or not a provider has already applied. Click on "DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant".
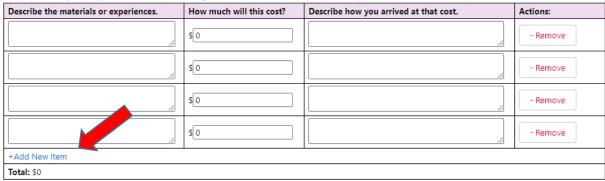
6. Application opens in a new window.

7. Read and answer the Prioritization Questions. Your answers will be used to prioritize your plan for funding.

8. The Project Questions ask for the goal of your project, what you will do, and for details on what you will spend the funding on if you receive the grant. You only need to fill out spending information for the category/categories that you are requesting funding for.

Tip: To make a text box bigger, click on the bottom right corner of the box with your mouse, and drag to change the size

8. In 1-3 paragraphs, tell us what your project is. How will you use Early Childhood Equity Grant funding to make it happen? How

Tip: If you need additional lines to enter your anticipated expenses, click +Add New Item at the bottom left of the table.

...u experiences. If your project does not require funding for child care materials and experiences, you can move on to the next question.
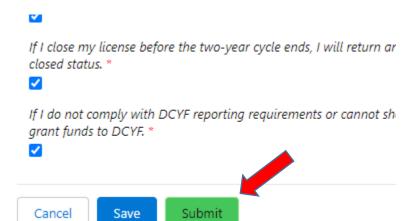
Describe the materials or experiences.	How much will this cost?	Describe how you arrived at that cost.	Actions:
	$ 0		- Remove
	$ 0		- Remove
	$ 0		- Remove
	$ 0		- Remove
+Add New Item			
Total: $0			

Once you have entered each expense and the estimated cost, the total for this specific spend category will appear at the bottom of the table. Review the total to make sure it shows the entire amount of funding you are requesting for this specific spend category.

10. Complete this process for each category you are requesting funding for.

11. The application asks for the total amount requested. This answer is the total amount of funding for each spend category added together. Example: if you requested $1,000 for office and business supplies and $90,000 for hiring specialized staff, you will enter $91,000 for this question.

12. The final questions ask about your experience using technical assistance, if applicable. These questions are for reporting purposes and will not be used to evaluate your application.

13. Read and agree to all terms and conditions by checking each box. Each term and condition requires a response in order to submit your application.

14. Click "Submit". Verify that you are ready to submit the application, then hit "Submit" again.

☑

*If I close my license before the two-year cycle ends, I will return an
closed status.* *

☑

*If I do not comply with DCYF reporting requirements or cannot sh
grant funds to DCYF.* *
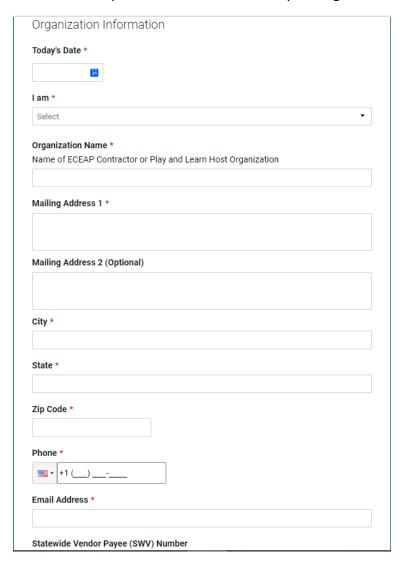
☑

Cancel   Save   Submit

Appendix D: SmartSheet Application Step-by-Step Guide

We recommend using the Application Preview Guide to prepare your answers before inputting them into the WA Compass application.

Tip: the Early Childhood Equity Grant application has multiple versions. The instructions below are specifically for the SmartSheet application for ECEAP/Early ECEAP contractors and Play and Learn Group Host Organization.

You will not be able to save your application to come back to it after you start.

1. Click on the application link on our website.

2. Enter the requested information about your organization.

Organization Information

Today's Date *

I am *
Select

Organization Name *
Name of ECEAP Contractor or Play and Learn Host Organization

Mailing Address 1 *

Mailing Address 2 (Optional)

City *

State *

Zip Code *

Phone *
+1 (___) ___-____

Email Address *

Statewide Vendor Payee (SWV) Number

3. Read and answer the Prioritization Questions. Your answers will be used to prioritize your plan for funding.

Prioritization Questions

For questions 1-6, please answer about the children in your program. DCYF will use the information provided to prioritize awards, as described in the Early Childhood Equity Grant Manual

1. **Question 1: Are any of the children in your care Black, Indigenous, or Children of Color? Please include any children who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern/North African, Pacific Islander, or multiracial. ***

○ Yes

○ No

4. The Project Questions ask for the goal of your project, what you will do, and for details on what you will spend the funding on if you receive the grant. You only need to fill out spending information for the category/categories that you are requesting funding for. Your answers to these questions must meet the requirements described in the Application Preview Guide.

7. **Question 7: You may request funding for a project with one of the following outcomes. All activities you request funding for should be related to the outcome you select. What is the intended outcome of your project? ***

○ a. Preventing suspension and expulsion

○ b. Increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices

○ c. Increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom

○ d. Offering ongoing child assessment and developmental screening

○ e. Connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial, or other needs

○ f. Other: another project to incorporate inclusive practices, culturally and linguistically supportive and relevant practices, or both into early learning program design, delivery, education, training, and/or evaluation.

5. Complete this process for each spend category you are requesting funding for.

6. The application asks for the total amount requested. This answer is the total amount of funding for each spend category added together. Example: if you requested $1,000 for office and business supplies and $90,000 for specialized staff, you will enter $91,000 for this question.

Question 17: How much total funding are you requesting? Please check to make sure your answer equals the total amount requested in the tables above. ECEAP contractors may request up to $100,000. Play and Learn Host Organizations may request up to $30,000. *

Please enter a numeric value only.

example: 72000

[   ]

7. The final questions ask about your experience using technical assistance, if applicable. These questions are for reporting purposes and will not be used to evaluate your application.

Technical Assistance Questions

Questions 18-20 ask about your experience accessing technical assistance, if applicable. Technical assistance information is collected for reporting purposes and will not be used to evaluate your application.

18. Question 18: Did you receive any assistance in filling out the grant application? This information is collected for reporting purposes and will not be used to evaluate your application.

○ Yes
○ No

8. Read and agree to all terms and conditions by checking each box. Each term and condition requires a response in order to submit your application.

General Terms and Conditions

The DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant must be spent within two years of award and within the
project scope described above.

☐ **Agree: I certify that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct ***

9. Click "Submit".

[Submit]

Appendix E: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Early Childhood Equity Grant?
A: The Early Childhood Equity Grant is a competitive grant opportunity from DCYF. The Early Childhood Equity Grant helps support culturally responsive programming so that children have access to diverse care that meets their needs.

Q: What happened in earlier rounds of the Early Childhood Equity Grant?
A: See our website for summaries of earlier rounds: https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/child-care-grants/equity-grant

Q: Who is eligible for the Early Childhood Equity Grant?
A: The Early Childhood Equity Grant is awarded through a competitive grant process. Applying does not guarantee that an eligible provider will receive a grant award. In the first round, less than 2% of applications were awarded a grant. Eligible applicants may only receive an Equity Grant every two years.

Eligibility is open to:

- Licensed or certified child care providers with an open license in good standing.
- License-exempt Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers serving children receiving state subsidies.
- ECEAP/Early ECEAP contractors.
- Play and Learn Group Host Organizations that are recognized by Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA of WA) and currently receive funding and/or direct programming support from CCA of WA to actively provide direct and virtual education and materials to parents and FFN caregivers. This is the result of a contractual agreement between CCA of WA and the State of Washington and applies to Play and Learn Groups.

Each facility applying must have at least one child enrolled or regularly receiving care at the time of the application.

For licensed, certified, and license-exempt FFN providers: grants are awarded to a specific licensed facility/site, not a larger organization. Providers with multiple licensed locations will need to submit a separate application for each licensed site that qualifies to apply for a grant.

Facilities that are both licensed and serving ECEAP slots may only apply through their ECEAP contractor. ECEAP contractor applications may include funds for non-ECEAP classrooms at the same facility.

ECEAP contractors should submit a single application with information on all sites, including non-ECEAP classrooms within ECEAP-funded sites.

Play and Learn Host Organizations should submit a single application per host organization, with information on all sites.

Q: How does the Early Childhood Equity Grant differ from past DCYF grants?
A: Many of our previous grants have been awarded to everyone who was eligible or on a first-

come, first-serve basis. This grant is different. We are asking providers to tell us about the children in their care, as well as what they will do with the funds to support the needs of the child(ren) in their care. Data from the applications will be used to prioritize the funding.

Q: If I am eligible and apply for a grant, am I entitled to receive the grant?
A: No. While we have more funding for the 2024 DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant than we did in previous rounds, we may still receive more applications than we are able to fund. Only complete and reasonably detailed applications will be considered (please see the Application Preview Guide for more information).

Q: Do I need to answer every question in the application?
A: No. You only need to answer the Project questions about the categories for which you request funding. You must answer all Prioritization Questions and agree to all attestations.

Q: What happens if I submit my application and then need to change something?
A: Providers should make every effort to ensure that their application is complete and error-free before submitting it. DCYF is unable to change the content of your application after it is submitted.

Q: What can I use these funds for?
A: Grant funds must be used to incorporate either inclusive practices or culturally and linguistically supportive and relevant practices, or both into program design, program delivery, program evaluation, and/or staff education and training. For examples, please see "What Can the Funds be Used For?", above , and the Application Preview Guide.

Q: Can I use the funds for [something else]?
A: In general, the funds can be used for any activity that is not explicitly prohibited, and that helps promote the chosen outcome of the project. Providers must use the application to relate the requested purchase to the chosen outcome.

Q: What can I not use these funds for?
A: Grants funds may not be used for:

- Activities or materials that do not advance or inspire practices that promote inclusive and culturally responsive learning, environments, and enhanced language access
- Costs that are not explained in the project narrative (Question 9 on the application)
- Costs that are not explicitly related to the nature of the project and its goals, needs, and anticipated outcomes as described within the body of the application
- Religious activities or purposes, including worship or instruction
- Academic, professional, or vocational degrees or certificates, or classes in such programs
- Capital improvements, like major construction or renovation
- General program costs, like the basic expenses of owning and operating your business, are not allowed. This includes things like:

- o   Regular payroll costs for existing staff
- o   Costs of purchasing, owning, or maintaining a vehicle
- o   Costs associated with the space out of which you operate, like rent or utilities
- o   Insurance
- o   Federal taxes
- o   Indirect costs
- o   Other business operating costs
- Raises or bonuses for existing staff
- Gifts for families

Q: Can I apply for staffing funds to pay my salary?
A: No. You cannot use the funds to cover the current payroll.

Q: Can I use these funds to give my current staff a raise or bonus?
A: No. Funds cannot be used to give raises or bonuses to existing staff.

Q: Can I use these funds to hire new staff?
A: Yes, funds can be used to hire staff with specialized skills. Staff must be able to help incorporate either inclusive practices or culturally and linguistically supportive and relevant practices, or both, into your programming. You must explain your plans to do so on the application.

Q: Can these grant funds be used for reimbursement of previous purchases?
A: No, this funding may only be used for resources identified in the grant application once the grant is approved and the provider receives the funds.

Q: I just applied. What happens next?
A: The application will be open until March 29, 2024, at 5 p.m. After the application closes, DCYF will prioritize the applications according to the priority factors. We will update applicants about whether or not they are finalists via email. After the finalists have been notified, the Community Review Panel will meet. Finalists will receive notification of funding status after the review panel submits their recommendations.Providers whose applications are approved and who have attended the required training and passed the check for understanding will receive funding within 2-4 weeks of the training.

Q: What if I don't agree with the decision about my grant? Can I appeal?
A: While applicants may feel that their proposal is strong, there may be other projects that are prioritized more highly by the Community Review Panel based on the available resources and the specific goals of the grant. There is not an appeals process for the DCYF Early Childhood Equity Grant. Due to the limited availability of funding, an appeals process could lead to unfair treatment of other applicants.

Q: Can DCYF tell me why my application was rejected?

A: Due to the anticipated volume of applications, DCYF will not be able to provide individual feedback on applications. Our technical assistance partners at Imagine Institute are able to go over your application with you and can give you feedback specific to your application. You can contact them at:

Imagine Institute
Phone: 206-492-5249
Email: ta@imaginewa.org

Q: If I am selected for funding, when can I expect to receive payment?
A: Providers who are selected for funding must attend a technical assistance session on grants management and pass a check for understanding before the specified deadline in order to receive funds. Payments will be processed within 2-4 weeks of the required technical assistance session. Receipt is dependent upon USPS mail processing and electronic payment timelines of your financial institution.

Q: How will I receive payment if I am selected for funding?
A: Licensed/certified providers will receive payments through the Social Service Payment System (SSPS). These providers will receive the funds in the same way they usually receive subsidy payments from DCYF. Providers who have not received payments through SSPS will receive payment via the U.S. Postal Service. Payments will be mailed to the address associated with the SSPS number.

Payments to Play and Learn Groups will be processed through Child Care Aware of Washington. ECEAP contractors will receive funds in the manner indicated on their Statewide Vendor Payee (SWV) registration.

Q: Is this grant taxable?
A: Yes. Grant funds are considered income. DCYF will send out a 1099 in January for tax purposes. The 1099 includes all DCYF funds provided in the tax year period.

Q: Do these grant funds need to be spent within a certain timeframe?
A: Yes. Grant funds must be spent within two years of receipt.

Q: Can I apply for this grant more than once?
A: Yes. Providers can only receive an Early Childhood Equity Grant every two years. If you are not selected for funding, you may apply again in the next round.

Q: Do I need to save and submit receipts associated with this grant?
A: Yes. Providers must save the receipts for purchases made with these grant funds for five years. Providers may be asked to submit these receipts to DCYF. If a provider is unable to provide receipts and documentation upon request, they may be required to repay part or all of the grant funds.

Q: Are there any other reporting requirements associated with this grant?
A: Yes, providers will be asked to complete a regular survey on their project results, and any successes and challenges they experienced in implementing their project.

Q: What happens if I close my license after receiving the grant?
A: If a provider receives the grant and then closes their license, they must return any unspent grant funds to DCYF. A provider may still be responsible for providing receipts to DCYF detailing funds they spent, regardless of open or closed status.

Q: Is there a deadline to apply for this grant?
A: Yes. The application deadline is March 29, 2024, at 5 p.m.

Q: When can I learn more about the next funding round for this grant?
A: DCYF will send out updates to licensed providers via GovDelivery. The information will also be posted online at https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/child-care-grants

Appendix F: Early Childhood Equity Grant Project Examples

This document features real examples of projects that were funded in previous rounds. Examples may have been edited slightly to assure anonymity. Examples may not feature all of the desired elements of a grant narrative. Providers should review the checklist above and the Application Preview and Question Guide to ensure their applications are complete. Note: two examples are provided for project goal C because of the variety of projects proposed in that category. No examples are provided for the "Other" category due to the facility-specific nature of those projects.

A.) Preventing racial disparities in disciplinary action, such as suspension and expulsion

Our childcare is currently serving in the heart of [City], Washington. We are located in a high-risk, low-income area where majority (93%) of our students are on subsidy. This allows us to serve and nurture children who are typically declared "not good fits" for other childcares. However, this also presents a challenge of being able to help those children reverse their mindset so that they don't label themselves as "not good fits" and act out to try and prove what they may have been told when getting suspended or expelled from previous places. The NCPMI states that early learning children are three times more likely to be expelled than those in K-12. Of those 3 times more likely, boys are three times more likely than girls and African American students make up 50% of those suspended or expelled, even only making up 20% of the population(2). An article by the Center for American Progress states that of those preschool age that are suspended or expelled, 75% have a disability, (such as autism, ADHD, anxiety, developmental delays, etc.)(1).

Our goal is to create a space and experience where everyone belongs and feels welcome and loved. To do that our first call to action is to get our staff trained in handling big behaviors and also in recognizing mental disabilities or behavioral tendencies. To do this we need our staff to attend trainings online and in person. To attend online we would need support in purchasing equipment for them to use. We also would need assessment tools for staff to learn to recognize a child that may be behind and acting out because of this. In our classrooms we would need more sensory activities and tools or materials for the students to be able to process better when overwhelmed. We would also need a safe quiet area for the student to be able to decompress and take space away from other students if needed. We would also purchase books that talk about diversity and big behaviors so that students can read something that may relate to their feelings. Another thing we would purchase is office materials to help us to print and laminate pictures to hang around the room, such as calm down techniques and feelings charts.

With the help of these purchases and trainings we hope to help the students feel comfortable and safe when in our care so that they are less likely to act out but also our staff is more prepared to handle that acting out. By being prepared and well equip we

can help combat the anxiety and stress of today's children and show them guidance, acceptance, and love and preventing suspension and expulsion.

(1)Novoa, Cristina, and Rasheed Malik. "Suspensions Are Not Support." Center for American Progress, 17 Jan. 2018, www.americanprogress.org/article/suspensions-not-support/#:~:text=The%20odds%20of%20being%20suspended%20or%20expelled%20were%2033%20times,for%20children%20with%20autism%2FASD.

(2)"Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood." National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations, 22 Aug. 2022, challengingbehavior.org/pyramid-model/suspension-expulsion/.

B.) Increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices

My project will focus on increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices. Social-emotional learning is a critical component to effective childcare, pre-pandemic and even more so now. We know that BIPOC children and children of poverty are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and its negative consequences resulting in housing instability and food insecurity. These children feel depressed, hopeless, and withdrawn or agitated. We started tracking misbehaviors and emotional outbursts by using incident reports in 2021. We were sad that at our center: 90% of outbursts have been BIPOC children and children claiming state subsidies, although they together only made up 40% of children under our care. As a response, we have started training our teachers on addressing social emotional needs of the children, and have asked a school psychologist to give workshops to our teachers about conflict resolution and building friendship, but we continue to see high misbehavior and outburst rates. We are also aware that, in addition to the racial and socio-economic disparities among the affected group, emotional outburst is highly disturbing to children and families and make them more overwhelmed by their daily burden. Our goal is to reduce misbehaviors and outbursts by 50% at the end of year one of the grant, and to 10% by the end of year 2.

We want to use the grant funding to extend our efforts to implement the [Curriculum Name] curriculum at our daycare center. I evaluated five different SEL curricula and chose [Curriculum Name] curriculum for implementing evidence-based practices to: promote the social and emotional outcomes of all children; promote the skill development of children with social, emotional, and behavioral delays to prevent the need for more intensive supports; and intervene effectively when children have persistent challenging behavior. [Curriculum Name] offers online trainings and annual virtual conferences. The [Curriculum Name] program also fulfils guidelines established by CASEL (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning). We are

specifically interested in the infant-toddler and pre-school curriculum kits with materials for children. Their online professional development modules will provide consistent and systematic SEL training to our teachers. To assist in our learning, we also want to send a few staff members to their annual conference remotely to learn more about implementing the Supporting Adult-Child Interactions and anti-bias Learning Environment, which is related to the [Curriculum Name] curriculum. The conference is for early childhood educators. It will be held in person or online in July 2024.

As part of implementing the [Curriculum Name] curriculum at our daycare, we want to engage more with the families of children in our program. We also want to involve families in implementing supports for children exhibiting challenging behaviors. We plan to start sending home [Curriculum Name] resources for families, like the Home-School Connection newsletters, home with children in the language(s) that are appropriate for their parents. We need to hire translators to help our translation. This work to reform our school climate, provide additional training for teachers, and increase engagement with families, combined with the steps we have already taken, will help us strengthen our capacity to improve children's social emotional well-being by the end of the grant period. We will have annual teacher surveys, children assessment, and parent focus groups to assess our efforts. The assessments for teachers, children, and parents are based on Clark McKown's book published in 2019, "Assessing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Guide to Meaningful Measurement."

C.) Increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom

Project Example 1:

Our nature-based preschool in [City] has close ties to the [Name] Indian Tribe through both student enrollment and community involvement. We would like to create a Tribal Garden on campus: a garden that focuses on plants used by native peoples of the Puget Sound area and upholds traditional ecological knowledge. We will grow and harvest traditional plants, vegetables, berries, and fruit trees, such as camas, salmon berries and mountain huckleberries. Tending this garden will teach students the gifts these plants provided (and still provide) to the local native peoples: food, medicine, utility, clothing, and ceremonial uses. It will also increase access in our local community to culturally relevant foods.

Project Example 2:

[Facility Name] would like to create more meaningful experiences for children and families by seeking Dual Language Designation and expanding current curriculum resources. We will focus on the outcome areas of increasing the use of culturally and linguistically responsive practices and decreasing bias in the classroom, connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial or other needs, and increasing the use of research-informed social-emotional teaching practices. The funding will be used to hire specialized staff to support multilingual education and continue the duties of a family service worker, plus expand our current curriculum resources with the purchase of online curriculum resources, professional development, and family engagement resources through [Program].

Hiring a specialized staff member will help our project meet its outcomes by qualifying our center for Dual Language Designation and adding diversity to our staffing. This person will give daily instructions in English and Spanish, and bring awareness to cultural blind spots. In addition to supporting multilingual education, [details redacted]. We plan to support our existing staff with our curriculum by expanding our prior purchase to include supporting online resources through [Program]. This purchase equips our staff with online resources and training that will allow for effective implementation of [Curriculum Name]. This purchase also provides teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities, the [Name] assessment tool for child assessments, digital resources in the CLOUD for planning, and [Program] for enhanced family engagement.

Research shows high-quality early learning opportunities are key to ensuring children start school ready to succeed. We are located in a community impacted by poverty. All of our families qualify for state childcare subsidies, with 90% of children enrolled having a Hispanic heritage. Our families are pregnant and parenting teens pursuing their high school diplomas or GED completion. Providing the highest level of childcare and a culturally diverse environment helps our young parents to achieve their learning goals. This also allows us to assist our families in accessing post-secondary opportunities. We believe our project addresses potential gaps in our program and that by having diverse cultures represented in daily instruction by highly-qualified staff, we will create confident learners at the earliest stages of life. We will know our project has been successful after securing Dual Language Designation and by increases in daily attendance and participation in family engagement activities and events. We also intend to track progress and growth of our children using [Assessment Tool] which will help us better align with our district preschool program.

D.) Offering ongoing child assessment and developmental screening

Our goal for this Equity Grant funding would be to purchase teaching strategies [Name] Assessment program as well as their [Curriculum Name] "social-emotional" additional resource program for children and families.

This funding will allow our center to start our assessment program with a strong, accredited program to help ensure early identification of developmental delays, detecting and addressing these delays allows for support from us and the families.

We will be able to tailor our curriculum and daily interactions and curriculum with all children by conducting comprehensive assessments upon enrollment and throughout their years in our classrooms to help us individualize our curriculum. Having a strong individualized curriculum that meets their delays and developmental level will allow us to have a strong school readiness program so we can identify any gaps early to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten.

Lastly, if we are offered this funding, we will be able to have an effective parental involvement and guidance program. Our centers future strong developmental assessments will provide an opportunity for parents to become aware of their child's developmental strengths and weaknesses. It will empower them with valuable information about their child's development and will help guide them in supporting their child's growth at home, which will foster a positive and supportive learning environment for their child.

This funding will be crucial for our program; since our program has high majority of families, and children struggling with developmental delays, language and communication delays and socioeconomic disparities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States, "approximately 15% of children aged 3-17 years have at least one developmental disability". With our centers population we can safely say that 30% of our enrolled students and families are facing one of the delays or disparities mentioned above. Our goal and hope is that with our new stronger assessment program our center will be able to support and close that percentage gap with a strong assessment program to help families and children earlier.

E.) Connecting families to services and supports that meet health, mental health, financial, or other needs

As far as we are aware, [Organization] is the only Play and Learn host in [Location] that provides a fully outdoor, all seasons, early learning program that is free of cost to the public. Over the past year, we have been thrilled to experience a significant increase in attendance at our Play and Learn classes. Our Play and Learn groups have grown into an

amazingly supportive and inclusive community. We are led by dedicated caregivers and educators who see the need to provide children in our community with more opportunities to play, unhurried and unstructured, in the natural environment. Our organization's mission to connect young children and their caregivers to the splendor of nature is in alignment with the growing body of research indicating that time spent outdoors increases children's resiliency and is protective of their health and social-emotional well-being. Humans, especially children, from all cultures and backgrounds benefit from time spent in nature and should have access to safe, healthy outdoor spaces where they can recharge and thrive. Our Play and Learn classes are designed to support the developing social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of all young children.

Over the past decade of providing nature immersion opportunities for families, the two most common obstacles we have witnessed that prevents young children and their caregivers from enjoying and benefiting from being outdoors is 1) the high cost of nature-based early learning program tuitions and 2) the lack of knowledge and access to proper outdoor clothing. Our proposed project for the Early Childhood Equity Grant would strive to minimize the latter challenge. We are striving to revive and improve upon a project we call Boots For All. The project goal for Boots For All is to ensure that our Play and Learn attendees are dressed to be comfortable, dry and protected from the elements so they may have the greatest opportunity to receive the full benefits of outdoor learning during our classes and beyond. We will use our expertise in nature-based learning to create a "Gear Library" by acquiring high-quality outdoor clothing layers and gear in a range of children's sizes for our Play and Learn community members to have access to. The clothing and gear provided will be based on a family's needs in order to achieve success in our classrooms. These items will not be gifted just for simply being present at a class. We will also focus on educating our Play and Learn attendees on how to dress appropriately for all seasons and weather by hosting regular mini lessons and providing reference materials (paper and digital) in multiple languages, as needed.

Our project will have accomplished its goals if we can achieve the following over the next two years: 1) Increase the average attendance and the demographic diversity of the children that attend our two [Location] Play and Learn locations by minimizing a common deterrent and making our outdoor classroom experience more accessible and inclusive. 2) Increase the amount of time our families spend in nature with the children they care for beyond our normal class times by providing education and assistance with dressing for the outdoors. 3) Connect at least 20 children with needed high-quality outdoor clothing/gear. We will utilize on-site questionnaires to determine the specific needs of our families and to assess the overall success of the project. Families will be asked to share about their experiences with dressing for the outdoors and what

obstacles they have encountered. To further support the success of this project, we believe it would be beneficial for our current Play and Learn facilitators, who will also be leading the project, to attend the Wilderness Awareness Nature Instructor Training course. This course will expand our educators' knowledge and skills necessary for mentoring youth in an outdoor class environment.

Appendix G: Early Childhood Equity Grant Receipt Review Guide

Overview

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) will select a random sample of Early Childhood Equity Grant recipients ("grantees") for receipt review after their two-year spending period ends. DCYF reviews receipts to show how the grant funds were spent – it is a requirement of the State that DCYF understand and verify that grantees spent the funds they received on approved items.

This process isn't meant to be scary, and we are here to help!

What to Expect If You Are Selected for Receipt Review

- DCYF will send out notification letters to randomly-selected grantees after the period when they can spend grant funds is over.
- If you are selected for receipt review, you will receive a letter in the mail from DCYF. Don't worry! This process is not meant to be scary. With your letter, you'll receive a copy of your application, a spending report tool to fill out, and a list of frequently asked questions.
- You'll fill out the spending report tool to show that you spent all the grant funds on the items in your approved grant application, and you will send it back to DCYF along with copies of your receipts. You can do this through email or the U.S. Postal Service.
- All notification letters will have a 30-day due date. If you need more time, you can request an extension over email.
- Notification letters also say that if a provider doesn't send in the documents we need, they may have to repay part or all the Early Childhood Equity Grant funds.
- DCYF is here to support you during the receipt review process. Please let us know if you need assistance in submitting your receipts or have difficulty meeting the timelines. If DCYF has any questions or if there is missing information or missing receipts, we will reach out to you over email to ask for more information. We are here to help!
- If you have questions, you are welcome to email us. You can also reach out to the Imagine Institute for help with your receipts or the Spending Report tool.

Helpful Tips to Prepare for Receipt Review

When using Early Childhood Equity Grant funds, save your receipts in a paper folder, in a folder on your computer, or in your email. If you have all your receipts together already, it will be easy for you to find them later. It's also helpful if you track how you spend your grant funds in a notebook or on a spreadsheet.

Here is the information we will need from any documents you send in:

Receipts
- All receipts must show:
  - Vendor name

- o All items purchased
- o Each item price
- o Date of Purchase
- o Payment method

- If you didn't buy all the items on your receipt with grant funds, highlight the items you did buy with grant funds to make them easy to identify. It's much harder to remember which purchases were related to the grant and which ones weren't two years later.

- DCYF does not accept receipts for items bought at casual sales, including garage sales, Facebook marketplace, or Craigslist.

Invoices with Proof of Payment

Invoices can be used to verify how funds were spent on certain kinds of purchases, like work done by a contractor. If you submit an invoice to DCYF to show how you spent your grant funds, you will also need to send us proof that the invoice was paid.

Proof of payment can be:
- A payment receipt
- Copy of a cancelled check*
- Bank statement showing a fund transfer*

*If sharing a copy of a check or bank statement, the amount must match the invoice.

Tracking Expenses

Track your expenses in a notebook or spreadsheet – when you make a purchase with Early Childhood Equity Grant funds, note the vendor's name, the items you bought, the spending category, and the amount of grant funds you spent. For a full list of the items you are approved to buy with grant funds, please see your grant application. For example:

Vendor Name	Items	Date	Category	Amount
Jane Doe	Payroll	5/25/24	Hiring Specialized Staff	$2,000
Office Depot	Printer	6/1/24	Office/Business Supplies	$150

Tracking Payroll

If you don't have a payroll processing system, track your spending using a payroll ledger. For example:

Payee Name (Name of the person who was paid)	Pay period	Amount (Total pay amount)	Payment Date	Check Number
Jane Doe	5/1/24-5/15/24	$2,000	5/25/24	1005

Keep some kind of proof you made these payments so you can send the payroll ledger and proof of payment to DCYF if they're requested.

If you have a formal payroll tracking system, you can submit reports or paystubs as proof of your payroll expenses.

Spending Reports

When you send your receipts to DCYF, you are also required to send us a spending report that summarizes the items you bought. You will need to fill out this spending report with the information for all the items you bought. The name section at the top of the form MUST be completed, or DCYF cannot accept it. It looks like this:

Facility/site name	
Licensed Provider ID number:	
Name of point of contact:	
Point of contact email address:	
Phone number:	

Providers must also include a total at the bottom of the form. The total must equal the prices of all the items on your form added together. The total blank is at the bottom of the form. Here is what it looks like:

Total Spent: $

Please attach additional pages for more room.

*Categories:
Program Design

There are two ways you can list the items you bought on your verification form:

List the Prices for All Items Individually

A verification form with individual prices listed would look like this:

Vendor Name What is the name of the business or person you paid?	Items Included What item(s) did you buy?	Spend Category* What spending category corresponds to the item?	Cost Total amount of grant spending on this receipt
Examples: Lakeshore	Multicultural clothes Story Books	Program Design Program Design	$76 $74

Providers can include sales tax in item prices, but cannot list the tax total as a separate expense.

Listing the Prices for Each Receipt

If you buy all the items on a receipt with grant funds and did not make any personal purchases on the same receipt, you can write one receipt total on your verification form:

Vendor Name What is the name of the business or person you paid?	Items Included What item(s) did you buy?	Spend Category* What spending category corresponds to the item?	Cost Total amount of grant spending on this receipt
Examples: Amazon ******** Lakeshore	Anti-bias education books ******** Multicultural clothes Story Books	Staff Training and Education ******** Program Design	$250 ******** $150

This is only allowed if every single item on the receipt is bought with grant funds. If one item on the receipt is not allowable, all the item prices must be listed individually.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I send in my receipts if I'm selected for receipt review?

You may scan and email your receipts to DCYF, or you can mail us a photocopy of your receipt (please do not send original receipts – keep those for your records). If you email your receipts to us, you can take a picture of the receipt as long as it is easy to read the name of the vendor, the items you bought, how you paid them, and the payment date.

- **If emailing your receipts, please send them to:** dcyf.childcaregrants@dcyf.wa.gov
- **If mailing your receipts, please use this address:**
  Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families
  ATTN: Child Care Grants Office
  P.O. Box 40970
  Olympia, WA 98504-0970

Can I send in receipts from purchases I made before I received the grant?

No, any receipts representing purchases made before the date the grant was received will not be accepted. The Early Childhood Equity Grant can be used for purchases from the day you

receive the award to exactly two years later. If all the grant funds weren't spent on items in your application during that time, you will need to return those funds.

Case Closure

After sending in copies of your receipts, it may take several weeks for DCYF to complete the review. If your receipts add up to your total grant amount and were spent on approved items within the allowed timeframe, you will receive a letter from DCYF informing you that your receipt review is closed successfully.

If DCYF needs more information, we will reach out to you by email and let you know what else we need. Here are some reasons that DCYF might need more information or different receipts from you:
- The receipts you sent in might not add up to your full grant amount.
- The receipts you sent in might have been outside the allowed spending period.
- The receipts you sent in might not be for purchases listed on your approved grant application.

Your spending report may also need some changes before it can be accepted.

Questions?

Email dcyf.childcaregrants@dcyf.wa.gov for any questions. You can also contact our technical assistance partner, **The Imagine Institute**: 206-492-5249 or email TA@imaginewa.org.