

## Public Guidelines

Updated: March, 2024

### **Background**

In partnership with the Province of British Columbia and with support from the Government of Canada, the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC) are administering the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Specialized Certification Grant, commencing January 2024.

The purpose of the ECE Specialized Certification Grant is to incentivize educators to upskill and obtain their Specialized Certificate(s) – Infant and Toddler Educator (ITE) and/or Special Needs Early Childhood Educator (SNE) – and to work in the child care sector with children ages 0 to 5, given current workforce shortages in BC. The ECE Specialized Certification Grant also recognizes long-standing educators holding their Specialized Certificate(s) for their continued commitment to working with children ages 0 to 5 in the child care sector. This will support increased quality and continuity of child care programming, access to quality child care spaces, and align with ongoing space creation initiatives.

### **Applicant Eligibility**

The ECE Specialized Certification Grant will recognize all BC certified ECEs holding at least one Specialized Certificate (ITE and/or SNE) who meet the following eligibility criteria. Please see Appendix A for an Eligibility Quick Guide diagram.

Eligible applicants must:

- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
- Hold a valid Infant and Toddler Educator Certificate and/or Special Needs Early Childhood Educator Certificate.
- Currently work with children ages 0 to 5 in a licensed child care program or an Aboriginal Head Start program for an average of 10 hours per week (which can be calculated over the course of the month). This includes Supported Child Development (SCD) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD) support workers meeting these criteria (see “eligible employment criteria” below).
- Have been continuously employed and working with children ages 0 to 5 in an eligible work setting(s) for the previous 12 months (see “definition of continuous employment” below).

### **Eligible Employment Criteria**

Individuals working in licensed child care or Aboriginal Head Start programs are eligible to apply for the grant. Only employment in BC working with children ages 0-5 is used when determining 12 months of continuous employment in an eligible child care setting. This includes individuals working within the following designations:

- Licensed Group Child Care
- Licensed Multi-Age Child Care
- Licensed Preschools
- Licensed Family Child Care
- Licensed In-Home Multi Age Child Care
- Licensed Group Child Care (school age) and School Age Care on School Grounds (if Kindergarten children are enrolled)
- Aboriginal Head Start
- Supported Child Development (SCD) and Aboriginal Child Development (ASCD) support workers who work with children in any of the above settings. Applicant may be employed by the child care provider OR by the contract agency who provides SCD/ASCD.

While eligible applicants must hold at least one Specialized Certificate, their work experience in an eligible child care setting may pre-date their Specialized Certificate(s). For the 12-month employment requirement, this may have been completed in any of the eligible settings and hours completed as an ECE Assistant, ECE or SCD/ASCD support work all counts towards this requirement. For both the previous and current employment requirements, only hours working with children 0-5 are counted.

For example, if an applicant works with an eligible employer (e.g., licensed preschool) and works with an employer that isn't considered eligible (e.g., Strong Start), only the hours worked in the eligible child care setting count towards determining eligibility.

## **Definition of “continuous employment”**

For the purposes of the Specialized Certification Grant, the Ministry of Education and Child Care defines continuous employment as:

*“Any employer authorized leave of absence, such as medical leave or education leave and including temporary layoff, is included when determining continuous employment. Short breaks of employment are allowed up to and including 14 calendar days in length, as long as a period of at least 3 months of continuous employment preceded the break in employment.”*

For example;

- I was on maternity leave last year, am I eligible? YES
- I work at a licensed preschool program with children 0-5, that closes for July and August. Am I eligible? YES

## **Grant Amount**

An approved applicant may only receive one grant per year:

- Eligible ECEs who hold one Specialized Certificate (ITE or SNE) will receive a \$2,000 grant.
- Eligible ECEs who hold both Specialized Certificates (ITE and SNE) will receive a \$3,000 grant.

If an applicant obtains their second Specialized Certificate after receiving the incentive for one certificate, they will receive the higher incentive amount upon application the following year.

## **Application Process**

Application forms and accompanying documentation may be submitted on an ongoing basis starting January 15, 2024. Applicants who continue to meet eligibility requirements for the grant in subsequent years will be able to reapply the following year as of the month the previous application was submitted.

For example, If you applied and were successful for funding in May 2023, you are eligible to apply again in May 2024.

## **Document Requirements**

Applicants are responsible for submitting their own complete application, including all of the following required documents. **We do not accept documents from third parties.**

### **1. Application Form**

Complete the ECE Specialized Certification Grant application form via the [drop box link](#) found on ECEBC's website. Applicants are responsible for verifying that the application form and supporting documents are COMPLETE and ACCURATE before sending to the ECE Specialized Certification Grant team via the drop box link.

### **2. Confirmation of Minimum 12 Months Working in Child Care**

The annual grant will be issued upon confirmation of continuous employment in BC over the previous 12 months in an eligible work setting. Only employment in BC working with children ages 0-5 counts toward current and previous eligible employment criteria. These details will be completed within the application form.

### 3. Proof of Residency

The ECE Specialized Certification Grant is available only to Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Proof of residency in the province of BC - **ONE** of the approved residency documents below. **Interim documents are not accepted.**

- BC Driver's License
- BC Services Card
- BC Identity Card
- Recent (within the last two months) BC Hydro bill in applicant's name and address
- Recent (within the last two months) letter or communication from a BC government agency on professional letterhead and showing the applicant's name and address.
- Certificate of Indian Status Card
- Métis Nation BC Citizenship & ID Card
- Letter from Band Chief

**Please note:** All BC Government issued ID submitted with your application **must be valid – not expired. The address on the proof of residency MUST match the address on the application form.**

\*Visual examples of BC Government issued ID.



BC Identity Card



BC Driver's License



BC Services Card

### 4. Void Cheque or Direct Deposit Form (DDF)

- Copy of void cheque or DDF from the bank to ensure accuracy of banking details. Funds will be deposited into the bank account provided.
- Void cheque/DDF must be in applicant's name.

Applicants will be notified via email of the decision within 30 days following receipt of the completed application package.

### Grant Payment Process

Please note that ECEBC reserves the right to audit applications and may validate certification and/or employment information provided.

Applicants must provide accurate banking information and Social Insurance Number (SIN) to receive payment. If you do not have a Social Insurance Number, you will need to obtain one before applying for the grant. To learn more about Social Insurance Numbers and how to apply for one, click [here](#).

Payments will be made directly to approved applicants via direct deposit from ECEBC to the bank account provided. Direct deposit of funds will be processed within 3 months of all application requirements being met.

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) defines grants as a form of taxable income and requires ECEBC to provide T4As to beneficiaries and report the value of the grant to the CRA. It is the sole responsibility of the grant beneficiary to report this as income for that year when filing their tax return with the CRA.

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## **Appeal Process and Resolution**

ECEBC strives to deliver the Specialized Certification Grant fairly and equitably to all eligible Specialized ECEs in BC; however, ECEBC recognizes that applicants may request a review of an eligibility decision.

The applicant will have fourteen (14) business days from the date the notice of decision is emailed to launch an appeal. The process will be as follows:

- The applicant submits a claim to the Executive Director at [appeals@ecebc.ca](mailto:appeals@ecebc.ca) with an explanation of why they think the decision should be adjudicated and includes any relevant information or documentation to support their appeal. In the subject line please state, “Appeal Process ECE Specialized Certification Grant”.
  - Note: This does not include resubmission of missing or inaccurate documentation originally requested.
- The Executive Director will respond within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the appeal letter/email with a decision that either: (i) upholds the original decision and explains the rationale in support of this decision or (ii) amends or overturns the original decision and describes the rationale for the new decision.
- The Executive Director’s decision will be considered final, with no further avenues for appeal of the decision for that application.

If you require further assistance and for all funding related questions, please contact the ECE Specialized Certification Grant team at [specializationgrant@ecebc.ca](mailto:specializationgrant@ecebc.ca).

## Appendix A - Eligibility Quick Guide

# I am a BC ECE working in Child Care, am I eligible for the ECE Specialized Certification Grant?

