Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund
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About the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund

1. What is the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund?
The Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Budget Support Emergency Amendment Act of 2021 created the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund as a special fund of the District of Columbia Government, to be administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and used to increase compensation of child development facility staff. The Act also created an Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Task Force to make recommendations for implementing the fund.

Consistent with the recommendations of the Task Force, OSSE is working with an intermediary organization, AidKit, to disburse pay supplements directly to early childhood educators in FY22.

In future years, supplemental payments will be replaced by ongoing funding for child development facilities to enable child care providers to increase early educator pay, aligned with minimum salaries and a recommended pay scale that OSSE will establish. Additional information about that system will be shared in 2023. The information in this document pertains solely to the distribution of pay equity funds directly to educators in FY22.

2. How will pay equity funds be distributed?
OSSE has engaged an intermediary organization, AidKit, to manage the pay supplement application and distribution process. Eligible early educators will apply to and receive funds directly from AidKit, not from OSSE or their employer. Additional information on how to apply for these funds is addressed in questions 19 through 22 of this document.

Eligibility

3. Who is eligible to receive a supplemental payment from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund?
In order to be eligible to receive a supplemental payment distribution from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund for FY22, an early childhood educator must meet the following requirements:

- Be currently employed in a child development facility licensed by OSSE, with employment starting on or before May 16, 2022; and
- Be employed in an eligible role:
  - Teacher;
  - Assistant Teacher;
  - Associate Caregiver;
  - Expanded Home Provider;
  - Home Provider;
  - Montessori Assistant Teacher; or
  - Montessori Teacher.
For more information on eligibility requirements, see page 1 of the Child Care Staff Eligibility and Payment Amounts for Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund policy document.

OSSE and AidKit will verify all applicants’ employment on the date an application is submitted and again prior to disbursement of funds. Early childhood educators who leave employment after submitting an application for funds and who are not employed in an eligible position in a child development facility at the time funds are disbursed, will lose eligibility for funding. Employees who are on temporary leave (e.g., paid family leave, short-term disability, family and medical leave act) are eligible for funds, provided they were employed in a child development facility in an eligible role prior to May 16, 2022, remain employees of the facility and intend to return to work in the facility following the end of their temporary leave.

4. Are part-time workers eligible for pay equity funds? How will OSSE determine if I am a full- or part-time worker?
Yes. Individuals who work at least 10 hours a week at a child development facility in an eligible role (see question 3) are eligible for a supplement payment if they are currently employed and were employed in a child development facility on or before May 16, 2022.

Part-time workers are defined as those who work between 10 and 30 hours per week on average, or who have worked at least 80 hours in the last eight weeks (staff must meet at least one of these criteria).

Full-time workers are defined as those who work 30 or more hours per week on average, or who have worked at least 240 hours in the last eight weeks.

Eligible early childhood staff must certify their full- or part-time status when applying for the pay supplement.

5. I have an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN). Am I eligible to apply for the fund?
If you meet the eligibility requirements detailed in question 1 you may apply for funds regardless of your documentation status. You may use a Social Security Number (SSN) or ITIN when completing your application.

6. I’m a lead teacher in a Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP). Why won’t I be able to receive funds from this program?
Child development facilities that participate in PKEEP are required to pay PKEEP teachers at parity with DC Public Schools (DCPS) teachers. Therefore, PKEEP lead teachers are not eligible to participate in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund. If you are a PKEEP lead teacher and believe that your employer is not paying you the required salary for PKEEP lead teachers, please contact OSSE.DELCommunications@dc.gov and we will refer your information to the PKEEP program manager for further assistance.
7. I am planning to start working in a child development facility in June 2022. Am I eligible to receive a supplemental payment?
   No. In order to be eligible to receive a supplemental payment through the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, you must be employed at a licensed child development facility on or before May 16, 2022, in an eligible role. Workers hired after May 16, 2022, are not eligible to participate in FY22, but may be eligible to receive pay equity funds in future years, if they remain employed in a child development facility in an eligible role.

8. If I change jobs between now and the time funds are distributed, will I still be eligible to receive a supplemental payment?
   In order to receive your supplemental payment, you must be currently employed in a child development facility in an eligible role on or before May 16, 2022; be employed in a child development facility in an eligible role at the time you submit your application and at the time funds are disbursed; and affirm that you intend to remain employed in a licensed child development facility on a part- or full-time basis through at least Dec. 31, 2022. If you take a job in an eligible role in another child development facility licensed by OSSE before your payment is disbursed, you will still be eligible to receive a supplemental payment, but you or your employer may need to provide additional documentation. OSSE will provide additional information for staff who move between eligible roles in child development facilities licensed by OSSE and their employers.

   If you change jobs and are no longer employed in an eligible role in a child development facility licensed by OSSE, you will no longer be eligible to receive a supplemental payment.

9. Are directors, assistant directors or other staff who spend part of their day in child care classrooms (for example, providing coverage) eligible to receive pay equity funds?
   No. To be eligible to receive a supplemental payment through the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, your position listed in the Division of Early Learning Licensing Tool (DELLT) must be an eligible role. If your position listed in DELLT is not one of those eligible to receive a pay supplement (see question 3 for a list of eligible roles), but you spend more than 50 percent of your working hours per week teaching children or assisting in classrooms, you may submit an appeal to request funding. Appeals will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the policies established for the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund and the individual’s specific employment circumstances. Additional details regarding how to file an appeal will be provided in a separate document after the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund application opens.

10. Are staff who are working at a facility that is operating under a restricted license eligible for a supplemental payment? (Updated 6/15/2022)
    Yes.
11. I was working at a facility licensed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) on May 16, 2022, in a role that is eligible to receive a supplemental payment. However, I was recently promoted and am now a director/instructional coach/other role at the facility. Am I still eligible for a supplemental payment? (Updated 6/15/2022)

In order to receive your supplemental payment, a child care worker must:

- **be currently employed** in a child development facility at each of the following times: a) on or before May 16, 2022, b) at the time they submit their application, and c) at the time funds are disbursed;
- **be employed** in a child development facility **in an eligible role** (e.g., teacher, assistant teacher, associate caregiver, expanded home caregiver, home caregiver, Montessori assistant teacher or Montessori teacher) **at the time they submit their application**; and
- **affirm** that they intend to remain employed in a licensed child development facility on a part- or full-time basis through at least Dec. 31, 2022.

If you are promoted to a non-eligible role before you submit your application, you are no longer eligible for a supplemental payment. If you are promoted to a non-eligible role after you submit your application, you are eligible for a supplemental payment.

12. Do I need to reapply for my current job to qualify for funds? (Updated 6/15/2022)

No. Early childhood educators who are eligible to receive a supplemental payment do not need to submit an application to their employer or reapply for their current job. To apply for a supplemental payment, eligible early childhood educators must submit an application through AidKit’s platform. For more information, see question 19.

13. Am I required to meet specific education requirements (e.g., Child Development Associate [CDA], associate degree, bachelor’s degree) to receive a supplemental payment? (Updated 6/15/2022)

To receive a supplemental payment, you must meet the eligibility criteria detailed in question 3.

Your staff type/role is based on your responsibilities at the facility where you are employed and your qualifications. For example, an individual in the assistant teacher role must carry out the responsibilities that reflect an assistant teacher role as defined in licensing regulations and have the credentials required for the role as of the date of application. Early educators do not need to meet the new educational credential requirements that will be in effect as of December 2023 in order to receive funds from the pay equity fund in FY22. For more information on current and future credential requirements, see:

- Teacher or [Assistant Teacher in a Child Development Center](#)
- [Home, Expanded Home or Associate Home Caregiver](#)
Information for Employers

14. What actions do I need to take to ensure staff at my child development facility receive a pay supplement?
To ensure staff at your facility receive a pay supplement, you must review and update staff records in DELLT.

Updates made to DELLT in May 2022 give facilities direct access to staff information in the provider profile section. You must update staff records individually to include the correct job title, staff mobile phone number, staff email address and staff home address. Other staff information, including staff type, must also be reviewed to ensure the information is correct. Your staff’s eligibility for funding and the amount they receive will depend on the staff title listed in DELLT, so it is important to make sure this information is accurate. AidKit will use the staff cell phone number and email address included in DELLT to send your staff members a personalized link to apply for funds, so it is crucial this information is included in DELLT for each eligible staff member. Staff whose email and cell phone information are not updated in DELLT will still be able to apply for funds, but employers and staff may need to complete additional steps to verify their employment. To simplify the process for you and your staff, providers are strongly encouraged to update all staff records and ensure staff contact information is complete prior to the launch of the application process in summer 2022.

15. How do I update staff records for my facility in DELLT?
On May 16, 2022, the person of record listed in DELLT for your facility received a guide with information on how to update staff information in DELLT. If you require assistance, please contact your assigned licensing specialist.

16. I am the director of a child development facility. Why am I not eligible to receive a pay supplement?
OSSE is implementing the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund consistent with the recommendations of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Task Force and legislation passed by the DC Council. Both the Task Force and DC Council indicated that the primary intended beneficiaries of the fund are early educators whose primary and daily focus is direct work with children. While directors play an important role in supporting children’s development and learning, and sometimes also fill teaching responsibilities, the primary responsibilities of a director are administrative. Child development facilities may use other funding sources, including funds received through the DC Child Care Stabilization Grant, to provide bonuses or other financial incentives for directors and other staff not eligible for pay supplements through the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund.

17. I am currently recruiting for a vacant position in my facility. Will staff I hire for this position be eligible to receive payments from the fund?
Staff employed on or before May 16, 2022, in a role eligible to receive a supplemental payment are eligible to receive funds. If you hire a staff member who was employed in an eligible role in another facility licensed by OSSE on or before May 16, 2022, and that staff member is employed in an eligible...
role at the time they apply and the time funds are disbursed, they maintain eligibility for funding, but you and the staff member may need to provide some additional documentation. Staff hired after May 16, 2022, who were not working in an eligible role in a child development facility licensed by OSSE on or before May 16, 2022, will not be eligible to receive a pay supplement in FY22.

18. I am concerned that staff in my program might quit after they receive the funds. What steps is OSSE taking to prevent this?
In order to receive their supplemental payment, eligible child care workers must affirm they intend to remain employed in a licensed child development facility on a part- or full-time basis through at least the end of December 2022. Additionally, staff who remain in their roles are expected to continue to benefit from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund in future years.

Resources are available through Capital Quality, the DC Shared Services Business Alliance (DC SSBA), DC Child Care Connections and EC Share DC to support child development facilities in human resources practices, including best practices for staff recruitment and retention. Please contact DC Child Care Connections for more information on training and technical assistance opportunities. If your facility participates in Capital Quality, you may also contact your quality facilitator for assistance.

Information for Eligible Child Care Staff

19. How do I apply to receive a supplemental payment?
To receive a supplemental payment, you must submit a payment request through AidKit’s platform. AidKit and OSSE are currently customizing a portal that DC child care workers will use to submit their payment requests and expect to launch it in late summer 2022. In July 2022, AidKit will share more information with you on how to access the platform and submit your payment request. Please note that this is not a competitive program; applicants who meet eligibility criteria and provide all required documentation should expect to receive funds.

20. What information or documents do I need to apply for funds?
As part of your payment request, you must share the following information/documentation:
  • Photo ID;
  • Headshot/selfie;
  • Payment information (direct bank deposit or debit card);
  • SSN/ITIN; and
  • W-9 form.

You are also required to affirm that you intend to remain employed in a licensed child development facility through at least Dec. 31, 2022, and regularly work at the facility/facilities on a full- or part-basis.
For more details, see page 2 of the Child Care Staff Eligibility and Payment Amounts for Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund policy document.

21. How much money will I receive through the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund?
Your payment amount is determined based on a combination of your staff type and employment status (e.g., full- or part-time employee). More information is available in the table below and on pages 3-4 of the Child Care Staff Eligibility and Payment Amounts for Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund policy document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Type</th>
<th>Time Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECE I:</td>
<td>Full-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Assistant Teacher</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Associate Caregiver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Montessori Assistant Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE II:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Teacher</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Expanded Home Provider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Home Provider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Montessori Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. How will my supplemental payment be distributed?
When completing your payment request you will have the option to choose between receiving your payment via direct bank deposit or debit card. If you choose to receive your payment via direct bank deposit, it will be distributed directly to the back account for which you provide information. It is important to make sure the bank information you provide to AidKit is correct. If you choose to receive your payment via debit card, a debit card will be mailed to your home address or a centralized collection location. Funds will not be loaded on the debit card until you have verified receipt. Information on how to verify receipt will be shared with staff who elect to receive payments via debit card through a separate communication.

23. When will I receive my supplemental payment?
A timeline for disbursement has not been finalized, however OSSE and AidKit anticipate that the platform for eligible early childhood educators to request funds will launch in mid- to late-summer 2022. Once an early educator has submitted all required information and documents to demonstrate eligibility, their payment should be distributed within three to four weeks. The timing on which eligible staff receive funds will depend on how quickly they submit the required information.
24. Will funds be distributed on a “first-come, first-served” basis?
All eligible child care workers who complete and submit the payment request through AidKit’s platform by Sept. 30, 2022, will receive funds. To receive your supplemental payment in a timely manner, you are encouraged to submit your payment request as soon as possible.

25. Is the supplemental payment I received from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund subject to income tax?
Yes. Supplemental payments are subject to both state and federal taxes. Unlike your paycheck, state and federal taxes are not withheld from pay supplements distributed through this program. This means that you will need to report the income when filing your state or federal taxes and may need to pay additional tax on these funds when you file your 2022 taxes. AidKit will provide the documentation that early childhood educators who receive funds will need to submit their 2022 taxes but will not withhold state or federal taxes. Early childhood educators who receive a supplemental payment may wish to consult with an accountant or other tax expert, and/or to save a portion of funds received to cover potential future tax liabilities.

26. Will accepting a supplemental payment impact my eligibility to receive assistance from programs such as Medicaid or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or qualify for a housing voucher?
OSSE does not administer Medicaid, SNAP or housing assistance and cannot provide specific guidance on whether or not pay supplements will be considered income by the agencies responsible for administering these programs. The impact of supplemental payments on eligibility for other publicly funded programs may also vary based on each early educator’s unique personal situation and family characteristics. If you receive SNAP, WIC, Medicaid or other public benefits, you should consult with the agencies that administer those programs and their established eligibility policies.

27. Are there restrictions on how I can use the funds I receive from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund?
Pay supplement funds are your money, just like the compensation you receive from your employer. Eligible early educators who receive funds may use them as you see fit, and do not need to report on how funds were spent. (OSSE or AidKit may conduct voluntary surveys in the future to learn more about how funds are benefitting early educators, but these will be anonymous and completely optional.)

In making decisions about how to use funds, please keep in mind that pay supplements are subject to federal and state income taxes, which will not be withheld at the time funds are distributed. This means you may need to plan to pay additional taxes on them when you file your 2022 taxes.

OSSE will share information on financial planning resources (e.g., workshops hosted by partners) with eligible early educators in the coming months.
28. Am I required to give my employer a portion of my supplemental payment?  
No. Your employer may not require you to provide them a portion of your supplemental payment. If your employer directs you to give them a portion of your supplemental payment, please contact OSSE at OSSE.DELCommunications@dc.gov.

29. I believe I am eligible to receive a supplemental payment, but I have not received an invitation to apply for funds. Who should I contact?  
AidKit and OSSE have not yet begun the process to distribute pay equity funds, so no early educators have received an invitation to apply for funds. Once the application platform is launched, you will receive an invitation to apply for funds via email or text message. OSSE will also provide additional information on how to apply for funds if you do not receive an invitation via email or text, and that information will also be posted on the OSSE website here.

30. I am concerned about the requirement to affirm that I intend to remain employed in child care in the District through Dec. 31, 2022. If I lose my job or need to move to another state for family or other reasons, will there be negative consequences? (Updated 6/15/2022)  
The application asks eligible early childhood educators to affirm that they currently intend to remain employed in a licensed child development facility in the District through Dec. 31, 2022. This is a statement about what you intend to do and does not constitute a binding commitment. Individuals who must leave their jobs for unexpected reasons, such as illness or family needs, will not be penalized. Neither will eligible early childhood educators who move to a non-eligible role (such as a director or coach) in an OSSE-licensed child development facility after receiving funds.

Eligible child care employees are strongly encouraged to remain employed in a licensed child care facility in the District through and beyond December 2022, and those who do so will be eligible for additional payments through the fund in fiscal year 2023 (FY23) (October 2022-September 2023), as well as increased pay from their employers in future years.

Early childhood educators who meet the eligibility criteria for funding but have already accepted an offer of employment that is not in a licensed child development facility in the District and/or plan to leave their current roles to take the new job before Dec. 31, 2022, should not accept a supplemental payment. Staff who are temporarily working in a child development facility for the summer and plan to return to another job (such as teaching in a public or private school) in the fall also should not accept a supplemental payment.

OSSE will pursue recoupment of funds only in cases where individuals knowingly submit inaccurate or misleading information on their applications for funding.

31. I am concerned my employer did not update my information in the Division of Early Learning Licensing Tool (DELLT). What should I do? (Updated 6/15/2022)  
No early educator who is eligible for funds will be denied a supplemental payment because their employer did not update staff records in DELLT by a specific date. Eligible early educators who do not receive an invitation directly from AidKit to apply for funds when the application platform is launched will still be able to access the application and apply for funds, but their employer will need to update
their employment information in DELLT before funds can be disbursed. Staff who submit applications but whose information cannot be verified in DELLT will receive additional information on what to do next through the application process.

Please note, section 131.1 of OSSE’s child care licensing regulations requires licensed child care providers to maintain accurate staff records and provide required staff information to OSSE, in the form required by OSSE. Facilities are required to update all staff information in DELLT regardless of position or eligibility for pay equity funds.

32. Why are early childhood educators who are new to the field eligible for the same payment amounts as educators who have been in the field for several years? (Updated 6/15/2022)
For the FY22 administration of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, the payment amount an eligible early childhood educator receives will be determined based on their staff type and employment status (e.g., full time or part time), as detailed in the payment amount policy document.

As noted in question 1, the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund is a program created by the DC Council based on the recommendations of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Task Force. The DC Council, in following the task force’s recommendations, directed OSSE to issue supplemental payments directly to eligible early childhood educators in FY22 with payment amounts based on an individual’s staff type/role and employment status. The task force did not recommend payment amounts be based on years in the field for supplemental payments issued in FY22.

OSSE is working to implement a long-term program that will direct funds to child development facilities to implement a compensation scale that reflects parity with DCPS that includes increased compensation based on years in the field, which is expected to take effect in FY24. Additional information on that program will be available in the future. In the application for a supplemental payment for FY22, early childhood educators will be asked questions about their experience. Information provided in response to these questions will assist OSSE in long-term planning. An early educator’s response to these questions will not impact the payment amount they receive in FY22.