



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR PAY EQUITY FUND

Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund Frequently Asked Questions for Early Childhood Educators

Updated January 2024

Information for All DC Early Childhood Educators Employed at Licensed Child Development Facilities

1. What is the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund?

The Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund is a special fund of the District of Columbia Government, administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), used to increase compensation of child development facility staff. In FY22 and FY23, OSSE worked with an intermediary organization, AidKit, to disburse pay supplements directly to early childhood educators.

Beginning in [FY24](#), which begins on Oct. 1, 2023, and going forward, OSSE will stop making direct payments to early childhood educators through AidKit. Instead, OSSE will distribute funds directly to child development facilities through the [FY24 child development facility \(CDF\) payroll funding formula](#). This document only has information about FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund.

2. How will the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund work in FY24?

In FY24, OSSE will distribute funds to licensed child development facilities that choose to participate in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund. To participate, a facility must agree to pay eligible early childhood educators, by position and degree, salaries that meet or exceed the [FY24 minimum salaries](#) established by OSSE. Child development facilities are not required to participate in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, but it is highly encouraged.

3. Will early childhood educators receive Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Funds from their employer?

Early childhood educators will no longer receive direct pay supplements from AidKit. Child development facilities that participate in FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund will receive funds to raise the wages of their employees. Facilities must pay eligible lead teachers and assistant teachers wages or salaries that meet or exceed the [minimum salary requirements](#) established by OSSE. If you are employed in an eligible role at a facility participating in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, any monies you receive from the program will be received in the form of pay from your employer, such as your regular paycheck.

4. Why is OSSE distributing funds to employers to then pass along to early childhood educators instead of making direct payments to early childhood educators?

OSSE is implementing the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund in accordance with legislation that established that funding from the program, in FY24 and going forward, is to go through child development facilities. In FY22 and FY23, direct supplemental payments were issued to eligible early childhood educators to swiftly distribute funds to the early childhood workforce in the short-term while a more complex and robust long-term mechanism for disbursing funds to facilities was developed for implementation beginning in FY24.

5. Is my employer required to participate in FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund?

Child development facilities are not required to participate in FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, but it is highly encouraged. If your employer does not participate in the program, they will not receive any funds from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund and will not be required to pay their staff the [FY24 minimum salaries](#). All employers must comply with other District and/or federal laws and requirements regarding worker wages and hours that apply to all employers, including the Fair Shot Minimum Wage Act of 2016, and for child care providers participating in the District's child care subsidy program, the Living Wage Act of 2006.

6. How do I know if my employer is participating in FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund?

Ask your employer if they plan to participate in the program in FY24. OSSE will also publish a list of facilities participating in the program annually.

7. If my employer does not participate in FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, can I receive funds through AidKit?

No. Consistent with the law, in FY24, OSSE will cease making direct payments to early childhood educators through AidKit.

Information for Early Childhood Educators Employed by a Facility Participating in FY24

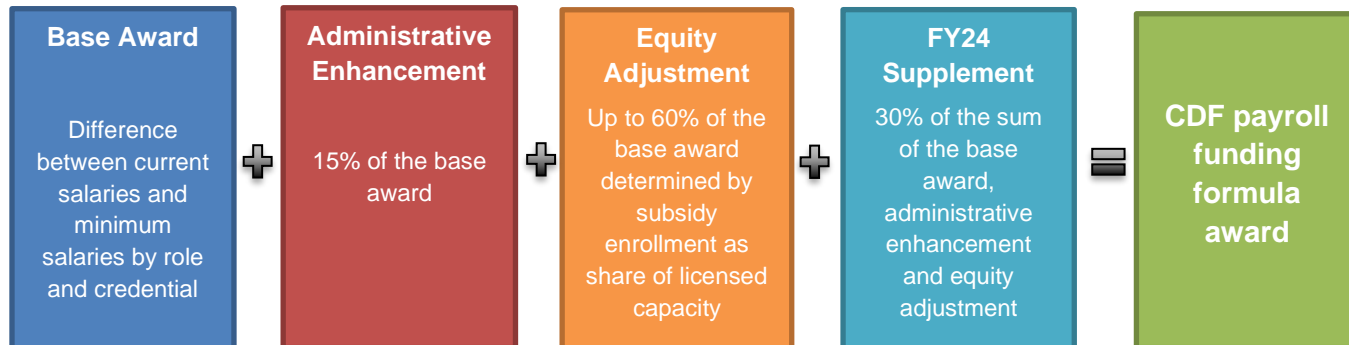
8. How will OSSE determine the amount of money a child development facility receives from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund? (UPDATED January 2024)

OSSE will use the [CDF payroll funding formula](#) to determine the award amount a participating child development facility receives from Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund in FY24. OSSE will calculate CDF payroll funding formula awards quarterly.

The CDF payroll funding formula consists for the following components:

- Base Award;
- Administrative Enhancement;
- Equity Adjustment; and

- FY24 Supplement



The CDF payroll funding formula is a new revenue source that will give child development facilities additional resources to raise the salaries of early childhood educators.

9. How do I know if my employer is required to pay me an FY24 minimum salary? (UPDATED January 2024)

Child development facilities that receive CDF payroll funding formula awards must pay eligible lead teachers and assistant teachers, in the following staff types in the Division of Early Learning Licensing Tool (DELLT), salaries that [meet or exceed the minimum salaries](#).

For FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, the following staff types in DELLT qualify as a **lead teacher**:

- Teacher
- Montessori teacher
- Expanded home caregiver
- Home caregiver

For FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, the following staff types in DELLT qualify as an **assistant teacher**:

- Assistant teacher
- Montessori assistant teacher
- Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) assistant teacher
- Associate home caregiver

If you are assigned one of the staff types listed above in DELLT, your employer is required to pay you according to the required minimum salaries, consistent with your educational credentials as approved in DELLT.

If you are unsure of your staff type or approved credentials in DELLT, please talk with your employer.

10. How does my employer determine what my staff type is in DELLT?

An early childhood educator's staff type in DELLT is based on their responsibilities at the facility where they are employed AND their 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. Employers must include the required supporting documentation (e.g., proof of degree completion such as a transcript, certificate, diploma, etc.) in an employee's staff record. An educator's staff type in DELLT should reflect the role they spend the majority of their time in.

11. How does my employer determine my credentials in DELLT? (NEW January 2024)

The credentials an early childhood educator is assigned in DELLT must be approved by OSSE and are based on the supporting documentation (e.g., transcript, certificate, diploma) provided in the employee's staff record. For example, if an early childhood educator's highest educational credential is an associate degree in early childhood education, their employer should include proof of degree completion, such as a transcript showing the degree was conferred, in the employee's staff record in DELLT. OSSE will review the supporting documentation to confirm the credential was conferred and approve the early childhood educator in DELLT as holding an associate in early childhood education. Staff records must include supporting documentation to prove the credential and/or credit hour attainment.

12. Are there minimum salary requirements for directors, assistant directors or other staff who spend part of their day in child care classrooms (for example, providing coverage)?

OSSE has not established minimum salaries for individuals who have a staff type of director, assistant director, administrative staff, floater and/or substitute in DELLT. However, child development facilities have discretion in how they spend their funding award, as long as they are meeting the minimum salary requirements for eligible lead teachers and assistant teachers. Should a facility have additional funds after meeting the minimum salary requirement for eligible staff, the facility may use the excess funds to compensate additional staff, including directors, assistant directors, administrative staff, floaters, substitutes and individuals employed in other roles.

13. What are the minimum salaries for FY24?

The minimum salary requirement for an eligible early childhood educator is based upon their role and credentials as documented in DELLT and reviewed and approved by OSSE. Your staff record in DELLT must include required supporting documentation (e.g., proof of degree completion such as a transcript, certificate, diploma, etc.). See the table below for more information.

Role	Credentials	Minimum Salaries for FY24 (annual salary)	Minimum Salaries for FY24 (hourly wage)
Assistant Teacher	Less than a Child Development Associate (CDA)	\$43,865	\$21.09/hour
	CDA	\$51,006	\$24.52/hour
	Associate degree or higher	\$54,262	\$26.09/hour
Lead Teacher	CDA <u>or</u> 48 credit hours with greater than or equal to 15 hours in Early Childhood Education (ECE)	\$54,262	\$26.09/hour
	Associate degree in ECE <u>or</u> an associate degree with greater than or equal to 24 credit hours in ECE	\$63,838	\$30.69/hour
	Bachelor's degree (or higher) in ECE <u>or</u> a bachelor's degree (or higher) with greater than or equal to 24 credit hours in ECE	\$75,103	\$36.11/hour

14. OSSE updated the minimum education requirements for the DC early childhood workforce in December 2023. Does this update change the credential requirements associated with the FY24 minimum salaries? (NEW January 2024)

No. The updated child care licensing regulations that took effect on Dec. 20, 2023 do not change the FY24 minimum salaries for the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund or the CDF payroll funding formula calculation. The updated regulations allow early childhood educators who receive an enrollment-based certification to remain employed in roles they would not have been able to be employed in prior to the updates to the licensing regulations. However, in most cases, updates to the child care licensing regulations do not change the minimum salary the individual qualifies for.

15. The FY24 minimum salaries say that an eligible assistant teacher can have less than a CDA, a CDA or an associate degree or higher and that an eligible lead teacher can have a CDA, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree or higher. Am I still required to meet the minimum education requirements? (NEW January 2024)

Yes. The minimum salary requirement for an eligible lead teacher or assistant teacher is based on their role. More information on the credential requirements for teachers, assistant teachers, associate caregivers, home caregivers and expanded home caregivers can be [found here](#).

OSSE recognizes that some eligible lead teachers and assistant teachers may still be pursuing the required credential or exempt from the requirement due to 10 years of continuous service. Continuous service certifications issued to staff consistent with licensing regulations allow the holder to work in the position for which they hold a certification, but do not affect the educational level used in calculating a facility's CDF

formula award or the minimum salaries to which an eligible early educator is entitled under the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund. For example, if a teacher who holds a CDA as their highest credential receives an enrollment-based certification to enable them to continue to work as a lead teacher while enrolled in a degree program and pursuing their associate degree, their employer is required to pay them the minimum salary applicable to teachers with a CDA. When the teacher obtains an associate degree, the facility will be required to pay the teacher a minimum salary that meets or exceeds the minimum salary for a teacher with an associate degree, starting with the first payroll cycle after the facility updates the staff record in DELLT and submits, and receives approval from OSSE for, documentation showing the degree has been obtained. A facility is not prohibited from paying an eligible teacher or assistant teacher a salary higher than the minimum salary required for the credential and role they currently hold.

16. When is my employer required to start paying eligible staff the minimum salaries? (NEW January 2024)

Employers must pay eligible staff wages or salaries that meet or exceed the minimum salary requirements in the first payroll cycle after the facility receives their first quarterly payment. Employers must meet the minimum salary requirements through hourly wages or annual salaries paid to employees through their regular paycheck. OSSE will conduct monitoring on a quarterly basis and will require that facilities provide record of payroll following payment disbursement.

Please talk with your employer about their plan for implementing the minimum salaries. The quarterly payment schedule that details when OSSE will deliver funds to participating facilities is below:

- Quarter one: December 2023
- Quarter two: March 2024
- Quarter three: June 2024
- Quarter four: September 2024

17. Can my employer increase my compensation through a bonus or supplemental payment? (NEW January 2024)

No. Facilities must meet the minimum salary requirements through hourly wages or annual salaries paid to employees through their regular paycheck. These funds are not intended to be supplemental or bonus payments. For example, if your employer received an award payment for quarter one on Dec. 22, 2023, your employer is required to incorporate wages or salaries that meet or exceed the minimum salary requirements in the next feasible payroll cycle after they have received funds (which may occur in December 2023 or January 2024) and in subsequent payroll cycles. Please talk with your employer to learn more about their plan for implementing the minimum salaries.

18. Is my employer required to pay me backpay or retroactive payments for months in FY24 prior the month the first quarterly payment was distributed (e.g., October-December 2023)? (NEW January 2024)

No. Employers that participate in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund are required to meet minimum salary requirements through hourly wages or annual salaries paid to employees through their regular paycheck, starting in the next feasible payroll cycle after the employer receives their first quarterly payment from the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, and continuing in subsequent payroll cycles in which the employer continues to participate in the program. Employers are not required to distribute backpay for payroll cycles prior to receipt of their first quarterly payment through the fund. Some employers may choose to use other funding sources to implement increased salaries and/or other compensation and retention incentives to staff before they receive their first quarterly payment from OSSE, but they are not required to do so. Please talk with your employer to learn more about their plan for implementing the minimum salaries.

19. What happens if I change jobs? (UPDATED January 2024)

If you take a job at another facility that is participating in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, your new employer must create a staff record for you in DELLT. The staff record must include all the required information (e.g., name, date of birth, staff type, etc.) and supporting documentation (e.g., hiring form, proof of credentials, etc.). Following OSSE's approval of your staff record in DELLT, if you are employed in an eligible staff type, your employer is required to pay you at least the minimum salary that aligns with your role and credentials.

If you take a job at another facility and the facility is not participating in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, your new employer is not required to pay the minimum salary for your role and credentials but must comply with other District and/or federal laws and requirements regarding worker wages and hours that apply to all employers, including the Fair Shot Minimum Wage Act of 2016, and for child care providers participating in the District's child care subsidy program, the Living Wage Act of 2006.

20. If my staff type/role changes will my salary change? (UPDATED January 2024)

The minimum salary for an eligible lead teacher and assistant teacher is based on their role and credentials. If your staff type changes, your employer must update your staff record in DELLT and include the required supporting documentation. Your employer is required to pay you the minimum salary for your new staff type as soon as the staff type change is approved in DELLT by the facility's assigned licensing specialist. Please note, if your staff type changes to a staff type associated with a lower minimum salary (e.g., you go from teacher to assistant teacher), your salary could decrease. Your staff type in DELLT should reflect both your credentials (including any certifications based on continuous service or enrollment in a degree program to meet required credentials) and your responsibilities at the facility where you work. If you are unsure of your staff type or minimum salary requirement, please talk with your employer. Please note that an

employer may not change an employee's staff type solely to reduce the minimum salary for which an employee is eligible, if the employee's responsibilities have not changed and the employee meets the credentials required for their role or has obtained a credential allowing them to work in the role without holding required credentials. If you believe your employer has violated this requirement, please contact OSSE.ECEPayEquity@dc.gov.

21. If I achieve a higher credential, will my salary change? (UPDATED January 2024)

The minimum salary for an eligible lead teacher and assistant teacher is based on their role and credentials. If you achieve a higher credential, your employer must update your record in DELLT and include the required supporting documentation.

Your employer is required to meet the minimum salary aligned to your new credential as soon as the credential is verified in DELLT by the facility's assigned licensing specialist. If you are unsure of your credentials documented in DELLT or minimum salary requirement, please talk with your employer.

22. How do I know my employer is paying me the required minimum salary?

If you are employed in an eligible staff type at a child development facility participating in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, your employer must pay you the required minimum salary aligned to your role and credential as documented in DELLT. See question 13 for the FY24 minimum salaries. Please note, employers are required to meet the minimum salaries before state or federal taxes or other deductions that may come out of your paycheck. If you are unsure of your staff type or credentials in DELLT, please talk with your employer.

23. I am concerned my employer is not paying me the required minimum salary. What can I do?

If you believe your employer is not paying you the minimum salary requirement you are entitled to, please contact OSSE.ECEPayEquity@dc.gov.

24. My employer said they were approved for a waiver and are not required to pay eligible staff the required minimum salary. Is this true? (NEW January 2024)

OSSE has established a waiver process for FY24 for child development facilities that lack sufficient revenues to meet the minimum salaries for all eligible staff. If a child development facility is approved for a waiver, they are not required to pay eligible staff the FY24 minimum salaries. A facility that has received a waiver must use all funds received from the program to increase salaries or wages for eligible teachers and assistant teachers, cover taxes and mandatory benefits associated with higher salaries or wages and/or provide health or other discretionary benefits for staff, and must pay all eligible teachers and assistant teachers wages or salaries higher than those which the employees were paid as of Sept. 30, 2023. If you're unsure if your employer was approved for a waiver, please contact OSSE.ECEPayEquity@dc.gov.

25. How will this program affect my taxes?

Your employer will be required to pay employer payroll and other taxes and withholding taxes, as they are for other wages and salaries; however, you are required to pay applicable income or other taxes on the wages or salaries you receive from your employer. Early childhood educators may wish to consult with an accountant or other tax expert to find out whether the increase in pay will impact their tax liability.

26. I am employed in an eligible staff type. Do I need to submit an application to my employer to receive a pay increase in FY24?

No. Early childhood educators do not need to submit an application for FY24 of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund. Eligible early childhood educators will receive Early Childhood Pay Equity Funds through regular pay received from your employer, such as your regular paycheck.

27. Will a pay raise impact my eligibility to receive assistance from income eligible benefits programs (e.g., Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP], housing vouchers)? (UPDATED January 2024)

OSSE does not administer Medicaid, SNAP benefits, or housing assistance and cannot provide specific guidance on eligibility for these programs. If you are concerned that a salary increase may impact your eligibility to receive assistance from income-based public benefit programs like Medicaid, SNAP, housing vouchers, etc., please consult with the agencies that administer those programs in the state in which you reside for additional information on eligibility. Early childhood educators who lose eligibility for Medicaid as a result of increased pay may be eligible for subsidized health insurance coverage through HealthCare4ChildCare. For more information about this program, please visit the DC Health Benefits Exchange website [here](#).