

## Early Childhood Education Graduate Bursary Program

**Policy No.:** ELCD-BUR-001

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2017

**Date Revised:** March 9, 2018

**Policy Cross References:** FCD-ELCC-001, ELCD-BUR-002

**Legislative References:** n/a

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Graduate Bursary Program is to improve recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood educators in regulated child care services by reducing student debt. Well-trained early childhood educators are an essential component of regulated child care services and are the main determining factor in the level of quality provided by these services. The ultimate goal of this bursary program is to increase the number of qualified early childhood educators within the province, which will, in turn, improve the quality of child care services available to children and families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The intent of the ECE Graduate Bursary Program is to provide assistance to candidates who have obtained a diploma in Early Childhood Education through a recognized post-secondary institution in Newfoundland and Labrador. Bursaries are available to graduates who meet the criteria set by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). In return, bursary recipients must commit to work in a regulated child care service in this province for three years after graduation.

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. **Definitions:** The following definitions will apply in interpretation of these policies:
  - 1.1. Date of graduation: The date noted on the Diploma issued by the post-secondary institution.
  - 1.2. Early Childhood Education (ECE) Diploma program: A post-secondary ECE program operating in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador that is recognized for the purposes of child care services certification as Level II.
  - 1.3. Full-time Equivalent (FTE): Three years full-time equivalent is working 4,320 hours and minimally 27 months out of 36 months.
  - 1.4. Permanent full-time employment: Minimally 120 hours per month.
  - 1.5. Permanent part-time employment: Minimally 60 hours per month.

- 1.6. **Quarter:** A quarter is a 3 month period, each covering one quarter of a fiscal year – April 1st to June 30th (1st Quarter), July 1st to September 30th (2nd Quarter), October 1st to December 31st (3rd Quarter) and January 1st to March 31st (4th Quarter).
- 1.7. **Regulated child care service:** A child care service which has been issued a valid child care Licence, or an approval certificate from a licensed family child care agency.

## 2. Bursary Amount:

- 2.1. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will provide up to \$7,500 to graduates of an ECE Diploma program, for the purpose of reducing student debt.
- 2.2. Funding received under the ECE Trainee Bursary Program (ELCD-BUR-002) will be deducted from the total eligible amount of the ECE Graduate Bursary Program.
- 2.3. If an applicant has identified having a balance owing to Federal Student Financial Services, the bursary will be paid directly to Student Loan Corporation and any remaining balance will be sent to the applicant directly (refer to 7.4.4 of this policy).

## 3. Eligibility: To qualify for the ECE Graduate Bursary, eligible candidates must:

- 3.1. Graduate from a recognized two-year Early Childhood Education program in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- 3.2. Begin permanent full-time or permanent part-time employment in a regulated child care service in Newfoundland and Labrador within six months of graduation, for a period of not less than three years full-time equivalent. Those working part time may require an extended period of service.
- 3.3. Submit a complete application package within six months of graduation.

## 4. Application:

- 4.1. Graduates of an Early Childhood Education Diploma program who wish to apply for the ECE Graduate Bursary must submit a complete application package within six months of graduation, including:
  - Completed application form (<http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/family/childcare/childcareresources.html>);
  - Copy of ECE Diploma;
  - Copy of official transcripts;
  - Proof of permanent full-time or permanent part-time employment in a regulated child care service in Newfoundland and Labrador:
    - Regulated Centre - Correspondence from employer indicating start date and confirming permanent full-time or permanent part-time status.
    - Regulated Family Home Child Care – Copy of Licence or Approval Certificate (from the Agency) and documentation of start date.
- 4.2. A signed Application Form must be submitted with required documentation as described. *If the package is sent via email, only PDF format is acceptable.*

## 5. Return Service Requirements:

- 5.1. Bursaries will be awarded to individuals who sign a contract with the Department agreeing to provide three years of service (full-time equivalent) as an early childhood educator in a regulated child care service in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- 5.2. This employment may be in more than one regulated child care service.
- 5.3. Applicants must begin working within six months of graduation (date of graduation is the date on the diploma).
- 5.4. Verification of Return Service Requirement:

- 5.4.1. Where possible, return service requirement is verified through Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Supplement approvals in each quarter, through ELCC Supplement records in the Department:
- Twelve full-time quarters (i.e. receiving the full ELCC Supplement) meets the three-year full-time commitment.
  - Two part-time quarters is considered equal to one full-time quarter for verification purposes.
- 5.4.2. Recipients who work in a regulated child care service but are ineligible for the ELCC Supplement in a quarter are required to send notification in writing to the Department within 10 days following the end of that quarter. This notification must be accompanied by verification of hours worked – verification includes copies of paystubs or a letter from the employer indicating the number of hours worked in the quarter.
- 5.5. Break in Service: If a recipient has not worked in a regulated child care services during a quarter, notification must be sent in writing to the Department within 10 days following the end of that quarter indicating the reason and the approximate timeframe of the break in service – for example, parental leave.

## 6. Extension of Contract:

- 6.1 The Provincial Director of Child Care may permit an extension of the time to fulfil the three-year employment requirement in extenuating circumstances, such as parental leave, if the recipient intends to return to work.
- 6.2 Conditions regarding a time extension will be determined by individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.3 Extensions to the three-year contract in order to meet the three-year FTE must be requested in writing to the Provincial Director of Child Care outlining the reason(s) for the request. If granted, extensions will not exceed three years (six years total) to meet the required commitment.
- 6.3.1 Extensions must be requested a minimum of 30 days prior to the expiry of the signed contract.

## 7. Assessment and Approval:

- 7.1. Eligibility for the ECE Graduate Bursary shall be assessed based on submission of a complete application package including all required documentation.
- 7.2. Incomplete application packages will be returned to the applicant.
- 7.3. Complete application packages received within six months of the applicant's graduation date will be further assessed for compliance with other eligibility criteria.
- 7.4. If assessed as eligible:
- 7.4.1. The amount of the bursary will be calculated (up to \$7, 500) based on the eligible amount – deductions will be made based on amounts reimbursed from the ECE Trainee Bursary Program.
- 7.4.2. The contract package will be sent to the applicant including any required financial documents to be completed and signed.
- 7.4.3. The complete contract package must be returned by email, mail, fax, or delivered (by hand or courier).
- 7.4.3.1. If emailed only legible PDF scanned documents will be accepted – photos (e.g. jpg) are not acceptable.
- 7.4.4. As per section 2.3 of this policy, the applicant will receive by direct deposit the amount of the bursary less any Federal Student Loan owing.

7.5. Application packages received outside the six-month eligibility period will be ineligible for the ECE Graduate Bursary.

**8. Decision/Notification:**

8.1. If an applicant has met all the requirements of the ECE Graduate Bursary Program a contract package will be sent for the applicant's signature that will indicate the amount of bursary approved.

8.2. An applicant will be advised in writing within 10 business days if ineligible or if the application is incomplete.

**9. Income Tax Information:**

9.1. The ECE Graduate Bursary is considered to be taxable income and must be reported on a recipient's Income Tax return.

**10. Non-Fulfillment of Contract:**

10.1. Recipients who do not fulfill the employment requirement or who do not notify EECD in writing of a break in service, must repay all or a portion of the bursary.

**11. Effective Date Retroactivity for Previous Applicants:**

11.1. Those applicants with a graduation date after April 1, 2017 and who have previously received the ECE Graduate Bursary are eligible to request in writing the increase (up to \$2,500) as per revised policy.

11.2. The request must include:

11.2.1. Full name on contract

11.2.2. Address on Contract (If moved – new address)

11.2.3. Written request for increase including acknowledgement of increase in return in service to three years from two years.

11.3. If eligible, Graduates must sign an amended contract before payment will be made.

**12. Questions/Inquiries:**

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