

# 2026/27 Early Childhood Educator Workforce Supports Program

## Professional Development and Release Time Funding Fact Sheet

### Overview

The Government of Alberta is updating professional development (PD) and release time (RT) for early childhood educators (ECEs) to enhance the quality of licensed early learning and childcare (ELCC). The updated program focuses ECE PD and RT funding on training that builds core skills, increases competencies, supports higher certification levels and strengthens leadership capacity across the sector.

### Funding allocations

The government is maintaining PD and RT funding allocations for ECEs in 2026/27, at a combined total of up to \$4,387.50 per ECE per fiscal year.

#### 2026/27 FUNDING ALLOCATIONS PER ECE

| Funding Elements      | Professional Development | Release Time  | Total             |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Post-secondary        | \$1,500                  | \$1,600 (\$800 per 3-credit course up to two courses) | \$3,100           |
| Workshops/Conferences | \$500                    | \$787.50 (\$17.50 per hour up to 45 hours)            | \$1,287.50        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>\$2,000</b>           | <b>\$2,387.50</b>                                     | <b>\$4,387.50</b> |

\*RT funding is only paid to ECEs and is no longer available for employers.

### Funding eligibility and approval criteria changes

New funding eligibility and approval criteria are introduced in 2026/27 to focus on increasing the capacity of ECEs to deliver high-quality ELCC, building key *Flight* curriculum competencies and leadership skills, and supporting ECEs to increase certification levels and educational credentials.

#### 2026/27 FUNDING ELIGIBILITY AND APPROVAL CRITERIA CHANGES

| Criteria   | 2025/26  | 2026/27   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Length of Employment in Licensed Childcare in Alberta</b> | Minimum of 29 hours, in at least one month from date of expenditure or date the application was received | Minimum of 720 hours by the date of completion of the training, based on wage top-up hours claimed and paid in the last two years |
| <b>Level 1 and 2 ECEs Post-secondary</b>                     | Broad eligibility for types of coursework and locations of institutions                                  | ELCC credit courses offered by recognized Canadian institutions that lead to higher certification levels                          |
| <b>Level 3 ECEs Post-secondary</b>                           |  | ELCC credit courses offered by recognized Canadian institutions that lead to educational credentials                              |
| <b>Level 1 and 2 ECEs Workshops/Conferences</b>              | Broad selection of training types, duration and provider locations                                       | Flight and pedagogy related workshops/conferences on the 2026/27 approved list  |
| <b>Level 3 ECEs Workshops/Conferences</b>                    |  | Leadership, Flight, and pedagogy related workshops/conferences on the 2026/27 approved list                                       |

\*ECE Bursary applicants are not eligible for post-secondary PD or RT funding.

## Funding request process changes

Childcare operators and ECEs can continue to apply for PD and RT funding using the [Professional Development Funding Request form](#). New requirements are in place for funding requests in 2026/27 to enhance administrative efficiency and improve transparency.

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### 2026/27 FUNDING REQUEST PROCESS CHANGES

| Requirements                                     | 2025/26   | 2026/27  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Funding Request Submission</b>                | Submit 2025/26 PD Funding Request form, after paying for or enrolling in course, workshop or conference | Submit 2026/27 PD Funding Request form, receipt of payment, and proof of completion after <b>completing</b> course, workshop or conference   |
| <b>Post-secondary Submission Deadline</b>        | Due anytime in the fiscal year, from April 1 to March 31  | Due within three calendar months of completion in most cases. But for courses started between January and March 2027, due within three calendar months of completion or by June 30, 2027, whichever is sooner. |
| <b>Workshops/Conferences Submission Deadline</b> | Due anytime in the fiscal year, from April 1 to March 31  | Due within three calendar months of completion or by March 31, 2027, whichever is sooner   |

\*RT funding for employers has been discontinued.

More information is available in the [Funding Guide for Early Childhood Educator Workforce Supports](#).