

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Child and Family Services
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Child Care Providers

FROM: Office of Child and Family Services

DATE: September 29, 2023

SUBJECT: CCDF ECCP® Stipend Award Guidance

In November 2022, the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) announced a new ECCP® stipend initiative funded by supplemental Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Discretionary Funds allocated through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) (Public Law 117-2). This initiative awarded a one-time \$5,000 stipend for child care providers who access and successfully complete certain types of early childhood mental health consultation services through the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP®) program. These federal ARPA funds expire on September 30, 2023, and \$5,000 stipends will not be available through these funds after that date.

In recognition of the success of the ARPA ECCP® stipend awards, OCFS will initiate a new ECCP® stipend funded with Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Discretionary Funds. This stipend is meant to further support Maine's child care providers, and continue to place value on the three goals outlined in the Child Care Plan for Maine: increase access, quality, and workforce.

OCFS has allocated CCDF Discretionary funds to recognize child care programs that participate ECCP® program. Programs that participate in ECCP® Core Classroom Services or Family Child Care Provider Services and meet the eligibility requirements outlined below are eligible to receive stipends. OCFS will issue stipends through June 30, 2024, or the until allocated funds are exhausted.

Eligibility & Requirements:

- Licensed child care facilities and licensed family child care providers are eligible for stipends.
 - License-exempt and programs licensed solely under the Department of Education, such as a public Pre-K classroom, are not eligible for stipends.
- Eligible programs may receive one **\$500** stipend per classroom or family child care program after completing participation in Core Classroom Services **or** Family Child Care Provider Services through June 30, 2024.

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- Stipends will be awarded per classroom or family child care program. Programs may receive multiple stipends if they meet the criteria below.
- ECCP® Child-Specific Services are not eligible for a stipend.
- Requirements for a **completed** service include:
 - The program must complete all service visits in the Core Classroom or Family Child Care Provider Service up to and including the one-month follow-up visit.
 - To qualify, the head or lead teacher in the classroom or program receiving the Core Classroom or Family Child Care Provider Service must remain employed by the program and serving as the head or lead teacher in the classroom throughout the service through the one-month follow-up visit. If the head or lead teacher leaves employment or is re-assigned to another classroom prior to the one-month follow-up visit, the classroom or program will not be eligible for a stipend.
- Programs must use **100%** of the awarded \$500 stipend to purchase resources and/or materials to support social-emotional learning or development in the classroom or program. Examples of qualifying resources and materials are provided in Appendix A. Qualifying purchases are not limited to the provided examples in Appendix A.
 - Programs do not need to request authorization from OCFS or ECCP® consultants for the type of resource or material purchased. Programs shall use their professional judgment in their selection of materials. However, programs should be able to document and identify purchases made with the \$500 stipend awards if requested by OCFS.
- Programs do not need to register or complete applications with OCFS to receive this stipend. OCFS will automatically award the \$500 stipends to programs who complete qualifying ECCP® services and meet the eligibility requirements as stated above. Stipends will be distributed to programs by mail or through direct deposit, consistent with the method the program typically receives other payments from OCFS, such as Child Care Subsidy Payment funds.

For more information, please contact the ECCP® program at our office at 1-877-680-5866 or 207-624-7991 or email ECCPProgram.DHHS@maine.gov.

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APPENDIX A

CCDF ECCP® Stipend Award Guidance: Examples of Qualifying Resources/Materials

Programs must use **100%** of the awarded \$500 stipend to purchase resources and/or materials to support social-emotional learning or development in the classroom or program. Examples of qualifying resources and materials are provided in the following list. Qualifying purchases are not limited to the provided examples in Appendix A.

Programs do not need to request authorization from OCFS or ECCP® consultants for the type of resource or material purchased. Programs shall use their professional judgment in their selection of materials. However, programs should be able to document and identify purchases made with the \$500 stipend awards if requested by OCFS.

- Social-Emotional Learning curriculum.
- Children’s books and stories that promote emotional and social development of young children.
- Educational books for teachers/educators about social-emotional development, behavior management, positive guidance, inclusion practices, and/or mental health, among other topics.
- Dramatic play materials, including but not limited to puppets, dolls/dollhouses, figurines, and/or dress-up props.
- Materials to create a “cozy corner” or quiet area of the classroom or program. Such materials include, but are not limited to children’s books, cushions, seating, lighting, music/noise machines, plush toys, sensory regulation/integration items.
- Animal families, bear counter families, people families figurines.
- Toys to encourage pair play, including but not limited to wagons, teeter totters, sleds.
- Sensory calming toys.
- Mirrors for infants/toddlers to explore recognizing self and facial expressions.
- Craft materials to be used for social emotional learning activities.
- Music, music players.