

Eligibility Transition to Ohio Benefits Guidance for Early Childhood Education Grantees

July 1, 2024, all Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grantees were required to transition to Ohio Benefits for eligibility, Child Care Time Attendance and Payment Information (TAP) for enrollment and attendance reporting. Utilizing the Ohio Benefits system should result in the following family and administrative improvements:

- Families will have one entry point for all early care and education programs and may have access to additional resources within the Ohio Benefits system.
- ECE Providers and County Department of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) staff will utilize a streamlined application process for ECE, Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) and the Child Care Choice program (CCCP) to support families.
- Enrollments in multiple programs can be managed to effectively guarantee that duplication of services do not overlap, while ensuring the maximum funding is eligible for all families.

Eligibility vs. Enrollment

Enrollment is completed by the ECE Grantee who determines admission for an ECE slot at a designated ECE site location.

Eligibility is determined by the CDJFS who is processing the application and obtaining appropriate documentation to determine if the family meets the criteria for ECE Grant funding. The CDJFS will determine eligibility through the Ohio Benefits system.

- Families need to complete a PFCC application for ECE Grant funding. All applications for Early Care and Education services will start with determining eligibility for PFCC and CCCP. The ECE Grant will be explored if ineligible for PFCC and CCCP.
- ECE Grantee Providers will be responsible for enrollment of a child but eligibility for Early Care and Education Services does not guarantee the enrollment at a grantee site.
- The family should contact their desired program to ensure there is space available for their child.

ECE Grant Application Process in Ohio Benefits

Effective **October 1, 2024**, families interested in participating in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grant program must complete a full PFCC application. This application may be completed in two ways:

1. Applying through the Ohio Benefits Self Service Portal. Visit Self-Service Portal at <https://ssp.benefits.ohio.gov/apspssp/ssp.portal>.

2. Completing a paper JFS 07200 and submitting to the county agency. Print or download the JFS 07200 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Cash Assistance, Medical and/or Child Care Assistance Application at <https://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS07200/pdf/>. This form should be submitted to their local County Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Eligibility Documents

ECE Grantees can help a family prepare for submitting their ECE Grant applications by having them gather the following documents:

- Proof of US Citizenship or qualified alien for the child
- Proof of Income* or any other money coming into the household (such as pay statements, tax records, award letters, child support)
- Proof of any Child Support paid for children not living with the applicant
- Categorical Eligibility, if not income
 - a) IEP signature page
 - b) Active Case Plan, Family Service Plan or receiving Kinship Permanency Incentive (KPI)
 - c) Zero Income Statement

Tips for Grantees: Supporting a Family with ECE Grant Eligibility

- Sit with the family to complete the paper or online application. Help the family gather **eligibility documentation**. Grantees should not be chosen as an authorized representative for the family they plan to serve but can assist in helping with the application process.
- Provide the **site license number** and program name.
- Encourage the family to use the **Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal**. The benefits of using the portal are application transparency as the system allows grantees to track the application, and increased efficiency because documents can be received with the application and the application is more likely to be complete.
- Share with the family that the **Child Care Assistance** application includes ECE Grant funding, even though it uses the term, Child Care Assistance.
- Eligibility for early care and education program results will then be shared with the family if they are eligible for Early Care and Education Services. Grantees can provide the **DCY 01115 Early Care and Education Services Release of Information** form which allows the grantee to have some information on eligibility determination and status of an application.
- County agencies use the term **caretaker** to mean the father or mother of a child, an adult who has legal custody of a child, an adult who is the guardian of a child, or an adult who stands in place of a parent.

Child Application Workflow

1. The first step for a family to receive ECE Grant funding is to first determine if the program has an opening for their child. If there is an opening, a family should collect the ECE Grantee's site location license number.
2. The family will apply through the Ohio Benefits Self Service Portal or through completing a paper JFS 07200 form and submit to the county agency.
3. The CDJFS will process the family's application. The CDJFS caseworker will reach out to the family if there are questions or if additional information needed. The Grantee can see the application status if the family applies through the Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal.
4. The CDJFS worker will assist the families to determine the best overall early care and education services for the family. Families can decide what best meets their needs (See the Early Care and Education Services Requirement Chart listed at the end of this document for more information on specific program requirements).
Funding selection is determined in the following order:
 - a. PFCC or CCCP at any program with a PFCC provider agreement
 - b. ECE Grant at an ECE Grantee location and additional PFCC or CCCP at a non-highly rated program with a provider agreement
 - c. ECE Grant only at an ECE Grantee location
5. The grantee can log into their TAP/KinderConnect account for updates on children authorized to their site.

Additional Resources

DCY Website

[Department of Children and Youth | Ohio.gov](https://www.ohio.gov/department-of-children-and-youth)

Early Childhood Education Grant Application Update

[DCY Guidance Letter 24-023- ECE Eligibility Determination.pdf \(ohio.gov\)](#)

Child Care Payment Assistance

<https://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/DCY01309/pdf/>

Early Care and Education Eligibility

<https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-partners/rules-and-resources/06-early-care-and-education-eligibility>

Early Care and Education Services Requirements Chart

Requirements	PFCC	CCC	ECE
Income	At or below 145% FPL	Between 146-200% FPL	At or below 200% FPL
Qualifying Activity	Required for all caretakers	Required for all caretakers	Not required for any caretaker
Ages Served	Children birth-13 years old (0-18 for special needs)	Children birth-13 years old (0-18 for special needs)	Children 3-5 years old & not Kindergarten eligible
Citizenship	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eligible Providers	Providers with a signed Provider Agreement (based on availability)	Providers with a signed Provider Agreement (based on availability)	Highly Rated program awarded the ECE grant and have a signed Provider Agreement
Allowable Hours	Up to 60+ weekly	Up to 60+ weekly	2 ½ - 5 hours only
Authorization Span	Through end of eligibility	Through end of eligibility	Through the end of June regardless of eligibility
Co-Payment	Determined by income & family size	DCY does not assign a co-payment (Additional costs may be required by the provider.)	DCY does not assign a co-payment (Additional costs may be required by the provider.)

Table Key

PFCC Publicly Funded Child Care

CCC Child Care Choice

ECE Early Childhood Education Grant

FPL Federal Poverty Level

Qualifying Activity Working or in school ([Qualifying Activities for the PFCC Program](#))

Highly Rated Step Up To Quality Silver or Gold