

CIRCULAR

Date: May 13, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19: 2020-82

To: Child care facilities, ELCC program staff

Subject: **Frequently Asked Questions about the Early Learning and Child Care Inclusion Support Program**

Program(s): All

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only
 Procedure Information Only

Effective Date Immediately

ISP Overview:

The Inclusion Support Program (ISP) helps licensed early learning and child care (ELCC) facilities address barriers, allowing a child with additional support needs to meaningfully and effectively participate in programming and activities.

Eligible facilities that need assistance to adequately support a child's inclusion in programming and activities may be considered for grant funding and other services under the ISP. All services must be provided in response to an identified need and could include: training, behavioural interventions, equipment/modifications or grants to enhance the staffing ratio and support inclusion.

ISP staffing grants are to be used to hire a casual Child Care Assistant to enhance the ratio and assist with regular programming. This staff is not intended to work one-on-one with a particular child, but to allow regular facility staff to be re-directed to support the inclusion of all children within the program.

Services provided under the ISP are subject to program eligibility, assessed need and availability of resources. Supports may vary due to changes in both the child's needs and facility's capacity, and are dependent upon the availability of resources. For example: During the COVID-19 response, previously-approved service plans have been suspended along with regular child care services. Facilities seeking ISP supports while providing temporary child care services must submit a new service-planning request to their Child Care Coordinator to determine the level and type of support needed in the new temporary space.

As of March 23, the ELCC program began providing all child care providers with information and direction in circulars. This approach is being used throughout the Department of Families to provide the most up-to-date information. Please regularly monitor your emails to ensure you stay informed or visit [COVID-19 Families Circulars](#)
Source: CIRCULAR: COVID-19: 2020-24

Frequently asked ISP questions during the COVID-19 response

1) Can I continue to submit ISP Staffing Grant Payment forms based on my previously-approved ISP service?

- No. Previously-approved ISP requests have been suspended along with regular child care services, effective March 20.

2) If a child attends my facility now, but previously attended a facility with ISP supports, will we receive those same supports?

- The child remains eligible for ISP; however, ISP supports cannot be transferred to another facility. A new service plan is required based on the capacity of the new enrollment in the temporary child care system. The reduced maximum group sizes at child care centres and the level of staffing in place need to be considered along with the needs of the child to determine how best to support the child to truly be included in facility programming. For example, smaller groups may allow for enhanced ratios to meet additional needs without further supports. Additionally, a greater range of ages in the group may result in increased need.

3) Under temporary child care services, my ratios are still the same. Why am I told they are already enhanced?

- Child care facilities continue to receive full operating grants during the suspension of regular child care services, based on the number of previously-licensed spaces. Combined with the federal wage enhancement grant, this allows child care facilities to continue to staff at higher levels than regulations require and will allow for enhanced ratios and the implementation of additional health and hygiene practices.

4) Where can I access public health information, including information on social/physical distancing related to the child care sector?

- Public health information for the ELCC sector is available at www.manitoba.ca/covid19 under Information for Manitobans. Click on the link for Licensed Child Care Facilities and Child Care Programming or Home-Based Child Care Providers for up-to-date resources.

5) Can we apply for support if a child does not already have confirmed eligibility, is in a new child care program and we are struggling to meet the child's needs?

- Yes, the usual eligibility and service planning process remains the same. Facilities struggling to support inclusive programming for all children despite smaller group sizes and changes to programs may submit an eligibility application to the ISP. Once eligibility has been confirmed, the facility would submit a service planning request form to their child care coordinator in order to complete an assessment. Please note that enhanced support is approved based upon the anticipated support required to meet a child's needs in a particular group setting, the child's individual needs and current centre dynamics.

6) When centres resume full operation, will we have to re-apply for enhanced support even if we were previously approved?

- This has not yet been determined due to the changing conditions of the COVID experience. Further information will be provided when it is clear we are moving in the direction of resuming full operations.

If you have any questions, please email cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca or call Manitoba Government Inquiry at 204-945-3744 or toll-free at 1-866-MANITOBA (1-866-626-4862). Manitoba Government Inquiry staff are working with the ELCC program, including Child Care Coordinators, to respond directly and refer calls and emails when needed.

Sincerely,
Early Learning and Child Care Program