

Early Childhood Education and Care Worker Retention Payment Grant Opportunity Guidelines

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Administering entity:	Department of Education
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact the department via email: ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au
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1. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Worker Retention Payment grant opportunity processes

The ECEC Worker Retention Payment is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives.

This grant opportunity contributes to the Department of Education's Outcome 1. We plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 \(CGRPs\)](#).



The grant opportunity opens.

We publish the grant guidelines on [GrantConnect](#).



You complete and submit a grant application.

You complete the Application Form and address all of the eligibility criteria to be considered for a grant.



We assess all grant applications.

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria.



Grant decisions are made.

We decide which applications are successful.



We notify you of the outcome.

We advise you of the outcome of your application.



We enter into a Grant Agreement.

We enter into a Grant Agreement with you if successful. The agreement will outline the terms and conditions for the grant.



Delivery of grant.

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your Grant Agreement. We manage the grant by monitoring grant activity and making payments.



Evaluation of the grant opportunity.

We evaluate your specific grant activity and the grant opportunity as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various other sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Worker Retention Payment grant opportunity.

You must read this document before applying for a grant.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity;
- the eligibility criteria;
- how grant applications are considered;
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments;
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated; and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

2. About the grant program

The purpose of this grant is to provide Australian Government funding to support a wage increase for all eligible ECEC workers from December 2024.

Eligible ECEC workers include:

- workers covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* and working in a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved Centre-Based Day Care (CBDC) or Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) service;
- workers covered by the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* and working in a CCS approved CBDC or OSHC service; and
- workers who are undertaking duties covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* or *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* and working in a CCS approved CBDC or OSHC service but are not covered by these awards (including workers covered by a state industrial instrument,¹ or working in a setting covered by a different award), and these duties constitute the majority of that worker's role.

Trainees who are undertaking duties covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* or *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* (or equivalent state award) are considered eligible ECEC workers.

The Australian Government is committed to providing funding towards a wage increase for eligible ECEC workers to recognise the value of the workforce and support the Government's ambition of universal access to affordable, quality ECEC.

Funding is calculated to support wages for workers who are either working in, or directly supporting, a CCS-approved setting. A CCS-approved setting is a setting in which CCS is claimable for the children who are receiving the ECEC.

The ECEC Worker Retention Payment (the program) will run over two years from 2 December 2024 to 30 November 2026.

¹ State industrial instrument means an award, an agreement (whether individual or collective), or another industrial instrument or order, that:

- (a) is made under, or recognised by, a law of a State that is a State or Territory industrial law; and
- (b) determines terms and conditions of employment.

The objectives of the program are to:

- support a meaningful wage increase for a historically undervalued, highly feminised sector that provides an essential service;
- contribute to the ongoing professionalisation of the ECEC sector;
- ensure ECEC remains accessible and affordable to families; and
- address workforce shortages as the Government considers a pathway to universal ECEC.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- improved attraction and retention of educators and early childhood teachers in the ECEC sector;
- improved access to high quality ECEC; and
- improved workplace instrument coverage in the ECEC sector.

We administer the program according to the CGRPs.

3. Grant amount and grant period

The Australian Government has announced a total investment of \$3.6 billion towards the ECEC Worker Retention Payment, of this up to \$3.5 billion has been made available for this grant opportunity. The grant funding awarded under this grant opportunity will be available from the first business day in December 2024 to 30 November 2026.

Funding provided is not capped but is dependent on a formula based on the labour costs for the charged hours of care provided by a service on a monthly basis and the Commonwealth contribution rate to support a wage increase. Charged hours of care is determined by administrative data held in the CCS system.

Labour costs are inclusive of salary-based allowances.

The formula has variations to account for differences in costs between different service and operating types. The payment will also be adjusted to account for seasonality across the year. To reduce viability concerns for Providers and 'smooth' payments across the calendar year, the funding amount provided may be increased in months with fewer charged hours on average and then be reduced during months with more charged hours.

The hourly rate input for each formula will be calculated from administrative data (average data from across the sector) prior to release of grant funding. The hourly rate will be updated on a six-monthly basis.

Providers may seek a review of their funding level where they can show, with evidence, they are not receiving adequate funding. In these circumstances, Providers need to contact ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

There may also be opportunity for Providers to apply for one-off funding towards accrued historical leave liabilities. This closed on 30 June 2025. Further information is provided at Section 5.2

The grant opportunity will be open for applications from 8 October 2024 to 30 September 2026.

4. Eligibility Criteria

We cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all of the eligibility criteria outlined below.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must:

- be a legal entity that provides CBDC or OSHC services (a Provider). One Provider may apply in relation to one or multiple service locations (Services) that the Provider owns and operates.

The Provider must be:

- an incorporated or unincorporated body or association; or
- a private or public company; or
- a registered co-operative; or
- a state/territory government body, or
- a local council; or
- an Indigenous corporation; or
- a sole trader; or
- a partnership.

The Provider must for each service on the application:

- have a valid ABN;
- have a valid account registered with a recognised Australian financial institution;
- be approved by the Department of Education to administer CCS payments as evidenced by a valid and current CCS approval number;
- meet and maintain all eligibility requirements of continued CCS approval for the duration of your Grant Agreement under this Grant Opportunity;
- have a legally enforceable workplace instrument in place, in line with Section 4.3; and
- not increase their Service fees by more than:
 - 4.4 per cent in the 12 months from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2025, 4.2 per cent from 8 August 2025 to 7 August 2026, and for each subsequent period, by more than the amount equivalent to the specified growth rate based on the Childcare Services Cost Index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), to be eligible from 2 December 2024; or
 - 8.6 per cent in the 24 months from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2026 (and by no more than 4.2 per cent from 8 August 2025 to 7 August 2026), and for each subsequent period, by more than the amount equivalent to the specified growth rate based on the Childcare Services Cost Index developed by the ABS, to be eligible from 1 December 2025; or
 - in relation to either time period specified above, such other fee growth percentage caps as may be determined by the Department (see Section 9.1 for further detail) (Fee Constraint Condition).

4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you:

- are an organisation included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au); or
- are a Commonwealth agency or body (including government business enterprises); or
- are an overseas resident; or
- are any organisation not included in Section 4.1.

4.3 Eligible workplace instruments

To be eligible for the grant, the Provider must have in place a legally enforceable workplace instrument(s) until at least the end of the grant period (see Section 2). Subject to the minimum threshold described below, the Provider must take all reasonable steps to engage all eligible ECEC workers at a Service under workplace instrument(s) that:

- include an obligation to pay workers at least 10 per cent above the applicable award rate for the relevant classification under the *Children's Services Award 2010* and/or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* (as relevant); and
- provide for an additional 5 per cent above the applicable award rate for the relevant classification under the *Children's Services Award 2010* and/or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* (as relevant) from 1 December 2025.

A workplace instrument which limits the application of the above amounts for the purpose of calculating penalties, loadings, termination payments, payments while on leave and superannuation will not be an eligible workplace instrument.

The workplace instrument must comply with any requirements imposed by the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) and any other requirement enforceable by law, as they apply to the workplace instrument, or it will not be an eligible workplace instrument.

Providers must provide information to all eligible ECEC workers on the types of compliant workplace instrument. During the term of the Grant Agreement, the Provider must confirm that they provided this information in accordance with reporting requirements outlined at Section 11.1 and in the Grant Agreement.

Schedule A sets out the minimum dollar value amounts that all eligible ECEC workers are to be provided as a pay increase in order for a Provider to be eligible for funding. An exception to the additional minimum amount payable applies in the case of the Annual Wage Review uplift when a Provider is paying above award (detailed below).

Minimum threshold

The Department acknowledges that there may be some limited instances where despite taking all reasonable steps, a Provider is unable to demonstrate that all eligible ECEC workers at a Service are engaged under legally enforceable workplace instrument(s) that meets the requirements of this Section at all times, or in all circumstances.

Accordingly, the minimum percentage of all eligible ECEC workers at a Service that must be engaged by a Provider under a workplace instrument(s) that meets the requirements of this Section 4.3 at all times until at least the end of the grant period is 95 per cent.

In circumstances where a Provider is unable to confirm that they have met the threshold above, the Provider will be required to report on what reasonable steps were taken to try to achieve this.

Where a Provider is unable to meet or is found to have fallen below the applicable threshold percentage for a Service, and has not provided evidence as to why, the Provider will not be entitled to receive grant funding in relation to that Service.

In accordance with the general protections in the *Fair Work Act 2009*, a Provider must not coerce or exert undue influence or pressure on an eligible ECEC worker to agree to, or terminate, a workplace instrument.

Further, where a Provider has an existing legally enforceable workplace instrument in place which covers all eligible ECEC workers at a Service and that includes rates that are in excess of the applicable award rates, and for which a variation to the instrument to meet the requirements of this Section 4.3 would be too onerous, the Department may exercise discretion in considering whether another form of instrument may be used to satisfy the criteria set out in Section 4.3 of these guidelines. This instrument must include the minimum rates specified in Section 4.3 of these guidelines and must be enforceable by employees or an employee-organisation.

Schedule A and impact of the Annual Wage Review or equivalent state processes

The amounts in Schedule A will increase in accordance with any increase in the award rates for each classification under the *Children's Services Award 2010* or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* as a result of an Annual Wage Review (AWR) of the Fair Work Commission or determination to vary the award to maintain a differential of 10 per cent above the applicable award rates (15 per cent from 1 December 2025), as the award rates increase in accordance with the AWR.

- In this scenario, a Provider is not required to increase their rates of pay again to account for the AWR uplift between 1 July 2025 and 30 November 2025 if they pay at or more than 10 per cent above the new applicable award rate following the AWR.
- A Provider paying above the new applicable award rates following the AWR, but not at or more than 10 per cent, must increase their rates of pay to at least the rates outlined in Column 4 of Table 4 for *Children's Services Award 2010* and Column 3 of Table 5 for *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020*.
- The same principle will apply from 1 July 2026 for Providers who have been paying at or more than 15 per cent above the new applicable award rate following the AWR.

The totals in Schedule A have been updated to reflect an additional 5 per cent above the applicable award rates (a total 15 per cent differential) from 1 December 2025.

Providers must pass on at least the additional minimum amount payable to all eligible ECEC workers from 1 December 2025, even those already paid at or above the minimum rate.

Without being prescriptive as to how they might do so, Providers must undertake to ensure that eligible ECEC workers covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* continue to be paid at least 10 per cent above the applicable award rates and provide the additional 5 per cent increase as outlined above.

For those eligible ECEC workers not covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* (for example, those workers covered by a state industrial instrument), there may be equivalent wage review processes that impact the award rate. Without being prescriptive as to how they might do so, these Providers must undertake to ensure that those eligible ECEC workers continue to be paid at least 10 per cent above the applicable award rates, and provide the additional 5 per cent increase from 1 December 2025 as outlined above. No updates to Schedule A will be made to reflect changes due to any equivalent wage review decision.

Impact of Gender Undervaluation Proceedings

On 10 December 2025, the Expert Panel of the Fair Work Commission concluded its examination of the *Children's Services Award 2010* on work value grounds, determining that an increase applies for most classifications under the *Children's Services Award 2010*, as well as introducing a simplified classification structure. Changes to the *Children's Services Award 2010* come into effect from 1 March 2026. Further information on the gender undervaluation proceedings is available on the Fair Work Commission website.

From 1 March 2026 for workers to whom the *Children's Services Award 2010* applies, the minimum hourly rate payable for a classification in Schedule A has been updated for those paid at or above the minimum rate.

The ECEC Worker Retention Payment will absorb any increases to the *Children's Services Award 2010* resulting from the gender undervaluation proceedings determined by the Fair Work Commission. This means that the above award requirement (under Section 4.3), will be reduced by the quantum of any changes to the *Children's Services Award 2010* determined through this process.

Additionally, should gender-based work value increases to the *Children's Services Award 2010* match the ECEC Worker Retention Payment amount, the updated *Children's Services Award 2010* could function as a compliant workplace instrument for the purpose of funding eligibility.

Note: *The Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* is not being considered as part of the FWC proceedings. State industrial instruments are also not in scope of the FWC proceedings. Therefore, the minimum rate requirements for eligible ECEC workers to whom the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* or a state industrial instrument applies are unaffected by the FWC proceedings in relation to work value.

5. What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

The grant is to be used only for supplementing wages and eligible on-costs for eligible ECEC workers at your Service(s).

5.2 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure.

The only eligible expenditure items are:

1. Supplementing wages for eligible ECEC workers at your Service(s).
2. Paying eligible on-costs for eligible ECEC workers at your Service(s) including superannuation contributions, employee entitlements, leave loading, workers' compensation insurance and payroll tax.
3. Further eligible on-costs, as may be approved by the Department in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

Any funds provided by this grant must first be expended on supplementing wages for eligible ECEC workers. Only once all eligible ECEC workers have been paid at least the amounts in accordance with Section 4.3 above and any Grant Agreement can any remaining funding be used for eligible on-costs.

Funds cannot be used for any other purpose, even if funds are provided in excess of the amount required to cover the payments in accordance with Section 4.3 and any Grant Agreement.

Providers who apply on or before 30 June 2025 have the opportunity to apply for funding towards accrued historical leave liabilities that will increase as a result of applying the ECEC Worker Retention Payment. Eligible historical leave liabilities include long service leave, annual leave plus any loadings applicable, and personal/carer's leave. Funding will be available in a one-off payment to eligible providers. The funding will cover a set percentage of the increase to eligible historical leave liabilities accrued before application.

More information about historical leave liabilities is available through the application process. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis.

5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for

You **cannot** use the grant funding:

- To subsidise the cost of your current wage expenditure. If you currently (at the time of application) pay workers above the applicable award rates under the *Children's Services Award 2010*, *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* or other award or state industrial instrument, grant funding may only be used to fund the costs of increases to rates by an amount equivalent to the 10 per cent and then an additional 5 per cent of the applicable award in accordance with Section 4.3. You must not decrease your existing contribution towards wages for eligible ECEC workers and substitute this with the grant funding.
 - The only exception to this is for Providers who are required to pay any uplift to the *Children's Services Award 2010* required by the Fair Work Commission's gender undervaluation proceedings (outlined at Section 4.3) prior to being issued with a Grant Agreement. In this instance, the Provider may decrease their wage expenditure upon receiving funding and use grant funds to pay the required gender undervaluation uplift, provided the minimum rates at Schedule A are still applied. This is to ensure the ECEC Worker Retention Payment absorbs increases to the *Children's Services*

Award 2010 resulting from the gender undervaluation proceedings, regardless of when a Provider receives their Grant Agreement.

- For any purpose that is not supplementing wages and eligible on-costs for eligible ECEC workers at your Service(s).
- For costs incurred in the preparation of the grant application or related documentation
- For costs associated with facilitating the increase such as administrative expenses, accounting, legal fees or financial advice.
- For costs associated with joining or developing a workplace instrument.

6. How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines. These guidelines do not constitute business, investment, legal or tax advice and you should seek independent professional advice in respect of all matters in connection with any application for grant funding.

These documents may be found on [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations and addenda² will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

To apply you must:

- meet all eligibility criteria;
- complete the online application form;
- provide all the information requested;
- include all necessary attachments; and
- submit your application/s to the Department of Education using the application form by 30 September 2026.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code 1995* and may also give rise to offences under the Family Assistance Law. We will also investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should email us immediately at ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application but may delay the application process.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your application within five business days of receiving it.

6.1 Attachments to the application

The following document must be included with your application:

² Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents

- a copy of your current in-force workplace instrument(s) that meets the requirements of Section 4.3 above, or a link to the workplace instrument(s) (on the Fair Work Commission website) if registered with the Fair Work Commission. A copy of the current in-force workplace instrument(s) must be provided with your application if not registered with the Fair Work Commission.

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

6.2 Timing of grant opportunity

You can submit an application at any time while the grant opportunity is open. The grant opportunity will run from 8 October 2024 to 30 September 2026. Applications submitted after the opportunity end date cannot be accepted. Payments will be made from January 2025 to December 2026 covering the period from 2 December 2024 until 30 November 2026. Providers may be given an opportunity for a payment to support the costs of increases to or above the relevant rates over the December 2024 period. Please note that this payment will be reconciled when the regular payment cycle commences in January 2025 (it is not an additional payment).

6.3 Backdating provision

An application submitted by 30 September 2025 that is awarded grant funding will receive funding in arrears backdated to:

- 2 December 2024 where the Provider has a workplace instrument(s) in place meeting the requirements outlined in Section 4.3 covering the full grant period from 2 December 2024 (this could include instruments adopted or formed after 2 December 2024 that are backdated); or
- the date from which the workplace instrument(s) applies where the Provider has a workplace instrument(s) in place meeting the requirements outlined in Section 4.3 commencing after 2 December 2024 but before 30 September 2025.

For example, where an application is submitted by 30 September 2025:

- A Provider that adopts or forms a compliant workplace instrument on 28 February 2025 that came into effect on 2 December 2024 would be eligible for funding backdated to 2 December 2024.
- A Provider that adopts or forms a compliant workplace instrument that comes into effect on 28 February 2025 would be eligible for funding backdated to 28 February 2025.

Applications are considered submitted and eligible for backdating if all applicable fields of the application form have been completed, and supporting evidence provided, to the best of the Provider's ability. In the event that a Provider attempts to form or join a workplace instrument before 30 September 2025 but it may not be approved until after the deadline, the Provider may still receive backdated funding as long as they submitted an application by 30 September 2025 and provided evidence that indicates they are awaiting approval of the workplace instrument.

Applications submitted after 30 September 2025 are not eligible for backdated funding.

Approved applications submitted after 30 September 2025 will be eligible to receive grant funding from the latter of:

- the date the application was submitted; or
- the date from which the eligible workplace instrument(s) applies.

6.4 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

7. The grant selection process

Your application will be considered through a demand driven grant process.

We will check your application to ensure it meets the eligibility criteria in order of application receipt. Application does not guarantee you will be awarded grant funding.

Your application will be assessed for eligibility within two months of receipt of your complete and accurate application.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors or omissions in your application, you may be contacted to correct, complete or explain the information.

Your application may not be considered complete and accurate until this further information is received.

7.1 Who will approve grants?

The Secretary of the Department of Education (or their delegate) is the Program Delegate and decides which grant applications to approve for the purposes of the grant program.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant;
- the grant amount to be awarded; and
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

8. Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

9. Successful grant applications

Providers must enter into a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth as represented by the Department of Education. The Department of Education will use a Grant Agreement to formalise the grant with general terms and conditions that cannot be changed.

The Department of Education must execute a Grant Agreement with a Provider before it can make any payments to that Provider. The Department of Education is not responsible for any expenditure committed by a Provider for wages paid as required under their workplace instrument (or other voluntary reason) prior to the execution of a Grant Agreement with the Department of Education. If a Provider chooses to pay workers amounts nominally covered by this grant before they have an executed Grant Agreement, they do so at their own risk.

A Grant Agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate.

The Grant Agreement will state the:

- Service(s) that have been deemed eligible;
- eligibility requirements of the grant;
- conditions of the grant;
- obligations in relation to the grant, including reporting requirements.

9.1 The Grant Agreement

Grantees (Providers who have been awarded a grant) will be required to agree to certain conditions in order to receive grant payments. These include:

- limiting Service fee growth in accordance with the Fee Constraint Condition (see further detail below);
- complying with the requirements to pay eligible ECEC workers in accordance with Section 4.3 (and for Providers already paying workers at this rate, a requirement to provide increases in pay equivalent to the amounts outlined in Section 4.3);
- passing on the full amount of grant funding by supplementing wages or eligible on-costs for eligible ECEC workers;
- complying with the terms of their workplace instrument(s);
- maintaining CCS approval; and
- complying with all applicable laws including the Family Assistance Law.

The Commonwealth may investigate or audit Providers to ensure compliance with the above conditions. Providers should be aware that provision of false, fraudulent or misleading information may be a criminal offence under the Criminal Code and Family Assistance Law and where the Commonwealth considers false or misleading information has been provided or fraudulent conduct has occurred, the Commonwealth may terminate the Grant Agreement and/or require repayment of grant funds to the Commonwealth.

Minimum threshold

In circumstances where a Provider is unable to confirm that they have met the minimum threshold as per Section 4.3 during the term of the Grant Agreement, the Provider will be required to report on what reasonable steps were taken to try to achieve the threshold, in accordance with the process outlined in the Grant Agreement.

Workplace instrument information

Providers must provide information to all eligible ECEC workers on the types of compliant workplace instrument. During the term of the Grant Agreement, the Provider must confirm to the Department that they provided this information in accordance with the process outlined in the Grant Agreement. The Department will monitor compliance with this requirement and may take grant management and compliance action in relation to any non-compliance.

Fee Constraint Condition

In addition to the eligibility criterion, all grantees must adhere to the Fee Constraint Condition, being annual fee growth percentage caps applicable from the date of announcement of the Grant Opportunity and for the duration of the term of the Grant Agreement.

Unless alternative fee growth percentage caps are determined by the Department of Education (see further details below), to be eligible for funding from 2 December 2024, the fee growth percentage caps are as follows:

- a maximum 4.4 per cent increase to Service fees applies from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2025 (12 months post announcement);
- a maximum 4.2 per cent increase to Service fees applies from 8 August 2025 to 7 August 2026; and
- for subsequent periods until the conclusion of the grant, a maximum increase equivalent to the specified growth rate based on the new annual Childcare Services Cost Index which has been developed by the ABS specifically for the ECEC sector.

Unless alternative fee growth percentage caps are determined by the Department of Education, to be eligible for funding from 1 December 2025, a grantee who has exceeded the 4.4 per cent increase to Service fees from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2025 must adhere to the following fee growth percentage caps:

- a maximum 8.6 per cent increase to Service fees from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2026 (with no more than a 4.2 per cent increase between 8 August 2025 and 7 August 2026); and
- for subsequent periods until the conclusion of the grant, a maximum increase equivalent to the specified growth rate based on the new annual Childcare Services Cost Index.

Fee growth monitoring

The Department of Education will review all hourly Service fees of every Service receiving grant funding, according to submitted session reports from the last CCS reporting fortnight before 8 August in each year of the term. The Service fees for this reference period will be used to measure Service fee growth against the Fee Constraint Condition. Additional information may be required to be reported or submitted by grantees during the term of the Grant Agreement to assist the Department to determine whether the relevant fee growth percentage cap has been complied with (see Section 11 below).

Service fees will be monitored by the Department for the length of the Grant Agreement. Where a Service is identified as having exceeded a growth percentage cap, the Department of Education will contact the relevant grantee and seek evidence to demonstrate they are not in breach of a fee growth cap.

New Services, and Services subject to change of ownership, face the same constraints on annual fee growth over the relevant period as existing Services participating in the grant. See Section 11 below for further detail regarding transfer of Services.

Alternative fee growth percentage caps

In limited circumstances where a restriction on Service fee growth can be shown to seriously impact the financial viability of the Provider/grantee or a Service, Providers/grantees may request Departmental consideration of the impact of the fee growth percentage caps for specific Services covered by the Grant Agreement. Providers/grantees can apply for an alternative fee growth cap as part of their initial Grant Application or subsequently via submitting a Grant Agreement variation request form.

In such circumstances, the Department may determine that less restrictive fee growth percentage caps are to apply under the Fee Constraint Condition. Providers are required to comply with any alternative fee growth percentage caps under the Fee Constraint Condition and the Department will monitor compliance and may take grant management and compliance action in relation to any non-compliance with the applicable Fee Constraint Condition as set out in this Section 9.1.

The alternative fee growth percentage cap process will remain available throughout the grant period and may be streamlined should there be a sector-wide event impacting viability for a large number of Services.

Contravention of Fee Constraint Condition

Where a Service is found to have contravened the Fee Constraint Condition, the grantee will not be entitled to receive further grant funding in relation to that Service unless the Service reduces their Service fees to a level at or below the allowable fee growth percentage cap.

The Department may also be entitled to exercise its contractual rights of repayment and other remedies under the Grant Agreement.

Funding must be passed on to eligible ECEC workers

All funds allocated to your Service(s) under the Grant Agreement must be passed on to eligible ECEC workers to supplement wages or must be applied to eligible on-costs (in accordance with Section 5.2 above). The Department may request evidence of compliance.

Funding cannot be used to subsidise the cost of your current wage expenditure, in accordance with Section 5.3. If you pay workers above the applicable award rates payable under the *Children's Services Award 2010*, *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* or other award or state industrial instrument, grant funding may only be used to fund increases to rates by an amount equivalent to the 10 per cent and then an additional 5 per cent of the applicable award in accordance with Section 4.3.

Where a grantee fails to meet the obligations of the Grant Agreement, the Department or other relevant Commonwealth entity may issue a breach of agreement notice which may result in the termination of the agreement and/or require repayment of funds to the Commonwealth.

Ongoing obligation to pay at least 10 per cent above the applicable award rates, and provide a further 5 per cent from 1 December 2025

Without being prescriptive as to how they might do so, Providers must ensure that during the term of the grant agreement, eligible ECEC workers covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* continue to be paid at least 10 per cent above the applicable award rates, increased to 15 per cent above the relevant applicable award rates from 1 December 2025. Schedule A reflects the relevant amounts for these Providers.

For those eligible ECEC workers not covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* (for example, those workers covered by a state industrial instrument), Providers must ensure that during the term of the Grant Agreement, those eligible ECEC workers continue to be paid at least 10 per cent above the applicable award rates under the relevant state or other award, and are provided the additional 5 per cent increase above the applicable award from 1 December 2025 as outlined in Section 4.3.

Providers who already pay workers above the applicable award rate

In accordance with Section 4.3, Providers who already pay workers above the applicable award rate must provide for a dollar value increase equivalent to 10 per cent above the applicable award rate for the relevant classification under the relevant award, increasing by an additional 5 per cent above the applicable award from 1 December 2025.

9.2 How we pay the grant

Payments will be made through the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS).

Grant funds will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for each Service in the CCSS, that has been used to pay the CCS. Grantees should ensure that their bank account details in the CCSS are up to date. It is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure that the payments are allocated correctly for each Service it manages. The Department will provide the Provider with a list of payments each month for their Service(s).

The grant will be paid in arrears every four weeks. The amount paid each month will be calculated based on the hours of care provided at the Service using CCS data.

9.3 Grant Payments and GST

There is no GST payable on the grant payments associated with this grant.

We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).³ We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

10. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website within 21 days after the date of effect⁴ as required by Section [5.4 of the CGRPs](#).

11. How we monitor your grant activity

Activity will be monitored through existing CCS monitoring and compliance systems as well as grant specific monitoring. Monitoring methodologies will vary and may involve the analysis of data, document reviews, quality assurance checks and internal audits.

The grantee has the responsibility to maintain grant related documentation and the administrative capacity to meet the required compliance and reporting standards. The Department may request relevant documentation for monitoring and compliance activities such as random audits and spot checks.

Compliance with the grant conditions including but not limited to the Fee Constraint Condition, workplace instrument coverage, rates of pay, and requirement to maintain CCS approval will be monitored for the duration of the grant. Providers identified through monitoring will be contacted and asked to provide evidence to demonstrate they are not in breach of the relevant grant conditions. Providers may also be asked to report or provide information from time to time to confirm they continue to meet the grant conditions.

In accordance with the Family Assistance Law, non-compliance with the Grant conditions may be a matter the Secretary has regard to in assessing whether a Provider is a fit and proper person to be involved in the administration of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy.

³ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

⁴ See glossary

11.1 Reporting Requirements

It is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure all relevant information is provided to the Department and is kept up to date.

Change of situation

If any of the following change, it is the Provider/grantee's responsibility to notify the Commonwealth of:

- the addition of a new Service or the removal of an existing one from the Provider/grantee's management;
- a change in the director or owner of the Provider/grantee; and/or
- the transfer of one of your Services to or from another Provider, including the CRN of the new Provider and the date of transfer.

Changes of situation may necessitate submitting a Grant Agreement variation request form or a new grant application. For further support a Provider can contact the CCS helpdesk (1300 667 276 or ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au). See also further detail below regarding transfer of Services.

Failing to keep information up to date may constitute non-compliance with the terms of your Grant Agreement and result in the Commonwealth recouping incorrect payments and/or terminating your Grant Agreement.

Transfer of Services

For Providers with multiple Services (receiving or losing a Service), a Grant Agreement variation request form will need to be submitted (available through the [Grants Portal](#)) to reflect any transfer of Services (receiving or losing Services). Additional information may be required to be reported or submitted by grantees in relation to a transfer as reasonably required by the Department. When a Provider loses a Service, the funding approval for that Service will be terminated (but the Provider can continue to be funded for retained Services provided they continue to meet eligibility criteria and the conditions of their Grant Agreement). If a Provider loses its only Service receiving grant funding, then the Grant Agreement as a whole will be terminated.

Providers already receiving grant funding who acquire a new Service will only be eligible to receive grant funding for the new Service provided they continue to meet the eligibility criteria and the conditions of their Grant Agreement (including regarding the Fee Constraint Condition). The Department reviews the hourly Service fees of each Service receiving grant funding, according to submitted session reports from the last CCS reporting fortnight before 8 August in each year of the term to measure Service fee growth against the Fee Constraint Condition (see Section 9.1 above).

If a Service is acquired by a Provider with no other Services receiving this grant, they will need to submit a new grant application and meet the eligibility criteria in order to be eligible for grant funding. If a Provider increased Service fees up to the fee growth cap prior to transferring that Service to the new Provider, the new Provider would not be able to increase Service fees any further for that Service.

Fraud

The Commonwealth defines fraud as dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means. You must ensure your personnel and subcontractors do not engage in any fraud in relation to the grant activity, including CCS-related fraud.

If you become aware of fraud in relation to the performance of the grant activity or any other fraud that has had or may have an effect on the performance of the activity, then **within 5 business days you must report it to the Commonwealth** and all appropriate law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

You can report fraud or suspected fraud using the department's anonymous fraud tip-off line at Whispli: [Whispli report](#)

Workplace instrument declaration

In accordance with Section 4.3, grantees will be required to submit a declaration confirming eligible ECEC workers were provided with information about the types of compliant workplace instrument. This must be submitted to the Department within 90 days of the date of execution on the Grant Agreement.

Annual declaration and financial statement

Grantees must submit an annual declaration confirming that all expenditure aligns with eligible grant activities and expenditure outlined at Section 5 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. The declaration must be signed and submitted on behalf of the grantee by its board, the chief executive officer, or an authorised officer.

Grantees must submit an annual financial statement on a standardised template including total expenditure on wages and eligible on-costs.

Giving false or misleading information is a serious criminal offence. Persons who do so, may be prosecuted under Section 137.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*.

Further information regarding the compliance checks that will be used by the Department will be outlined in the Grant Agreement.

11.2 Evaluation

We will evaluate the ECEC Worker Retention Payment program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application for this purpose. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

11.3 Acknowledgement

All materials related to grants under the program must acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

'Early Childhood Education and Care Worker Retention Payment – an Australian Government initiative'

If you make a public statement about the grant activity funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

'This [Service/Provider] received grant funding from the Australian Government under the Early Childhood Education and Care Worker Retention Payment grant program.'

12. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs.

These guidelines may be changed by the Department of Education. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

12.1 Enquiries and feedback

The Department of Education's [complaints procedures](#) apply to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au.

If you do not agree with the way the Department of Education has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Department of Education.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

12.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the Department of Education's staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel;
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; and/or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department of Education in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13 \(7\)\)](#) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

12.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything which, if done by the Department of Education, would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

12.4 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the Grant Agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all the three conditions below:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the program delegate and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities

- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The Grant Agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the Grant Agreement.

12.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [*Freedom of Information Act 1982*](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Coordinator
 50 Marcus Clarke Street
 Canberra ACT 2601

By email: FOI@education.gov.au

13. Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act)
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes
date of effect	can be the date on which a Grant Agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no Grant Agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
decision maker	the person who makes a decision to award a grant.
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Commonwealth entity	a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act.
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles</i>	the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework applicable from 1 October 2024.
<i>Family Assistance Law</i>	has the same meaning as it has in the <i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> (Cth)
grant	for the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money⁵ or other <u>Consolidated Revenue Fund</u> (CRF) money⁶ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
grant activity/activities	refers to the project /tasks /services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant
<u>GrantConnect</u>	is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process

⁵ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁶ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single Department of Education PBS Program.
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
PBS Program	described within the entity's Portfolio Budget Statement , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities
relevant award	<i>Children's Services Award 2010, Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020</i> , state industrial instrument and/or different award as applicable.
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria
Service fees	the hourly fees charged by the Service, by care type and sub-cohort (e.g. age groups).

Schedule A – Minimum Rates

Table 1

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Children’s Services Award 2010*

Classification		Column 3 Award rate 2 Dec 2024 – 30 June 2025	Column 4 New minimum rate (award + 10%) 2 Dec 2024 – 30 June 2025	Column 5 Additional minimum amount payable to staff 2 Dec 2024 – 30 June 2025
		\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Support Worker				
Level 1.1****	On commencement	23.97	26.37	2.40
Level 2.1	On commencement	24.84	27.32	2.48
Level 2.2	After 1 year*	25.66	28.23	2.57
Level 3.1	On commencement	27.17	29.89	2.72
Children’s Services Employee				

Level 1.1****	On commencement	23.97	26.37	2.40
Level 2.1	On commencement	24.84	27.32	2.48
Level 2.2	After 1 year*	25.66	28.23	2.57
Level 3A.1**	On commencement	26.75	29.43	2.68
Level 3A.2**	After 1 year	27.17	29.89	2.72
Level 3.1	On commencement	27.17	29.89	2.72
Level 3.2	After 1 year*	28.1	30.91	2.81
Level 3.3	After 2 years*	28.99	31.89	2.90
Level 3.4 (Diploma)		30.59	33.65	3.06
Level 4A.1	On commencement	28.99	31.89	2.90
Level 4A.2	After 1 year*	29.39	32.33	2.94
Level 4A.3	After 2 years*	29.79	32.77	2.98
Level 4A.4	After 3 years*	30.21	33.23	3.02
Level 4A.5	After 4 years*	30.61	33.67	3.06
Level 4.1	On commencement	32	35.20	3.20
Level 4.2	After 1 year*	32.49	35.74	3.25
Level 4.3	After 2 years*	32.97	36.27	3.30

Level 5A.1	On commencement	33.46	36.81	3.35
Level 5A.2	After 1 year*	33.95	37.35	3.40
Level 5A.3	After 2 years*	34.43	37.87	3.44
Level 5.1	On commencement	33.46	36.81	3.35
Level 5.2	After 1 year*	33.95	37.35	3.40
Level 5.3	After 2 years*	34.43	37.87	3.44
Level 5.4***		34.55	38.01	3.46
Level 6A.1	On commencement	38.59	42.45	3.86
Level 6A.2	After 1 year*	39.07	42.98	3.91
Level 6A.3	After 2 years*	39.55	43.51	3.96
Children's Services Employee—Director				
Level 6.1	On commencement	38.59	42.45	3.86
Level 6.2	After 1 year*	39.07	42.98	3.91
Level 6.3	After 2 years*	39.55	43.51	3.96
Level 6.4	On commencement	41.02	45.12	4.10
Level 6.5	After 1 year*	41.4	45.54	4.14

Level 6.6	After 2 years*	41.89	46.08	4.19
Level 6.7	On commencement	42.39	46.63	4.24
Level 6.8	After 1 year *	42.88	47.17	4.29
Level 6.9	After 2 years*	43.36	47.70	4.34

*Reference to a year or years of service is to service in the industry

**Former Western Australian 'E' worker classification

***An Assistant Director who holds an Advanced Diploma (AQF 6/3 year qualified) must be paid no less than Level 5.4

****Rates applicable until 31 December 2024. See Table 3 for minimum rates from 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025.

Column 5 is the difference between the current minimum hourly rate (Column 3) and the new minimum hourly rate (Column 4) for a classification. This is the minimum dollar amount that all eligible ECEC workers are to be provided as a pay increase (even for those workers currently paid above award) in order for a Provider to be eligible for funding.

In accordance with Section 4.3 above, in order to be eligible for funding, a Provider's workplace instrument must provide for a 5 per cent increase from 1 December 2025, which is calculated as 5 per cent of the minimum award rate payable as at 1 December 2025.

Junior employees

Junior employees employed as, or undertaking duties equivalent to Children's Services Employees Level 3, 4 and 5 must be paid at or above the applicable adult rate stipulated above. Junior employees employed as or undertaking duties equivalent to Children's Services Employee Level 1 or Children's Services Employee Level 2 must be paid at or above the applicable junior rate in accordance with the award, plus the amount specified in Column 5.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent in December 2025.

Table 2

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020*

Classification	Column 2 Award rate 2 Dec 2024 – 30 June 2025	Column 3 New minimum rate (award + 10%) 2 Dec 2024 – 30 June 2025	Column 4 Additional minimum amount payable to staff 2 Dec 2024 – 30 June 2025
	\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Teachers – Long day care centres			
Level 1	36.74	40.41	3.67
Level 2	40.16	44.17	4.02
Level 3	43.72	48.09	4.37
Level 4	47.28	52.00	4.73
Level 5	50.83	55.92	5.08
Teachers – Preschools and Schools			
Level 1	35.33	38.86	3.53
Level 2	38.61	42.47	3.86
Level 3	42.03	46.24	4.20

Level 4	45.46	50.00	4.55
Level 5	48.88	53.77	4.89

Column 4 is the difference between the current minimum hourly rate (Column 2) and the new minimum hourly rate (Column 3), for a classification. This is the minimum dollar amount that all eligible ECEC workers are to be provided as a pay increase (even for those workers currently paid above award) in order for a Provider to be eligible for funding.

In accordance with Section 4.3 above, in order to be eligible for funding, a Provider's workplace instrument must provide for a 5 per cent increase from 1 December 2025, which is calculated as 5 per cent of the minimum award rate payable as at 1 December 2025.

The minimum rates and additional minimum amounts specified in Table 2 are based on hourly rates. Accordingly, for eligible ECEC workers whose pay rates are specified as weekly rates, those weekly rates should be divided by 38 hours when comparing with the rates set out in Table 2.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent in December 2025.

Table 3

For Eligible Level 1.1 ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Children’s Services Award 2010* – from 1 January 2025

Classification		Column 3 Award rate 1 Jan 2025 – 30 June 2025	Column 4 New minimum rate (award + 10%) 1 Jan 2025 – 30 June 2025	Column 5 Additional minimum amount payable to staff 1 Jan 2025 – 30 June 2025
		\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Support Worker				
Level 1.1	On commencement	24.10	26.51	2.41
Children’s Services Employee				
Level 1.1	On commencement	24.10	26.51	2.41

Column 5 is the difference between the current minimum hourly rate (Column 3) and the new minimum hourly rate (Column 4) for a classification. This is the minimum dollar amount that all eligible ECEC workers are to be provided as a pay increase (even for those workers currently paid above award) in order for a Provider to be eligible for funding.

In accordance with Section 4.3 above, in order to be eligible for funding, a Provider’s workplace instrument must provide for a 5 per cent increase from 1 December 2025, which is calculated as 5 per cent of the minimum award rate payable as at 1 December 2025.

Junior employees

Junior employees employed as, or undertaking duties equivalent to Children’s Services Employees Level 3, 4 and 5 must be paid at or above the applicable adult rate stipulated above. Junior employees employed as or undertaking duties equivalent to Children’s Services Employee Level 1 or Children’s Services Employee Level 2 must be paid at or above the applicable junior rate in accordance with the award, plus the amount specified in Column 5.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent in December 2025.

Table 4

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Children’s Services Award 2010* from 1 July 2025

Classification		Column 3 Award rate 1 July 2025 – 30 Nov 2025	Column 4 New minimum rate (award + 10%) 1 July 2025 – 30 Nov 2025	Column 5 Additional minimum amount payable to staff 1 July 2025 – 30 Nov 2025
		\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Support Worker				
Level 1.1	On commencement	24.95	27.45	2.50
Level 2.1	On commencement	25.71	28.28	2.57
Level 2.2	After 1 year*	26.56	29.22	2.66
Level 3.1	On commencement	28.12	30.93	2.81
Children’s Services Employee				
Level 1.1	On commencement	24.95	27.45	2.50
Level 2.1	On commencement	25.71	28.28	2.57
Level 2.2	After 1 year*	26.56	29.22	2.66

Level 3A.1**	On commencement	27.68	30.45	2.77
Level 3A.2**	After 1 year	28.12	30.93	2.81
Level 3.1	On commencement	28.12	30.93	2.81
Level 3.2	After 1 year*	29.09	32.00	2.91
Level 3.3	After 2 years*	30	33.00	3.00
Level 3.4 (Diploma)		31.66	34.83	3.17
Level 4A.1	On commencement	30	33.00	3.00
Level 4A.2	After 1 year*	30.42	33.46	3.04
Level 4A.3	After 2 years*	30.83	33.91	3.08
Level 4A.4	After 3 years*	31.27	34.40	3.13
Level 4A.5	After 4 years*	31.68	34.85	3.17
Level 4.1	On commencement	33.12	36.43	3.31
Level 4.2	After 1 year*	33.63	36.99	3.36
Level 4.3	After 2 years*	34.13	37.54	3.41
Level 5A.1	On commencement	34.63	38.09	3.46
Level 5A.2	After 1 year*	35.14	38.65	3.51
Level 5A.3	After 2 years*	35.63	39.19	3.56

Level 5.1	On commencement	34.63	38.09	3.46
Level 5.2	After 1 year*	35.14	38.65	3.51
Level 5.3	After 2 years*	35.63	39.19	3.56
Level 5.4***		35.76	39.34	3.58
Level 6A.1	On commencement	39.94	43.93	3.99
Level 6A.2	After 1 year*	40.44	44.48	4.04
Level 6A.3	After 2 years*	40.93	45.02	4.09
Children's Services Employee—Director				
Level 6.1	On commencement	39.94	43.93	3.99
Level 6.2	After 1 year*	40.44	44.48	4.04
Level 6.3	After 2 years*	40.93	45.02	4.09
Level 6.4	On commencement	42.46	46.71	4.25
Level 6.5	After 1 year*	42.85	47.14	4.29
Level 6.6	After 2 years*	43.36	47.70	4.34
Level 6.7	On commencement	43.88	48.27	4.39
Level 6.8	After 1 year *	44.38	48.82	4.44

Level 6.9	After 2 years*	44.88	49.37	4.49
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*Reference to a year or years of service is to service in the industry

**Former Western Australian 'E' worker classification

***An Assistant Director who holds an Advanced Diploma (AQF 6/3 year qualified) must be paid no less than Level 5.4

Column 5 is the difference between the minimum hourly rate from 1 July 2025 (Column 3) and the new minimum hourly rate (Column 4) for a classification. This is the minimum dollar amount that all eligible ECEC workers are to be provided as a pay increase (even for those workers currently paid above award) in order for a Provider to be eligible for funding (with the exception of the AWR uplift scenario outlined at Section 4.3).

In accordance with Section 4.3 above, in order to be eligible for funding, a Provider's workplace instrument must provide for a 5 per cent increase from 1 December 2025, which is calculated as 5 per cent of the minimum award rate payable as at 1 December 2025.

Junior employees

Junior employees employed as, or undertaking duties equivalent to Children's Services Employees Level 3, 4 and 5 must be paid at or above the applicable adult rate stipulated above. Junior employees employed as or undertaking duties equivalent to Children's Services Employee Level 1 or Children's Services Employee Level 2 must be paid at or above the applicable junior rate in accordance with the award, plus the amount specified in Column 5.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent in December 2025.

Table 5

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* from 1 July 2025

Classification	Column 2 Award rate 1 July 2025 – 30 Nov 2025	Column 3 New minimum rate (award + 10%) 1 July 2025 – 30 Nov 2025	Column 4 Additional minimum amount payable to staff 1 July 2025 – 30 Nov 2025
	\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Teachers – Long day care centres			
Level 1	38.02	41.83	3.81
Level 2	41.56	45.72	4.16
Level 3	45.24	49.77	4.53
Level 4	48.93	53.82	4.89
Level 5	52.61	57.87	5.26
Teachers – Preschools and Schools			
Level 1	36.56	40.22	3.66
Level 2	39.96	43.96	4.00
Level 3	43.51	47.86	4.35
Level 4	47.05	51.75	4.70

Level 5	50.59	55.65	5.06
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Column 4 is the difference between the minimum hourly rate from 1 July 2025 (Column 2) and the new minimum hourly rate (Column 3), for a classification. This is the minimum dollar amount that all eligible ECEC workers are to be provided as a pay increase (even for those workers currently paid above award) in order for a Provider to be eligible for funding (with the exception of the AWR uplift scenario outlined at Section 4.3).

In accordance with Section 4.3 above, in order to be eligible for funding, a Provider's workplace instrument must provide for a 5 per cent increase from 1 December 2025, which is calculated as 5 per cent of the minimum award rate payable as at 1 December 2025.

The minimum rates and additional minimum amounts specified in Table 5 are based on hourly rates. Accordingly, for eligible ECEC workers whose pay rates are specified as weekly rates, those weekly rates should be divided by 38 hours when comparing with the rates set out in Table 5.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent in December 2025.

Table 6

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Children’s Services Award 2010* from 1 December 2025 to 28 February 2026

Classification		Column 3 Award rate from 1 Dec 2025	Column 4 New minimum rate (award + 15%) 1 Dec 2025 to 28 February 2026	Column 5 Additional minimum amount payable to staff (5%) from 1 Dec 2025 to 28 February 2026	Column 6 Difference between new minimum rate and award (15%)
		\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Support Worker					
Level 1.1	On commencement	24.95	28.69	1.25	3.74
Level 2.1	On commencement	25.71	29.57	1.29	3.86
Level 2.2	After 1 year*	26.56	30.54	1.33	3.98
Level 3.1	On commencement	28.12	32.34	1.41	4.22
Children’s Services Employee					
Level 1.1	On commencement	24.95	28.69	1.25	3.74
Level 2.1	On commencement	25.71	29.57	1.29	3.86
Level 2.2	After 1 year*	26.56	30.54	1.33	3.98

Level 3A.1**	On commencement	27.68	31.83	1.38	4.15
Level 3A.2**	After 1 year	28.12	32.34	1.41	4.22
Level 3.1	On commencement	28.12	32.34	1.41	4.22
Level 3.2	After 1 year*	29.09	33.45	1.45	4.36
Level 3.3	After 2 years*	30.00	34.50	1.50	4.50
Level 3.4 (Diploma)		31.66	36.41	1.58	4.75
Level 4A.1	On commencement	30.00	34.50	1.50	4.50
Level 4A.2	After 1 year*	30.42	34.98	1.52	4.56
Level 4A.3	After 2 years*	30.83	35.45	1.54	4.62
Level 4A.4	After 3 years*	31.27	35.96	1.56	4.69
Level 4A.5	After 4 years*	31.68	36.43	1.58	4.75
Level 4.1	On commencement	33.12	38.09	1.66	4.97
Level 4.2	After 1 year*	33.63	38.67	1.68	5.04
Level 4.3	After 2 years*	34.13	39.25	1.71	5.12
Level 5A.1	On commencement	34.63	39.82	1.73	5.19
Level 5A.2	After 1 year*	35.14	40.41	1.76	5.27
Level 5A.3	After 2 years*	35.63	40.97	1.78	5.34
Level 5.1	On commencement	34.63	39.82	1.73	5.19

Level 5.2	After 1 year*	35.14	40.41	1.76	5.27
Level 5.3	After 2 years*	35.63	40.97	1.78	5.34
Level 5.4***		35.76	41.12	1.79	5.36
Level 6A.1	On commencement	39.94	45.93	2.00	5.99
Level 6A.2	After 1 year*	40.44	46.51	2.02	6.07
Level 6A.3	After 2 years*	40.93	47.07	2.05	6.14
Children's Services Employee— Director					
Level 6.1	On commencement	39.94	45.93	2.00	5.99
Level 6.2	After 1 year*	40.44	46.51	2.02	6.07
Level 6.3	After 2 years*	40.93	47.07	2.05	6.14
Level 6.4	On commencement	42.46	48.83	2.12	6.37
Level 6.5	After 1 year*	42.85	49.28	2.14	6.43
Level 6.6	After 2 years*	43.36	49.86	2.17	6.50
Level 6.7	On commencement	43.88	50.46	2.19	6.58
Level 6.8	After 1 year *	44.38	51.04	2.22	6.66
Level 6.9	After 2 years*	44.88	51.61	2.24	6.73

*Reference to a year or years of service is to service in the industry

**Former Western Australian 'E' worker classification

***An Assistant Director who holds an Advanced Diploma (AQF 6/3 year qualified) must be paid no less than Level 5.4

Column 5 is the additional 5 per cent payable from 1 December 2025. This is the minimum dollar amount that all eligible ECEC workers are to be provided as a pay increase (even for those workers currently paid above award) in order for a Provider to be eligible for funding, as per Section 4.3.

Junior employees

Junior employees employed as, or undertaking duties equivalent to Children's Services Employees Level 3, 4 and 5 must be paid at or above the applicable adult rate stipulated above. Junior employees employed as or undertaking duties equivalent to Children's Services Employee Level 1 or Children's Services Employee Level 2 must be paid at or above the applicable junior rate in accordance with the award, plus the amount specified in Column 5.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent in December 2025.

Table 7

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* from 1 December 2025

Classification	Column 2 Award rate from 1 Dec 2025	Column 3 New minimum rate (award + 15%) from 1 Dec 2025	Column 4 Additional minimum amount payable to staff (5%) from 1 Dec 2025	Column 5 Difference between new minimum rate and award (15%)
	\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Teachers – Long day care centres				
Level 1	38.02	43.73	1.90	5.71
Level 2	41.56	47.79	2.08	6.23
Level 3	45.24	52.03	2.27	6.79
Level 4	48.93	56.27	2.45	7.34
Level 5	52.61	60.51	2.63	7.90
Teachers – Preschools and Schools				
Level 1	36.56	42.05	1.83	5.49
Level 2	39.96	45.96	2.00	6.00

Level 3	43.51	50.03	2.17	6.52
Level 4	47.05	54.10	2.35	7.05
Level 5	50.59	58.18	2.53	7.59

Column 4 is the additional 5 per cent payable from 1 December 2025. This is the minimum dollar amount that all eligible ECEC workers are to be provided as a pay increase (even for those workers currently paid above award) in order for a Provider to be eligible for funding, as per Section 4.3 .

The minimum rates and additional minimum amounts specified in Table 7 are based on hourly rates. Accordingly, for eligible ECEC workers whose pay rates are specified as weekly rates, those weekly rates should be divided by 38 hours when comparing with the rates set out in Table 7.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent in December 2025.

Table 8

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Children’s Services Award 2010* from 1 March 2026 engaged on or before 28 February 2026

Classification on 28 Feb 2026		Classification on 1 Mar 2026	Column 3 Award rate 1 Mar 2026	Column 4 ¹ Minimum rate that Eligible ECEC Workers must be paid from 1 December 2025	Column 5 Additional minimum amount of WRP funds to be passed on from 1 Mar 2026
			\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Support Worker		No change			
Level 1.1	On commencement		24.95	28.69	3.74
Level 2.1	On commencement		25.71	29.57	3.86
Level 2.2	After 1 year*		26.56	30.54	3.98
Level 3.1	On commencement		28.12	32.34	4.22
Children’s Services Employee					
Level 1.1	On commencement	Level 1 – Introductory Educator	26.19	28.69	2.50
Level 2.1	On commencement	Level 2 - Educator	27.00	29.57	2.57
Level 2.2	After 1 year*	Level 2 - Educator	27.00	30.54	3.54
Level 3A.1**	On commencement	Level 2 – Educator	27.68	31.83	4.15

Level 3A.2**	After 1 year	Level 2 - Educator	28.12	32.34	4.22
Level 3.1	On commencement	Level 3 – Qualified Educator	29.52	32.34	2.82
Level 3.2	After 1 year*	Level 3 – Qualified Educator	29.52	33.45	3.93
Level 3.3	After 2 years*	Level 3 Qualified Educator	30.00	34.50	4.50
Level 3.3	(With less than 4 years' experience at Level 3)	Level 3 Qualified Educator	30.00	34.50	4.50
Level 3.3	(With 4+ years' experience at Level 3)	Level 4 Experienced Educator	31.50	34.50	3.00
Level 3.4 (Diploma)		Level 5 – Advanced Educator	33.24	36.41	3.17
Level 4A.1	On commencement	Level 6 – Room Leader	31.50	34.50	3.00
Level 4A.2	After 1 year*	Level 6 – Room Leader	31.50	34.98	3.48
Level 4A.3	After 2 years*	Level 6 – Room Leader	31.50	35.45	3.95
Level 4A.4	After 3 years*	Level 6 – Room Leader	31.50	35.96	4.46
Level 4A.5	After 4 years*	Level 6 – Room Leader	31.68	36.43	4.75
Level 4.1	On commencement	Level 6 – Room Leader	34.78	38.09	3.31
Level 4.2	After 1 year*	Level 6 – Room Leader	34.78	38.67	3.89
Level 4.3	After 2 years*	Level 6 – Room Leader	34.78	39.25	4.47

Level 5A.1	On commencement	Level 7 – Assistant Director	36.37	39.82	3.45
Level 5A.2	After 1 year*	Level 7 – Assistant Director	36.37	40.41	4.04
Level 5A.3	After 2 years*	Level 7 – Assistant Director	36.37	40.97	4.60
Level 5.1	On commencement	Level 7 – Assistant Director	36.37	39.82	3.45
Level 5.2	After 1 year*	Level 7 – Assistant Director	36.37	40.41	4.04
Level 5.3	After 2 years*	Level 7 – Assistant Director	36.37	40.97	4.60
Level 5.4***		Level 7 – Assistant Director	36.37	41.12	4.75
Level 6A.1	On commencement	Level 8 - Director	41.93	45.93	4.00
Level 6A.2	After 1 year*	Level 8 – Director	41.93	46.51	4.58
Level 6A.3	After 2 years*	Level 8 – Director	41.93	47.07	5.14
Children’s Services Employee— Director					
Level 6.1	On commencement	Level 8 – Director	41.93	45.93	4.00
Level 6.2	After 1 year*	Level 8 – Director	41.93	46.51	4.58
Level 6.3	After 2 years*	Level 8 – Director	41.93	47.07	5.14

Level 6.4	On commencement	Level 8 – Director	42.46	48.83	6.37
Level 6.5	After 1 year*	Level 8 – Director	42.85	49.28	6.43
Level 6.6	After 2 years*	Level 8 – Director	43.36	49.86	6.50
Level 6.7	On commencement	Level 8 – Director	43.88	50.46	6.58
Level 6.8	After 1 year *	Level 8 – Director	44.38	51.04	6.66
Level 6.9	After 2 years*	Level 8 – Director	44.88	51.61	6.73

*Reference to a year or years of service is to service in the industry

**Former Western Australian ‘E’ worker classification

***An Assistant Director who holds an Advanced Diploma (AQF 6/3 year qualified) must be paid no less than Level 5.4

The minimum rates specified in Table 8 are based on hourly rates. Accordingly, for eligible ECEC workers whose pay rates are specified as weekly rates, those weekly rates should be divided by 38 hours when comparing with the rates set out in Table 8.

¹Some of the rates in Column 4 have not increased from 1 December 2025 and may no longer equate to 15% of the new award rate. This is to absorb the impact of the gender undervaluation proceedings as per Section 4.3.

Maintaining hourly wage rates for workers engaged on or prior to 28 February 2026

For eligible ECEC workers engaged on or prior to 28 February 2026, total hourly pay rates must be maintained (that is, total hourly pay rates should not be reduced as the additional minimum amount of WRP funds to be passed on decreases resulting from the gender undervaluation proceedings), including for those paid above the new applicable award rates.

Junior employees

Junior employees employed as, or undertaking duties equivalent to Children’s Services Employees Level 3, 4 and 5 must be paid at or above the applicable adult rate stipulated above. Junior employees employed as or undertaking duties equivalent to Children’s Services Employee Level 1 or Children’s Services Employee Level 2 must be paid at or above the applicable junior rate in accordance with the award, plus the amount specified in Column 5.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent in December 2025.

Table 9

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the Children’s Services Award 2010 engaged on or after 1 March 2026

Classification from 1 Mar 2026	Column 2 Award rate 1 Mar 2026	Column 3¹ Minimum rate that Eligible ECEC Workers must be paid from 1 March 2026	Column 4 Additional minimum amount of WRP funds to be passed on from 1 Mar 2026
	\$ per hour	\$ per hour	\$ per hour
Support Worker			
Level 1.1 On commencement	24.95	28.69	3.74
Level 2.1 On commencement	25.71	29.57	3.86
Level 2.2 After 1 year*	26.56	30.54	3.98
Level 3.1 On commencement	28.12	32.34	4.22
Children’s Services Employee			
Level 1 – Introductory Educator	26.19	28.69	2.50

Level 2 - Educator	27.00	29.57	2.57
Level 3 – Qualified Educator	29.52	32.34	2.82
Level 4 Experienced Educator	31.50	34.50	3.00
Level 5 – Advanced Educator	33.24	36.41	3.17
Level 6 – Room Leader	34.78	38.09	3.31
Level 7 – Assistant Director	36.37	39.82	3.45
Level 8 - Director	41.93	45.93	4.00

*Reference to a year or years of service is to service in the industry

The minimum rates specified in Table 9 are based on hourly rates. Accordingly, for eligible ECEC workers whose pay rates are specified as weekly rates, those weekly rates should be divided by 38 hours when comparing with the rates set out in Table 9.

¹Some of the rates in Column 3 may no longer equate to 15% of the new award rate. This is to absorb the impact of the gender undervaluation proceedings as per Section 4.3.

Junior employees

Junior employees employed as, or undertaking duties equivalent to Children’s Services Employees Level 3, 4 and 5 must be paid at or above the applicable adult rate stipulated above. Junior employees employed as or undertaking duties equivalent to Children’s Services Employee Level 1 or Children’s Services Employee Level 2 must be paid at or above the applicable junior rate in accordance with the award, plus the amount specified in Column 4.

Casual employees

The increase for casual employees can either be provided at the relevant base hourly rate with the casual loading applied subsequently to the total, or as an additional amount on top of the base hourly rate, with the casual loading applied to the base hourly rate only.

Trainees

Trainees must be paid, at a minimum, the hourly rates applicable to their classification as set out under the relevant award, plus an amount equal to 10 per cent from 2 December 2024, increased by a further 5 per cent from 1 December 2025.