



Early Learning and Child Care Initiative

Outdoor Play Space Grant

Terms and Conditions

Table of Contents

Background.....	2
Terms and Conditions Overview	3
Grant Description	3
Eligibility Criteria - Centres.....	4
Eligible / Ineligible Expenses	4
Application Process	5
Required Documentation	5
Application Deadline	5
Contact Information.....	5
Submission of the Application package	5
Grant Application Review Process.....	7
Applications Checked for Eligibility and Completeness	7
Review Process	7
Notification of Approved Applications	8
Disbursement of Funds Process.....	9
Recovery of Funds Process.....	10
Accountability Process.....	11
Evaluation Process	12
Appendix A - Definitions.....	13

Background

The priorities for the Government of Nova Scotia include the following key items:

- Health Promotion and Protection;
- Youth, Families and Communities;
- Community Safety;
- Economic Development and Infrastructure; and
- Environment.

These initiatives are focused on strengthening the social service system, enabling the government to improve outcomes for Nova Scotia's youth, families, and communities.

One of the new priorities of the Department of Community Services Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) program is to strengthen the child care sector by providing services and funds to "ensure that all Nova Scotia children enjoy a good start in life and are nurtured and supported by caring families and communities". This is compatible with the Department's goal of "self reliant people, strong families and inclusive communities".

A number of investments will be made in Early Learning and Child Care including providing funding to all licensed child care facilities enabling them to develop and/or enhance outdoor play spaces.

This document describes the Department of Community Services terms and conditions regarding the **Outdoor Play Space Grant**.

Terms and Conditions Overview

The purpose of the **Outdoor Play Space Grant** program is to provide **one-time funding** to licensed child care centres and licensed family home agencies for use toward outdoor play spaces. This investment will not only assist in the creation of safe and stimulating outdoor play areas but encourage the healthy development and physical fitness of children.

One component of this initiative will be the development of an Outdoor Play Space Grant Agreement. This Agreement will be developed and implemented to better clarify responsibilities of the centre(s) and the Department and to ensure adequate accountability for the funding provided through this grant.

Note: Please refer to “Appendix A – Definitions” for definitions of the terms used throughout this Terms and Conditions document.

Grant Description

The Outdoor Play Space Grant is available to all licensed child care centres, full-day and part-day centres, and family home agencies. This funding is being provided as a one-time grant for use in the development of or enhancement to outdoor play spaces. Grant funding may be used for all expenses related to outdoor play spaces including but not limited to landscaping, fencing, and equipment.

The grant funding limit is \$20,000 per approved centre. A Centre may apply for an amount in excess of \$20,000 for projects exceeding the grant amount. Amounts in excess of \$20,000 **may** be approved based on funding availability.

Funding will be issued in two installments, an initial amount when the grant agreement is signed and the remaining funds following a visual inspection of the completed outdoor play space. This is described in more detail in the *Disbursement of Funds Process* section of this document.

Interested centres **must** contact their regional ECDO before submitting an application. ECDO's will assist the centres with the development of their outdoor play space work plans by providing information on compliance, safety and designs for outdoor play spaces that are engaging and stimulating for children.

Eligibility Criteria - Centres

In order to be eligible to receive an Outdoor Play Space Grant, the applicant centre must be a licensed child care centre (non-profit, commercial, full-day, and part-day) or a licensed family home agency.

The Outdoor Play Space Grant is only available to eligible family home day care agencies and *not* their approved homes. It is expected that family home day care agencies will provide outdoor play equipment (outdoor toys, bicycles, push-toys, shovels etc.) to their affiliated homes through a lending library.

A centre is not eligible for Outdoor Play Space grant funding if:

- The centre's license to operate a day care centre has been suspended, cancelled or not renewed
- The Department has issued a written directive to the centre due to compliance violations or deficiencies
- A court has granted a bankruptcy petition or appointed a trustee for the centre
- The centre ceases operations.

Eligible / Ineligible Expenses

Grant funding can be used for:

- Fencing
- Landscaping – trees, grass, pea gravel, sand etc.
- Large play equipment (climbers, swings, etc) must be professionally installed to CSA/ULC standards (Z614-2007 – Contact ECDO for additional information).
- Materials – balls, tricycles etc.*
- Outdoor storage, sunshields

**Material expenses can be for items that encourage climbing, digging, movement (ride-on and push toys) and social/dramatic play.*

Grant funding cannot be used for:

- Pools
- Non-commercial grade equipment
- Large play equipment (climbers, swings, etc.) that is not CSA/ULC certified
- Landscaping, materials or equipment that does not conform to the criteria defined in section 11 of the Day Care Regulations, examples such as inflatable pools or trampolines.

Application Process

Required Documentation

The submitted application package must contain:

- a complete, signed Application form
- a work plan detailing the design and costing of the outdoor play space.
- 3 quotes supporting cost estimates outlined in the work plan (if you are unable to obtain three quotes please advise as to why not in the application).
- Photographs showing your existing place space.

A template for the work plan is included with the application. The work plan will describe the centres vision and objectives for their outdoor play space as well as provide the Department with information on how they plan to utilize any grant funding provided.

Application Deadline

Centres applying for this grant must ensure the completed application package is received by their regional Early Childhood Development Officer (ECDO) on, or before, the deadline stated on the Application Form.

Contact Information

Centres requiring additional information about the grant are requested to contact their regional Early Childhood Development Officer (ECDO). The grant application form will be available on the Department's web site for downloading.

Note: Centres are reminded they must contact their regional ECDO before submitting an application package.

Submission of the Application package

Please ensure the application is complete and submitted in full. All documents must be forwarded to the Centre's regional ECDO in order for the applications to be considered for grant funding. The Centre should create a photocopy of the application and supporting documentation for their records.

Submitted application packages should be addressed to the attention of the '***Outdoor Play Space Grant Application***' and either mailed, faxed or dropped off to, the centre's regional ECDO.

Note: Faxed applications will be accepted; however, a signed original must follow and be on file before any funding will be distributed.

The application package must be received by the Centre's regional ECDO on or before the application deadline. Application packages postmarked or stamped with a 'received' date on or before the application deadline are considered as meeting the deadline.

Grant Application Review Process

Applications Checked for Eligibility and Completeness

Once the application packages are received by the regional ECDO's, they will be checked to confirm the Centres meet the basic eligibility requirements for the grant and to confirm the application package is complete.

If an application package is not complete the Centre will be contacted by phone to request the missing information. The Department may also follow up the phone call with a letter to the Centre identifying the missing application information.

Review Process

Regional committees will perform an evaluations of each application based on the criteria described in this section of this document. A centre may be contacted to provide additional information. Following the regional review, applications and recommendations for funding, will be forwarded to Head Office for consideration and approval.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications prior to the due date. Applications for grant amounts of \$20,000 or lower will be reviewed as received. Applications in excess of \$20,000 will only be reviewed after the application due date.

Compliance Evaluation Criteria

The history of compliance with the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations for the previous two (2) licensing periods will be evaluated for each centre applying for the grant using a sliding scale.

Centres with a written directive are ineligible for funding consideration and will be eliminated from the review process.

Work Plan Evaluation Criteria

The work plan submitted with the application will document the centre's plan for their outdoor play space. The application will indicate the type of work proposed, new development to create an outdoor play space or enhancements to an existing outdoor play space. The work plans will be evaluated based on the type of work proposed and the perceived value that work will achieve, using a sliding scale.

Examples of potential projects

- Creation / Enhancement of natural play space
- Repairs/enhancement to bring centre into compliance (fencing, surfacing, safety & repairs etc)
- Increased Accessibility for children with special needs
- Replacement of play structure (safety and repair issues being addressed)
- Addition of new play structure (the application must demonstrate the value being brought to overall play experience)
- Storage and equipment purchases to enhance play experience

Applicants whose work plans demonstrate the enhancement or creation of natural play space will be viewed favorably during the application review process. Please contact your ECDO for guidance.

When the evaluation of the compliance history and work plan is completed, the scoring system will determine which applications are recommended for funding.

Notification of Approved Applications

Centres approved for the grant will be sent an Outdoor Play Space Grant notification letter and a copy of the Outdoor Play Space Grant Agreement.

Centres must return the Outdoor Play Space Grant Agreement to Head Office with the appropriate centre signatures before any funding will be distributed.

The Agreement will then be signed by the Minister or her delegate and a photocopy will be returned to the centre. The original signed contract will be filed at Head Office with the Centre's application file.

Disbursement of Funds Process

The distribution of funds can begin once the Centre has been approved for grant funding and the signed copy of the Outdoor Play Space Grant Agreement has been received at Head Office.

Funding will be distributed in two installments. The initial installment, 60% of the grant funding, will be disbursed following the receipt of the signed Outdoor Play Space Grant Agreement at Head Office. The remaining 40% of the grant funding will be disbursed following an ECDO's visual inspection of the completed outdoor play space.

Centres must complete work on their outdoor play space before the end of fiscal year 2007/2008.

Recovery of Funds Process

The following event will constitute a default of the Outdoor Play Space Grant:

- failure to fulfill the obligations of the grant funding agreement;
- a bankruptcy petition filed in relation to the centre;
- a court of competent jurisdiction has appointed a trustee to manage some of all of the Centre's assets;
- the centre has ceased to operate a licensed child care centre or the centre's license has been suspended, cancelled or not renewed by the Minister;
- If the premises is leased and the centre does not renew the current lease for the centre or the lease is terminated for any reason; or
- the sale of the centre.

If any of the circumstances listed above occur before any grant funding has been disbursed, the agreement for the grant is terminated and no disbursements will be made.

If any of the circumstances listed above occur after the initial disbursement of funding has been made, the agreement for the grant is terminated and no further disbursements will be made.

In the event of a default, the Department reserves the right to offset monies received by the centre through other programs.

Accountability Process

The Grant funding must be used in accordance with these Terms and Conditions and the conditions outlined in the Outdoor Play Space Grant Agreement.

The ECDO will complete a final inspection of the work outlined in the centres work plan to verify the work has been completed before the second instalment of the grant funding is disbursed.

Evaluation Process

For evaluation purposes, Centres will be required to:

- Participate fully in evaluations of the Outdoor Play Space Grant and provide any information requested by the Department in respect of these evaluations.
- Make Centre staff available to participate in the evaluation process at mutually agreeable times during the term of the Outdoor Play Space Grant Agreement or for up to seven years after the end of the fiscal year in which the grant funding expires, whichever is longer.

Appendix A - Definitions

For purposes of the Outdoor Play Space Grant the following definitions apply:

“Department” means the Department of Community Services.

“ECDS” means Early Childhood Development Services.

“ECDO” means Early Childhood Development Officer and refers to regional staff of the Department of Community Services responsible for licensing child care centres and providing supported child care consultation.

“Centre” and “child care centre” means a facility which provide full-day licensed day care under the Day Care Act. R.S. N.S., 1989, c.120.

“CSA” means Canadian Standards Association.

“ULC” means Underwriters Laboratory Canada.