

PURPOSE

This funding provides Early Childhood Services (ECS) **children** with a basic **ECS program** to help prepare them for entry into grade 1 and provide a foundation for later success.

CONDITIONS

1. Basic instruction funding is provided to **ECS operators** for each eligible **child** enrolled in an **ECS Program** offered for:
 - a) 475 hours or;
 - b) at least 22 in-home visits for each **child** in an **in-home program** during the school year; or
 - c) the equivalent of a combined program of school hours and home visits. A combined program must have a minimum of four visits to qualify for funding. See definition on an **in-home program** in the Glossary.
2. An approved **ECS operator** must be prepared to accept and organize programming for all eligible **children** for whom programming is requested, including **children** with special needs. Included in the Basic Instruction Funding is an additional amount to assist in meeting the needs of the children who are economically or socially disadvantaged.
3. A **child** referred to in Section 30(1)(a) of the *School Act* is not a resident or **non-resident student** of a **board**, therefore, approved **ECS operators** shall not use the residency or non-residency of the **parent** of a **child** in a district or **division** to:
 - a) deny a child access to the program; or
 - b) differentiate as to the fees charged for the program.
4. The ECS count must not include any **child** counted by another **ECS operator** for funding purposes in the school year. It is the responsibility of the **ECS operator** to ensure that a **child** has not been previously or currently enrolled and counted by another **ECS operator** in the current school year.
5. An **ECS operator** that receives provincial funding must ensure that **parents** can access the basic **ECS Program** of 475 hours for their **children** without any charge for instruction.

- New** 6. Alberta Learning provides funding for a basic 475 hour **ECS program** which includes support for instructional salaries and benefits, learning resources, furnishings and equipment. **ECS operators** may not charge a fee for services provided within the basic 475 hour program.
- Revised** 7. An **ECS operator** may charge a fee to **parents** of **ECS children** in a basic 475 hour program to offset non-instructional costs such as supplies, snacks and field trips.
- Revised** 8. **ECS operators** that offer an ECS program with more than 475 hours may charge a reasonable fee to cover the cost of the additional hours.
9. **School jurisdictions** may transfer funds provided for programs in grades 1 to 12 to cover costs of **ECS Programs**.
10. An individual is not a **child** for ECS purposes, but rather a student in grade 1, if the individual:
- a) is enrolled in grade 1 and attended an **ECS Program** in the previous school year; or
 - b) has been placed in grade 1 for sound educational reasons because an **ECS Program** was not available.
11. All individuals age 5 years and 6 months or older, but less than 6 years are counted as funded students under the instruction block if they are eligible to enter grade 1 under the school entrance policy of a **school jurisdiction**.

The exceptions to this condition are cases where:

- a) the **child** has spent less than the number of years in the program for which he/she is eligible for funding, e.g., received less than three years program unit funding; or
- b) the **child** has not enrolled in an **ECS Program** until this age; or
- c) the **child** has been assessed as **developmentally immature**. This child is not eligible for special education funding.

In these circumstances, when in the opinion of the **school jurisdiction** and the **parent**, an **ECS Program** is appropriate, the individual is counted as a **child** under ECS.

12. All individuals who are age 6 years or older, but less than 7 years are counted as funded students for funding purposes except individuals who are:
- a) **developmentally immature** or
 - b) entering an **ECS program** for the first time.

These individuals (a and b) are counted as **children** under this section.

An individual who is eligible to proceed to grade 1, but has been assessed as **developmentally immature** and whose program plan involves both ECS and grade 1 instruction may be counted either as a **child** under Part 2 of this manual or as a **funded student** under Part 1 of this manual.

Individuals aged 6 to 7 years old, who require another year of ECS and who have been assessed as having special needs (mild, moderate or severe) must be counted as a student.

13. Under no circumstances can an individual be counted as a student under Part 1 and as a **child** under Part 2 of this manual in the same school year.

REQUIREMENTS

1. New Private ECS Operators

Revised

The form "Notice of Intent to Operate" will be sent to new **private ECS operators** by their respective Zone Services Branch upon request. New **private ECS operators** will be required to provide a Certificate of Incorporation under the *Societies Act*, or be registered as a non-profit company under Part 9 of the *Companies Act*, or be incorporated as a non-profit corporation under an act of the Legislature. Also required is documented proof that the ECS facility meets all applicable municipal and provincial public health, safety and building standards requirements, and a signed declaration that the program will operate in accordance with the *School Act*, Section 30 .

2. Existing Private ECS Operators

The form "Notice of Intent to Operate" will be sent to **private ECS operators** by their respective Zone Services Branch in June. **Private ECS operators** may be required to provide documentation such as the current status of their Certificate of Incorporation and proof that their facility meets fire and health safety standards.

3. **Private ECS operators** must complete and submit the "Notice of Intent to Operate" form to their respective Zone Services Branch by July 31. The information on this form initiates the first payment of the school year.

Revised

4. **Private schools** that operate **ECS Programs** must complete and submit by May 31 a Private School "Annual Operational Plan". The Notice of Intent for ECS operations within private schools is incorporated into the Annual Operation Plan.

5. All **private ECS operators** must advise their respective Zone Services Branch within one week of any changes which occur in facility, society, programs, or teaching staff during the school year. Accredited **private schools** must send a list of any teaching staff changes to their respective Zone Services Branch by September 19.

6. A **private ECS operator** must maintain a blanket fidelity bond with respect to the **private ECS operator** for employees and board members in the amount of \$50,000 or the accumulated surplus plus 40 percent of Alberta Learning funding for the program year (the value of the first payment in the first month of operation), whichever is less.
7. Funding for ECS basic instruction is made on the basis of **child** registration information submitted to Learner Records & Data Exchange.
8. Funding for ECS basic instruction is calculated by multiplying the number of eligible ECS **children** by the rate for ECS basic instruction.

For **ECS programs** beginning in September:

- Revised**
9. The **count date** is September 30 and the information must be submitted by October 3 to Learner Records & Data Exchange.

For **ECS programs** beginning after September 30:

10. The count will be taken as of the last operating day in the month in which the **ECS program** begins. The information must be submitted within three weeks of that day to Learner Records & Data Exchange.
11. If any funding adjustment is required to the enrolment data reported to Learner Records & Data Exchange, complete form 94ED01.07 and submit to School Finance.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Funding for the basic 475 hour **ECS program** provides for instructional salaries and benefits, learning resources, equipment and furnishings.
2. Included in the basic instruction funding is Co-ordination and Parent Resources funding, a per-**child** payment to **ECS operators** for regional **parent** programs and regional co-ordination activities.
3. **ECS operators** who are intending to cease operation of an **ECS Program** should refer to the policy under the Miscellaneous Section of this Manual.
4. Alberta Learning has an agreement with the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency (Cancopy). Most schools in the province are covered in the license. Alberta Learning makes the payment for the license on behalf of all participating **private ECS operators**. The cost of the license, plus GST, is recovered from **private ECS operators** on a full-time equivalent student basis. It is up to the individual **private ECS operators** to apply for any GST rebate from the Government of Canada.

5. Edulink, a multi-functioned data exchange software tool, has been created to help **private ECS operators** and Alberta Learning simplify current data management and exchange processes.

Alberta Learning will deduct 35¢ plus GST per child on behalf of all **private ECS operators** using Edulink. This deduction will be made in September and based on the prior year frozen funded **child** count for ECS. The deduction will be reflected on the October funding statement. It is up to the individual **private ECS operators** to apply for any GST rebate from the Government of Canada.

Alberta Learning will forward the maintenance fee of \$195,000 to Edmonton Catholic Schools, the host board. This funding will provide for the annual maintenance budget, but it is not sufficient enough to pay for significant changes to the software.

REFERENCES

Advisory Manual on Early Childhood Service (1996)

Kindergarten Program Statement

Early Childhood Services Policy 1.1.3

New *Early Childhood Services Regulation A.R.31/2002*

