

Regional Grants are intended to support, sustain, and increase quality of child care programs. Grants require the completion of an online application and approval of eligible expenditures.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who can apply for Regional Grants?

Any program that is actively providing early learning services to children ranging in age from birth to school-age and is currently licensed with the Minnesota Department of Human Services or Tribal Government OR legally license-exempt, which include certified centers. If licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, a program must have no current negative actions. Licensing violations such as a temporary immediate suspension, suspension, revocation, or a maltreatment determination where the facility was found responsible will prevent the issuance of a grant and/or will cause the withdrawal of a grant.

Programs that have received a Start-Up Grant may not apply for a Regional Grant in the same fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

2. How much money can eligible programs receive?

Family providers may purchase items that total up to \$2,000. Center programs may purchase items that total up to \$3,000.

3. How and when do I apply for a Regional Grant?

Applications for Regional Grants are available on Develop (www.developtoolmn.org) in your Organization Profile beginning September 1 and must be completed by September 25. You must have a registered Organization Profile to access and complete the application in Develop. For programs with no internet access, please contact your local Grant Administrator for a paper application.

4. What items can my program apply for?

Programs may apply for funds to purchase items or training that meet quality improvement goals and strategies and activities to prepare young children for school and life. All materials must be new and must be purchased from a retail company, not a private individual.

Any items purchased with this grant must be used in accordance with licensing requirements. Please contact your licensor if you have questions about this.

Programs may apply for funds to support child care and school-age care services through the categories listed in this guide. Each year, the Department of Human Services and Child Care Aware determine grant priorities.

Priority Areas

Health and Well-being

- Equipment and activities that promote health and fitness in your program

Relationships with Families

- Materials that support the mental health of young children and their families.

Teaching and Relationships with Children

- Materials, activities, strategies, assessment, and curriculum development to promote social/emotional, physical, and intellectual development in all children

Assessment and Planning for Each Individual Child

- Materials that support school readiness, infant through school-age, in areas such as literacy, social and emotional growth, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), including assessment support pieces

Professionalism

- Technology items for professional use including laptops, tablets, desktop computers, printers

Please see pages 5-8 of this document for a guide to approved items.

Additional Examples of Eligible Items

Learning Support: Materials, activities, strategies, assessment, and curriculum development to promote social/emotional, physical, and intellectual development in all children.

Technology: Programs may use grants for technology and software to create, enhance, and maintain business management systems. This includes one-time costs associated with accessing the internet, such as installation or equipment, and website costs for start-up, maintenance, or ongoing subscription fees.

Education, Training, and Relationship-Based Professional Development: Grants may be used for higher education costs to support T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship recipients, fee-for-service mentoring, coaching, and/or consultation expenses conducted by a Develop-approved Relationship Based Professional Development (RBPDP) Specialist during the grant timeframe.

Wages: Grants may be used to pay wages for staff to attend required professional development trainings and/or to cover the costs of substitute teachers or providers to cover for staff who are attending training.

Business Development: Funds can also be used for private businesses that support business development. Contact First Children's Finance for free or low-cost services that support business development, including business coaching, consultation, leadership cohorts, and technical assistance.

Minor Construction Projects: Grants may be used towards the cost of materials for outdoor play area fencing or other minor construction or renovations to dedicated physical child care space as required by licensing to ensure child safety or meet other program standards.

Examples of allowable minor remodeling:

- Adding or replacing an egress window to the designated child care space to allow children to escape the area in an emergency.
- Replacing flooring in the designated child care space.

- Adding child friendly bathroom facilities to an existing space within the designated child care space.

All materials must be new and must be purchased from a retail store, not a private party.

In the event that a child care program wishes to have the cost of assembly and/or installation covered by a grant, the labor must be performed by a contractor following applicable state and local laws and regulations regarding registration and licensure. See <https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/residential-contractors-remodelers-roofers> for more information.

Eligible items that are for 100% business use will be funded at 100%. Items that are shared with a household or organization (such as a church) are funded at 50%.

5. What items are not eligible?

Due to a federal rule, Regional Grants may not be used for the following:

Major Construction or Renovations: Major renovation means structural changes to the foundation, roof, floor, exterior or load-bearing walls of a facility, or the extension of a facility to increase its floor area; or extensive alteration of a facility such as to significantly change its function and purpose, even if such renovation does not include any structural change. Funds may be expended for minor remodeling of the designated child care space and for upgrading the designated child care space to assure that providers meet state and local child care standards, including applicable health and safety requirements.

Religious-based Curricula, Activities, Materials, or Counseling: Child care programs are allowed to purchase and/or use religious-based curricula or items in their program if they choose, but they must use their own funds; they cannot use Child Care Services Grants.

Expendable Supplies: Expendable supplies (diapers, wipes, soap, paper products), except as it pertains to Personal Protective Equipment (cleaning products, hand sanitizer, masks) used for recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health to keep children and staff safe during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Food, lodging, or mileage associated with training or conferences.

Office supplies that are not directly used for early childhood quality improvement activities: Ink and paper used to print invoices for families would not be an allowed use of grants. Ink and paper used to print curriculum, worksheets, or a newsletter for families in the program would be allowed.

One-time field trips for children

Child care tuition (scholarships)

Items prohibited by licensing

CCDF federal restrictions can be reviewed at <https://ccdf-fundamentals.icfcloud.com/restrictions>

In addition, grants are not allowed to be spent on items considered to be part of the cost of doing business. This includes the following items:

- Accounting and legal fees
- Advertising
- Banking service charges

- Cleaning
- Food
- Insurance and warranties
- Licenses
- Taxes
- Rent or mortgage
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Wages or salaries other than those described under Education and Training

6. If my program receives a grant, what requirements do I have to meet?

Your program will need to sign and follow the requirements of a Participation Agreement. Please read the agreement carefully before signing. Also see the information on page 10 of this document about how the grant process works.

7. Why is cultural responsiveness important in an early childhood care and education program?

Although purchasing culturally responsive materials is not required for this grant, research has shown that children begin to create ideas about race very early on – typically by ages three and four. For this reason, it is important to teach all children about differences and help them develop individual and group identities based on personal abilities and interests, rather than race and entitlement. This is crucial for children to be able to develop unbiased and successful relationships with others as adults. Additional information in *What If All the Kids Are White: Anti-Bias Multicultural Education with Young Children and Families*, by Louise Olsen Derman-Sparks and Patricia G. Ramsey.

Questions to ask yourselves when purchasing materials:

- What does this item teach the children in my care about less dominant cultures in our country?
- Does this item explore a culture/cultures or a language/languages other than my/their own?
- Does this item help celebrate cultural diversity?
- How does this item encourage and recognize the cultural differences among the children in my care?

GRANT SPENDING CATEGORIES

The following charts give suggestions for items that you may want to purchase with your grant. This is not an all-inclusive list, but it will help you identify which spending category to use when describing your proposed purchases on the budget pages of the application.

Health and Well-Being			
Children do better when early care and education programs are safe and healthy, provide nutritious meals and snacks, and offer many opportunities for active play. This foundation allows children to take full advantage of learning opportunities.			
Alarms and Detectors		Transportation Safety	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoke alarms Carbon monoxide alarms Radon detectors Lead content detectors (for toys and other child items which could be put in the mouth) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate vehicle child restraint systems for the ages of the children in care Safety helmets for children riding bicycles or tricycles Strollers that meet safety specifications 	
Emergencies		Environment Safety and Health	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid kits Fire extinguishers Choke tubes (for gauging choking potential of small objects) Disaster kits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand-washing kits and posters Healthy habits posters Food group activities Safety kits and posters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety gates Appliance locks Electrical outlet covers Refrigerator thermometer Hot liquids thermometer Window blind and curtain cord tension or tie-down devices Air purifiers, humidifiers, dehumidifiers Light fixtures containing shielded or shatterproof bulbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fireplace, heater and wood-burning stove screen covers Closet door latches to prevent a child from being trapped inside a closet Locks for cabinets or locked storage units for medicines and cleaning agents Panic hardware for exterior doors
Child Safety		Facilities and Operations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child toothbrushes and individual toothpaste containers Cribs, mattresses that meet safety standards Cots, mats and linens for sleeping Highchairs that meet safety standards Changing tables 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egress windows Lead-free environment Facility improvements such as repairing steps, installing railing if flagged by licensing. Gates 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground safety surfacing Large outdoor umbrella Sandbox covers Infant bucket swings for outdoor playground swing sets Swings with soft or flexible seats Fencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shock-absorbent or loose material such as sand under outdoor climbing equipment Outdoor play equipment that meets safety standards Replacement of wooden barriers that contain creosote or arsenic Guardrails on stairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antibacterial wall dispensers Secured garbage cans and wastebaskets, hands-free covered waste disposal cans Purchase of safe plastics that do not contain polycarbonates for serving food Consultation with a Child Care Health Consultant in Family Child Care Homes for health, safety, nutrition, infectious disease control and/or advice on the care of a child with special needs Bibs and Eating utensils Special needs items such as positioning equipment, eating utensils, cups and plates, adapted toys 	

Teaching and Relationships with Children

Children do better when early care and education teachers and providers are caring and engaging, have quality learning environments, use a research-based curriculum, and support children’s transitions to kindergarten. Teachers and providers make a big difference in children’s lives. These practices help build relationships and give children what they need to learn and grow.

Aligned Curricula

These tools align with the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) and meet Parent Aware curriculum requirements: [ParentAware.org/programs/full-rating-resources/](https://parentaware.org/programs/full-rating-resources/)

Room Equipment and Furniture	Active Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables • Chairs • Coat, cubby units • Storage units • Centers (book, listening, writing) • Computer table • Cots or mats • Classroom activity carpets • Activity mats and gyms • Classroom displays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycles, Tricycles, • Wagons • Scooters, scooter boards • Balance beams • Tumbling mats • Play tunnels or hoops • Basketball hoops, balls • Playground equipment (climbers, swing sets, slides) • Large unit blocks • Rocking boats • Parachutes • Large motor games (such as bean bag, ring toss)
Manipulatives	Science and Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials that link, construction sets • Puzzles • Beads, lacing sets • Pegs and pegboards • Pre-writing stencils • Pounding benches • Tools and tool benches • Block play materials • Small design blocks • Sensory materials • Manual dexterity vests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration kits • Nature activities and materials • Magnifying glasses, microscopes • Weather charts • Magnets • Prisms • Science kits • Computers, tablets • Educational software • Minerals/rocks
Social Concepts	Cognitive Development and Perception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costumes • Play masks • Dramatic play equipment • Dolls, doll houses and furniture • Other play buildings (e.g., barn, firehouse, school, etc.) • Animal collections • Puppets • Plush animals • Miscellaneous such as purses, cameras, phones • Multicultural games, activity kits, craft kits and books • Bilingual language materials • Youth cookbooks • Cooking utensils, pots, pans, and food items • Woodworking materials • Posters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-appropriate books • Storytelling kits and materials • Materials that promote phonological awareness. • Materials that promote print awareness • Materials that promote alphabet awareness. • Early language concept activities such as object matching, sorting • Infant and toddler toys • Geometric forms and boards • Patterning activities and materials • Math awareness materials • Tactile numbers and tracing activities • Measurement kits • Clocks and time activities and materials • Calculators, money • Discovery boxes
Sensory	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music, Headphones, rhythm instruments • Art supplies including stencils and sponges • Sand and water tables and toys • Feely boxes • Sensory balls • Sight and sound tubes 	

Assessment and Planning for Each Individual Child

Children do better when their teachers and providers know them well, understand their levels of development, and use the information to plan instruction. Assessment information is accurate and fair when it is gathered in a way that includes observation in natural settings, and a child assessment tool that is valid and reliable.

Purchase of an assessment tool for use in your program. See list of approved assessment tools on the Parent Aware website: [ParentAware.org/programs/full-rating-resources/](https://parentaware.org/programs/full-rating-resources/)

- Camera or video camera for recording classroom activities (Does not include special lenses, etc.)
- Journaling materials
- Laptop, tablet, or desktop computer for on-line assessment

Professionalism

Children do better when their teachers and providers have professional preparation that includes higher education coursework, combined with on-going training and support. These qualifications have been found to be consistent predictors of program quality, strong child-adult interactions, quality learning environments, and positive child outcomes.

Learning Opportunities

- Face-to-face training approved on Develop
- Online learning approved on Develop
- Professional early learning organization conferences approved on Develop
- CDA training approved on Develop
- Fee-for-service mentoring, coaching, and/or consultation
- Higher education costs of supporting a T.E.A.C.H. recipient

Professional Resources

- Early childhood education and child development textbooks, subscriptions to education and professional journals
- Child care association fees
- Early childhood education professional texts
- Laptop or tablet for taking online courses

Relationships with Families

Children do better when families are engaged in their children’s education and development. Building two-way relationships with families helps strengthen a sense of belonging among all children in the program as they experience respect and support for their home cultures and languages.

- Face-to-face training approved on Develop about communicating with families
- Technology related to communicating with families (text programs, etc.)

- Bulletin boards
- Newsletters
- Family events
- Parent conferences

Multicultural/Culturally Responsive Items and Resources (optional)

Multicultural items and resources promote healthy social and educational outcomes in children and youth, and help them understand the world they live in. For the purpose of these grants, the terms “multicultural” and “culturally responsive” are used to refer to child care that responds to and reflects the needs of ethnic and linguistically diverse communities.

Websites	Available Items	Useful Search Terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becker's School Supplies (shopbecker.com) • Discount School Supply (discountschoolsupply.com) • Hatch: The Early Learning Experts (hatchearlylearning.com) • Kaplan Early Learning (kaplanco.com) • Lakeshore Learning (lakeshorelearning.com) • The Little Black Book Nook (bookshop.org/shop/littleblackbooknook) 	Multicultural books, music, classroom décor, toys, instruments, and activities	Anti-bias, multicultural, diversity, inclusion, world, global
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassroots Indigenous Multimedia (gim-ojibwe.org) 	Ojibwe language books, activities, and resources	No search terms needed, simply click on "products"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birchbark Books (birchbarkbooks.com) 	Native American children’s books and music	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (members.naeyc.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?WebCode=COEPubSearch&pager=12) 	Books for providers	Anti-bias, multicultural, diversity, world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redleaf Press (redleafpress.org) 	Multicultural books for children and providers	Multicultural, diversity, inclusion, world, global
The Brown Bookshelf: United in Story (thebrownbookshelf.com)	African American children’s books reviews and recommendations	
<h3>Trainings on Develop</h3> <p>Approved multi-cultural trainings on Develop can be found by using the keyword search (multicultural, diversity, anti-bias, etc.), or looking for appropriate titles under Knowledge and Competency Framework 3.</p>		

APPLYING FOR A REGIONAL GRANT

Training Requirement: Participate in 12 hours of training, approved by Achieve, which can be found on Develop (www.developtoolmn.org). **Four of the 12 hours of the required training must be in the Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) areas of III, IX, and/or X.** Training must be completed between **January 1 of this year, and March 31 of next year.** All required training must be completed before receiving reimbursement. The cost of participating in this required training is your responsibility. However, you may choose to include the cost of the required training as part of the grant application by applying for dollars within the Professional Development category.

Participation Agreement: Your program will need to sign a Participation Agreement that details all requirements. The agreement lays out the responsibilities of programs receiving grants. Please read the agreement carefully before signing

Two-Year Requirement: If you are awarded a grant, your program will be required to provide active licensed or license-exempt child care services in Minnesota for a minimum of two years from the date of your award letter. If for any reason your program ceases to provide active child care services within the required timeframe, you will be required to repay grant dollars on a prorated basis.

Reimbursement Timeline: All documents required for requesting reimbursement must be submitted by April 15 for Grant Administrator review. Grant Administrators have the right to:

1. Ask for clarification (or pictures) of any grant item before approving AND
2. Refuse reimbursement for any purchase that doesn't match the original request or intended purpose

Expenditures: Be specific on your expenditure pages. Only items that were approved on your application will be reimbursed. If any substitution needs to occur, this **must** be approved by your local Grant Administrator, prior to making the purchase. A budget change can only occur once in a grant cycle prior to March 31.

Grant Payment Information: All Child Care Services Grants are paid on a reimbursement basis after all requirements are completed.

Grant Application Process: Applications for Regional Grants are available on Develop (www.developtoolmn.org) beginning September 1 and must be completed by September 25 in your Organization Profile. You must have a registered Organization Profile to access and complete the application in Develop. For programs with no internet access, please contact your local Grant Administrator for a paper application.

Grant Application Review Process. Once you submit an application, it will be reviewed by a review committee. Each application is reviewed by three review committee members who determine a score. Scores are assigned according to how strongly the requested item(s) relates to the priority area and added to the score generated by Develop. Funding is awarded to the highest scoring applications. A denial or award letter will be sent to you on November 1 via email or U.S mail.

SUBMITTING YOUR PAPER APPLICATION

Fill out your application form completely in ink. Your application should be neat and easy to read and stapled together in order. Do not submit grant applications in folders or binders, professionally bound or store-bought.

1. Send in one complete packet, including the application with all required attachments stapled to it.
2. Keep one copy of the completed application form and all required attachments for your records. You will need to refer back to your application if you are awarded a grant.
3. Mail or email the original completed application packet to:

Local Child Care Aware Office

Attn: Grant Administrator

Address

City, State, Zip

Checklist

Your application packet must include:

- The application form, including the participation agreement, with all questions completed.
- A copy of your current child care license.
- Copies of Knowledge and Competency Framework Learning Records for all lead teachers or the lead child care provider for the last 12 months.
- Copy of your Parent Aware Rating certificate (*if applicable*).
- Estimate or bid (*if applicable*). This is required for the installation of fences, windows, or construction, as required by licensing, or equipment assembly projects. If a child care program wishes to have the cost of assembly and/or installation covered by a grant, the labor must be performed by a contractor following applicable state and local laws and regulations regarding registration and licensure. See <https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/residential-contractors-remodelers-roofers> for more information.
- Pictures (*if applicable*). A picture from a catalog or online is recommended if the item(s) may be questioned by the reviewers.

GRANT APPLICATION PLANNING LIST

This list is intended to help you plan your grant request before entering it into Develop. This is not to be submitted.

Priorities

Health and Well-being

- Equipment and activities that promote health and fitness in your program

Relationships with Families

- Materials that support the mental health of young children and their families

Teaching and Relationships with Children

- Materials, activities, strategies, assessment, and curriculum development to promote social/emotional, physical, and intellectual development in all children

Assessment and Planning for Each Individual Child

- Materials that support school readiness, infant through school-age, in areas such as literacy, social and emotional growth, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), including assessment support pieces

Professionalism

- Technology items for professional use including laptops, tablets, desktop computers, printers

Category/Priority	Goal (what you wish to accomplish)	Strategy (what you need to do to reach the goal)	Item(s)	Cost
<i>Example: Health and Well-being</i>	<i>Children are learning concepts from nature and exercising outside</i>	<i>Walk to the park for play and nature experiences</i>	<i>Commercial quality four-child stroller, and stroller awning</i>	<i>\$1,579.90</i>
Health and Well-being				
Relationships with Families				
Teaching and Relationships				
Assessment and Planning				
Professionalism				
TOTAL				