

# City of San Francisco Early Learning Scholarship System

After several years of planning, San Francisco's new Early Learning Scholarship (ELS) system rolled out on July 1, 2017. The Office of Early Care & Education is funding Children's Council and Wu Yee Children's Services to provide an array of supports to child care providers in our community, as we all work together to implement this new system.

For more information on supports being offered by the **Office of Early Care & Education** [visit their website](#) or call 415.355.3670.

For more information on supports being offered by **Wu Yee Children's Services** [visit their website](#) or call 415.677.0100.

## More About the Early Learning Scholarship System

Overall, the new system brings many innovations. The Early Learning Scholarship system...

- **Targets kids most at risk of not being ready for kindergarten**, while stretching local dollars to **serve more kids** by better leveraging state and federal funding.
- **Increases low-income kids' access to high-quality care**; all participating child care providers engage in continuous quality improvement and are paid at higher rates than the prior system.
- When fully implemented, the system will be **simpler for parents and providers**; community-based partner Children's Council is improving the way low-income kids access subsidized care; and it, along with [Wu Yee Children's Services](#), are aligning systems for engaging families and increasing child care providers' quality.

## What Parents Need to Know:

The Early Learning Scholarship (ELS) system **consolidates** a patchwork of early care and education subsidy programs into **Early Learning Scholarships**.

Eligibility depends on family size and income. If your monthly household income is less than the amounts listed here\* you may qualify:

- Family of 1-2: \$5,343



- Family of 3: \$5,802
- Family of 4: \$6,719
- Family of 5: \$7,794

\*Rates listed are valid as of July 2019. Income thresholds are subject to change.

Families have a **choice of nearly 400 child care providers** across the city, all of which are participating in quality improvement efforts.

Families **apply for Early Learning Scholarships through [EarlyLearningSF.org](http://EarlyLearningSF.org).**

Children with special needs or who are African-American, Latino, English-language learners, homeless or involved in the court system are given priority. However, funding is still insufficient to serve all eligible families, so many will still wait for care.

Families experience **more seamless services:**

- Once a child has an Early Learning Scholarship, the city will continue funding even if the child would otherwise lose eligibility.
- A Children's Council case manager will guide parents through the child care search process, follow them on their child care journey, and connect them to the community services they need.

## **What Providers Need to Know:**

**The process for interested providers to qualify to become an Early Learning Scholarship-qualified provider is now closed.** The San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education will decide when the ELS System will be reopened to child care provider applicants.

Pre-qualified child care **providers are paid higher rates** to reflect the cost of providing quality child care.

In 2017, 111 centers and 268 family child care homes were pre-qualified to care for children with Early Learning Scholarships through an application process with the SF Office of Early Care and Education.

Pre-qualified providers caring for kids with Early Learning Scholarships and those caring for kids with state- or federally-funded subsidies receive this higher rate.



Providers caring for children with state/federal subsidies (i.e., CalWORKs, Alternative Payment, Title 5, Head Start) receive an “ELS-Gap” payment to make up the difference between the amount the state/federal government pays providers and the cost of providing quality care.

Pre-qualified providers have committed to **continuous quality improvement** and to meeting a standard of quality (Tier 3 on the Quality Rating Improvement System) by 2020.

All pre-qualified providers receive coaching and professional development to enhance the quality of early education and care. Family child care providers receive support through one of two Family Child Care Quality Networks led by Children’s Council and Wu Yee. Centers receive support through SF Quality Connections.

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