

# **EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (ECAP) GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**



MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORTS  
AGRICULTURE & LANDS  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

## The Application Process

The ECAP fund is for qualifying Caymanian children who are 3 years old before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic year which funding is to be paid. The fund is to assist with access to attendance at an early childhood centre, and will be paid directly to the centre the child attends.

In order to ensure that information submitted is accurate and relevant, all ECAP application forms are processed by the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Unit. If necessary, parents and/or other agencies will be contacted to verify details or submit additional information. The following is the timeline for the application process:

ECAP application received and processed by the ECCE Unit	Oversight Committee Meeting
March to April	Reviewed by the Oversight Committee in May.
May to July	Reviewed by the Oversight Committee in August.
August to February	Reviewed by Oversight Committee members on an 'as needed basis'.

The Oversight Committee is a team of community minded individuals who freely give of their time to assist the Ministry of Education. These individuals commit to providing one year of service, undergo a training session and sign a confidentiality agreement. Each application is reviewed by at least two members of the oversight committee. If further information is required for a decision to be made either a member of the ECCE Unit or Oversight Committee will contact the either the parent(s)/guardian or person/agency listed within the application and/or on supporting documents to request the information. Two oversight committee members must agree on the outcome of the application and sign off. After the Oversight Committee meets, the ECCE Unit will notify applicants of the Committee's decisions by email.

Children who are granted **supplementary funding** will receive the maximum of **\$500** per month. Children who are granted **basic funding** will receive the maximum of **\$305** per month. Each month, funding is sent directly to the early childhood centres.

## Documents for Submission

Documentation is required for the oversight committee to verify the child's age, right to be Caymanian, parent(s)/guardian's signature, legal guardianship (where applicable) and parent(s)/guardian's income. In order to process the application the applicant is required to submit the following documentation.

<b>PROOF REQUIRED</b>		<b>These documents are accepted as proof ...</b>
<b>Child 's Age</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of the child's birth certificate
<b>Right to be Caymanian</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Parent's born on or before March 27 1977 copy of Birth Certificate showing child's parent are born in the Cayman Islands or that a parent (child' s grandparents) are born in Cayman, <u>OR</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent born after March 27 1977 Proof of Acknowledgement of Caymanian or Copy of Caymanian as of Right letter, <u>OR</u> copy of the Caymanian parent parent's birth certificate (the child's grandparent), <u>OR</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Caymanian Status for child, <u>OR</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Caymanian Status for parent dated prior to child's birth, <u>OR</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of letter of Confirmation Caymanian as of Right letter from the WORC Department for the child
<b>Government Issued ID</b> (required for each parent)		<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Driver's Licence, <u>OR</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Voter's ID, <u>OR</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Passport Picture Page
<b>Legal Guardianship</b> (where applicable if the child resides with someone other than his/her parents)		<input type="checkbox"/> Court order detailing legal guardian, <u>OR</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Written documentation from Department of Children and Family Services detailing legal guardian
<b>Income</b> (required for each parent)	<b>Employed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pay slips reflecting income for the 2 most recent months detailing salary earned with Pension and Health Insurance payments/deductions <u>OR</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Job letter detailing salary earned indicating the frequency of payments along with Pension and/or Health Insurance payments/ deductions
	<b>Unemployed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Proof of registration with Workforce Opportunities & Residency Cayman (WORC). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Caymanian parent: must register with WORC as Job Seeker Extended</li> <li>○ Non-Caymanian parent: must register as a Job Seeker</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Stay at home parent by choice – letter stating decision for parent to stay at home
	<b>Self-employed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Notarised statement written by self-employed parent stating that he/she is self-employed, the nature of the business and the average monthly salary earned, <u>AND</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of the Trade & Business License (if applicable) for the business(es) owned
	<b>Other Income</b> (includes maintenance payments, financial assistance and/or property rental)	<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of court ordered maintenance or maintenance agreement between parents <input type="checkbox"/> Letter from NAU or other agency explaining financial support received and the expected duration of that support <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of rental agreement or receipts for payment collected

## **Registering with WORC**

Parent must inform WORC of intention to apply for ECAP funding and sign a Release of Information form at WORC giving them permission to share information with the Early Childhood Unit.

1. Caymanian parent: must register with WORC as *Job Seeker Extended*, providing evidence of participation in the WORC work readiness programme(s) and/or interviews attended
2. Non-Caymanian parent: must register as a *Job Seeker*, and submit proof of registration

## **Stay at Home Parent**

If parents are married and one parent is a stay-at-home parent (by choice), this is **not** considered to be “unemployment”. The choice to have one parent remain at home as a stay-at-home parent should be shared in writing and included in this application.

## **Financial Means Testing Criteria**

Financial means testing is used for each application. The parent(s)/guardian’s total income along with the number of dependents is calculated and the chart below then determines the level of funding granted. For example: an application with a total income of \$3200.00 per month with 2 dependents (2 working parents and 2 children) supplementary funding would be granted. Total income is calculated as all income earned. Health insurance and pension payments made by the income earner with proof provided are the only expenditures that are deducted from the total income.

Number of Dependents	Total income			
	Less than \$2,625 per month	\$2,626 – 3,413 per month	\$3,414 – 4,200 per month	\$4,201– 4,998 per month
1	Supplementary	Basic	None	None
2	Supplementary	Supplementary	Basic	Basic
3	Supplementary	Supplementary	Supplementary	Basic
4 or more	Supplementary	Supplementary	Supplementary	Supplementary

**Personal expenditure is not considered** when processing applications, unless it relates to medical or special needs. There are specific extenuating circumstances that may affect the financial status of the family and may be considered when processing the application. These may include:

<b>Extenuating Circumstances</b>	<b>Documents Required</b>
Ill health of a parent or dependent which infringes on earning capacity of one or both parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter from medical doctor detailing the condition and level of care necessary. In the event that a parent is incapacitated by a medical condition the letter would state that the person is unfit to work.
Serious family emergency	<input type="checkbox"/> Death certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Deportation order from the Immigration Department
Ongoing health issues/conditions of a parent or dependent which substantially affects earning capacity and/or the expenditure of the family.	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter detailing health issues(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Invoices and/or receipts showing related medical costs <input type="checkbox"/> If parent is unfit to work, a letter from a medical doctor stating that the person is unfit to work
Sudden job loss of a parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Termination letter <input type="checkbox"/> Job letter/pay slips of remaining wage earner
Sudden acquisition of additional dependents	<input type="checkbox"/> Court order <input type="checkbox"/> Death certificate of biological parent
Multiple children of the same age	<input type="checkbox"/> Birth certificates of children (birth of multiple and/or 2 children born within 12 months)
Dependent with special educational needs/disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed report(s) from a qualified service provider or medical practitioner <input type="checkbox"/> Invoices and/or receipts showing related costs not covered by insurance

Documentation must be provided verifying information presented on extenuating circumstances.

If any of the above extenuating circumstances pertain to you, the Oversight Committee has the authority to:

- Consider expenditure when means testing the parents
- Disregard the ceiling rate
- Grant funding for a specified amount of time instead of only September 1 – June 30

### **Personal Information – Father, Mother, Guardian**

All **current** information, including telephone and email contacts must be provided. When processing the application, the ECCE Unit staff may need to contact the applicant to ascertain additional information.

- The decision regarding the application will be communicated via email, therefore it is imperative that **up-to-date contact information is provided**. Information is required for **both** parents, as either parent may be contacted to verify information which is stated on the form, during the processing of the application. If the child's Caymanian parent is absent from his/her life, the application is still valid once the child is proven to be Caymanian.

- If parents live separately, only the income of the parent who the child lives with the majority of the time will be considered. If the parent who the child lives with receives a contribution from the other parent (court order as Maintenance or Child Support, or as an informal arrangement), the amount contributed will be considered as part of the total income.

## Dependents

According to the Immigration Law, a dependent is defined as the spouse, child, stepchild, adopted child, grandchild, parent, stepparent, grandparent, brother, sister, half-brother, or half-sister, each of whom is wholly or substantially dependent upon the respective individual (in this case, the ECAP applicant/parent). Such dependents may include:

- Children under the age of 18
- Persons above 18 years old who are still in school (e.g. training institute, college or university)
- Elderly family members who do not have an income to support themselves
- Adults whose care relies on the parent applying for ECAP funding. In such cases, the ECAP parent will be asked to attach a medical letter or relevant document that proves that the adult is a dependent in the parent's care, and is relying on the parent

Proof of any funding which the family provides for dependents who reside overseas **must** be submitted.

## Acknowledgement of Understanding

The child's father, mother and/or legal guardian is asked to read and provide his/her signature to acknowledge understanding of the following statements:

- I have read the ECAP Guidance document.
- I understand the Ministry of Education processes this Early Childhood Assistance Programme (ECAP) application form based on the personal data relating to all persons indicated on this application which I have willingly provided or those collected from third parties by the ECCE Unit. Under the Data Protection Act, the Ministry of Education is the data controller for the purposes of processing ECAP applications and managing ECAP.
- I understand I must notify the ECCE Unit if: my contact information or circumstances change (e.g. income, number of dependents, status); or if I would like to change my child's registration to a different early childhood centre.
- My signature affirms that I understand that for my application to be processed I must submit information, which to the best of my knowledge, is true and correct. I understand that if I have submitted dishonest, misleading or inaccurate information, funding may be discontinued; even if my child's application was successful.

- I understand that if the ECCE Unit or the Oversight Committee needs additional information in order to process my child’s application, it is my responsibility to provide all relevant information. I therefore agree that the ECCE Unit may contact my employer and other persons or agencies to verify pertinent information, as deemed necessary. Permission is therefore given for the Ministry of Education or the Department of Education Services to share my information with relevant Government agencies e.g. Workforce Opportunities & Residency Cayman (WORC), the Needs Assessment Unit (NAU), or the Family Resource Centre (FRC).
- I understand that willful misrepresentation of any material fact made by me in this application, or in discussion with the ECCE Unit, or the ECAP Oversight Committee, may result in this and future applications being refused.
- I understand that if I qualify to receive an ECAP grant for my child, funds will be paid each month directly to the early childhood centre which my child attends. I also understand that the usual pay period for ECAP payments is from September 1<sup>st</sup> through to June 30<sup>th</sup>, and I am aware that I must make arrangements for payment of fees during the months of July and August.
- I understand that I will be responsible to pay any fees to the early childhood centre which are above that which is paid through the ECAP Fund.
- I understand that the ECCE Unit will monitor my child’s attendance at the early childhood centre during the payment period.

Questions about the statements can be addressed to the ECCE Unit at [ecap@gov.ky](mailto:ecap@gov.ky) or by calling 244-2714.

### **Early Childhood Centre Choice**

Parents are encouraged to register their child at an early childhood centre **before** submitting the ECAP form. Some centres reach capacity between mid-August and the start of September, so it is advisable to begin visiting childhood centres in advance. At the time of application, if parents need additional guidance in determining which centre is best suited for their child to attend, they may request a copy of the brochure “Choosing an Early Childhood Centre”. For parents with children with special education needs they may request a copy of the brochure “Choosing an Early Childhood Centre for Your Child with Special Needs.” These documents can also be accessed on the Ministry of Education’s website <http://www.education.gov.ky/portal/page/portal/mehhome/education/earlyeducation>.

### **ECAP Monthly Payments**

- If the early childhood centre’s fees are above the amount that the child is approved for, the parent is responsible to pay the balance of the monthly fee. This funding does not cover registration fees, cost of uniforms, supplies, meals, field trips or any additional fees incurred.
- If approved to receive funding, the approved amount is sent directly to the respective centre. The Early Childhood Centre will confirm your child’s attendance at the Centre each month.

- If the child changes early childhood centres, it is the parent's responsibility to provide advance notice to the Early Childhood Care and Education Unit and the manager of the early childhood centre so that the funding can be sent to the correct centre. Failure to do so may result in the parent incurring additional fees.

## **Expectations of Parent(s)/Guardian**

Each parent/guardian whose child receives ECAP funding is expected to complete the following throughout the period of funding:

- 1) Ensure active, positive participation in the early childhood centre such as: attending Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and progress reporting meetings, volunteering when the opportunity arises e.g. for field trips, respecting the rules and expectations of the centre, demonstrating a positive and caring attitude while at the centre, and communicating with the early childhood centre staff regarding your child.
- 2) Use the services of the Family Resource Centre. Each family should partake in offerings of the Family Resource Centre that pertain to their needs, such as the education/information sessions, individual Parent Coaching or individual sessions as arranged by the Family Resource Centre. Further information regarding the Family Resource Centre will be communicated to successful applicants.
- 3) Perform at least 3 hours of community service. It is recommended that you complete at least 1 hour per quarter/term. Community Service could include beach/community clean-ups, volunteering at the Pines or the Humane Society, or assisting at Meals on Wheels. There are also other ways to serve our community. The whole family can get involved and make it a memorable time of fun and learning.