

Tuition Assistance: 2024-2025 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grant

The purpose of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) grant is to maximize a child's early educational experiences before kindergarten and provide high-quality early learning services to eligible children. If your annual household gross income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (chart on page 3) your child may qualify for the Early Childhood Education Grant through the Ohio Department of Education for the 2024-2025 school year.

If your household meets the following eligibility requirements, your child's preschool tuition may be free or reduced from the full monthly rate.

- ☺ Your child must be three years of age; (no later than April 1, 2025).
- ☺ Children who are age eligible to attend kindergarten in their district of residence are **not eligible** to fill a grant slot. (see page 2*)
- ☺ Your annual household gross income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level: Please refer to the Federal Poverty document to see if your household qualifies for the ECE grant.

Required documents to complete the Early Childhood Education (ECE) grant process:

- ☺ A copy of your child's birth certificate to verify age eligibility
- ☺ Documentation to verify family income (see the household income verification section below for acceptable income verification documents)
- ☺ Complete the JFS 07200 SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SMAP), CASH, MEDICAL, AND /OR CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE APPLICATION through the Ohio Self Service Benefits Portal <https://ssp.benefits.ohio.gov/apsspssp/ssp.portal>
- ☺ OR Complete a paper application and submit to the County agency: <https://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS07200/pdf/>
- ☺ Complete the Lake or Geauga County Educational Service Center preschool enrollment packet

Household Income Verification: Two current consecutive paycheck stubs from all working adults in the household, current year tax return for all working adults in the household, W2, or proof of public assistance. If applicable: include income from self-employment, unemployment, disability, child support, spousal support, retirement, benefits from social security, and any other household income.

- If a family has no income, they must provide written documentation how they are meeting basic living expenses, including but not limited to food, housing, utilities and transportation. Examples of acceptable documentation to support the unearned income, include a housing voucher, food stamps, other public assistance, or letters verifying cash gifts.

There are limited ECE grant spots available. Please complete the proper paperwork/application in order to secure a spot for your child. Incomplete applications or missing documentation will delay the enrollment process.

Early Childhood Education Grant Definitions

Examples of gross earned and unearned income are as follows:

- **Gross earned** – wages, salary, severance pay, bonuses, sick leave paid as wages, annual leave, holiday and vacation pay
- **Unearned income** – is income that is not earned income from employment or self-employment. Unearned income includes interest, dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates, trusts, educational assistance, alimony and child support payments, and gifts or assistance received by the family from persons, organizations or assistance agencies, such as social security administration (SSA) disability, unemployment compensation, veteran's payments, survivor benefits, temporary workers' compensation, and pension or retirement income

For the purposes of determining family income, family is defined as:

- All parents/legal guardians of the child residing in the home and all minor children of the parent/legal guardian who are residing in the home;
- A stepparent residing in the home, and all of the minor children who reside in the home;
- The grandparents of the child residing in the home, only if the parent of the child is a minor and is residing in the home and is not participating in the LEAP program;
- Unmarried parents of a common child who reside in the same home and all of the minor children who live with them;
- A foster parent and all of the minor children who reside in the home

*Kindergarten Cut-Off Dates in Lake and Geauga County

Your ECE application will be denied if your child is age-eligible for kindergarten in your district of residence. This means that your child will be five (5) years of age by:

Cardinal Local Schools: August 1st

Chardon Local Schools: August 1st

Kenston Local Schools: September 30th

West Geauga Local Schools: August 1st

Fairport Harbor Local Schools: September 30th

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Beth Williams at 440.350.2563 ext 1728 or bwilliams@escwr.org.





United States Department of Health and Human Services
2024 FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES

Table with 7 columns: Size of Family Unit, 100% Poverty Level, 125% Poverty Level, 150% Poverty Level, 175% Poverty Level, 185% Poverty Level, 200% Poverty Level. Rows include family sizes 1-8 and a row for family units with more than 8 members.

200% of Federal Poverty Level Income Chart

Early Childhood Education funds are required to be used to provide preschool services to economically disadvantaged children whose family income falls at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Table with 2 columns: Household Size, Annual Income. Rows show household sizes 1 through 8 with corresponding annual income thresholds.

For each additional family member, add \$10,760 at the 200% level.

Note: Programs must use the current year's poverty guidelines for any student enrolled on or after February 1.