

# ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund Funding Guidelines



Ministry of  
Education and  
Child Care

---

The Ministry of Education and Child Care acknowledges the territories of First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands.

As the ministry is committed to reconciliation, we acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Métis, and Inuit – respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, and rights. We are committed to building child care as a core service where all First Nations, Métis and Inuit children have access to culturally safe care.

These guidelines are effective **May 26, 2026**

**PLEASE NOTE**

Capitalized terms in these guidelines, excluding proper nouns, have their meaning defined in [Appendix C – Definitions](#).

Please contact the ministry if you have questions at [CCCF@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CCCF@gov.bc.ca) or 1-888-338-6622 (option 5).

---

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Eligibility .....	3
3. Funding.....	4
3.1 Provincial Funding Amount and Disbursement.....	4
3.2 Funding Award Commitment Period.....	4
4. Eligible and Ineligible Costs .....	4
Table 1: Eligible Costs.....	5
Table 2: Ineligible Costs .....	5
5. Grant Deliverables .....	6
6. Intake Process.....	6
Appendix A – Terms and Conditions.....	7
7.0 Nature of the Process.....	7
7.1 Ministry Discretion.....	7
7.2 Operator Representations and Warranties.....	7
7.3 Ministry Due Diligence and Verification.....	7
7.4 Operator Responsibilities .....	7
7.5 Late Submission and Rectification.....	8
7.6 Additional Information .....	8
7.7 School Age Program Viability .....	8
7.8 Communication with Media.....	8
Appendix B – Additional Resources .....	9
Appendix C – Definitions.....	10

---

# 1. Introduction

For 2026-27, the Province has launched the ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up (OSU) Fund to expand access to before- and after-school care through cost-effective, school-based models delivered in partnership with Boards of Education. OSU funding is available to Operators associated with an approved 2026-27 Child Care Capital project administered through the Ministry of Infrastructure.

OSU provides direct financial support to Operators to bring newly built spaces into service. This support builds on recent amendments to the School Act, making it easier for Boards of Education to offer child care on school grounds, including on non-instructional days.

These Guidelines apply to the ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund's 2026-27 intake. Program details are available on the [ChildCareBC website](#).

## 2. Eligibility

Eligible organizations:

- Boards of Education, or
- A Board-selected Not-For-Profit Authorized Operator.

To be eligible, the spaces must be part of an approved 2026-27 Child Care Capital project through the Ministry of Infrastructure.

The Operator must:

- Complete and submit an Intake Form no later than **February 28, 2027**
- Be the Operator of an approved Ministry of Infrastructure 2026-27 Child Care Capital project
- Intend to operate net new licensed School Age Care on School Grounds (SACSG) spaces (new program or expansion)
- Have no outstanding debt(s) owing to the ministry (unless on a province-approved payment plan and in compliance)
- Have a history of compliance under the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) and the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) (where applicable)
- Be in good standing with BC Online/BC Registries (where applicable), and
- Be registered under the [Societies Act](#), if a Not-For-Profit Society

---

## 3. Funding

### 3.1 Provincial Funding Amount and Disbursement

**Funding amount:** \$1,500 per net new SACSG Space, up to \$150,000 per school.

**Use of funds:** OSU funding must be used only for eligible start-up operational costs specific to the SACSG Program (see [Section 4. Eligible and Ineligible Costs](#)).

All items funded through OSU must remain at the school of the approved SACSG Program.

Cost escalations are not eligible under OSU.

**Payment:** One payment (100%) will be issued within 30 days of the Province signing the Funding Agreement.

### 3.2 Funding Award Commitment Period

**3-year commitment:** Recipients must operate the approved SACSG Spaces continually for 3 years from the date of licensing (where demand warrants). As set out in the Funding Agreement, repayment may apply if the commitment period is not met.

## 4. Eligible and Ineligible Costs

OSU funding supports operational start-up costs associated with an approved SACSG Program. Other costs not listed below may be eligible at the ministry's discretion, if required for the program to become operational and are not an item eligible for Child Care Capital funding through the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Expenses are eligible only if they are incurred directly by the Operator and during the period from **2 months prior to OSU approval** to **3 months after licensing**.

**Table 1: Eligible Costs**

Costs associated with the development of an inclusion policy
Costs associated with the development of program policies required by licensing (e.g., active play, illness, etc.)
Housewares (e.g., pots, pans, dishes, flatware, brooms, garbage cans)
Lease costs
Legal costs (must be directly related to the child care facility operation, and unrelated to any ongoing legal disputes)
Licensing applications
Marketing and advertising (e.g., website development, social media advertising, flyers, brochures, staff recruitment)
Office supplies
Operational start-up costs and activities (e.g., utilities, planning, curriculum development and instructional planning)
Parent check-in technology (e.g., staff cellphones, online parent portal software subscriptions, tablets)
Small appliances (e.g., vacuums, air purifiers, portable heaters, portable fans)
Staff salaries and benefits in relation to the operation of the SACSG Program and SACSG Spaces
Toys, art supplies, books and games
Training and certifications (e.g., First Aid, CPR, Criminal Record Check, Responsible Adult)

**Table 2: Ineligible Costs**

Bad debts
Business-related meals/entertainment
Fixed outdoor play equipment (e.g., climbing structure) and/or program equipment eligible for Ministry of Infrastructure Child Care Capital funding
Fundraising
Insurance for operations
Loans
Networking activities (e.g., costs related to attending or hosting conferences/events/tradeshows, costs associated with directly meeting and/or lobbying with any level of government, meals, and travel expenses, etc.)
Proprietary programming
Renovations
Staff gifts
Taxes (e.g., property tax)
Travel expenses
Vehicle rentals

The ministry has the sole discretion to determine whether a cost is eligible. Any ineligible costs are the financial responsibility of the Operator.

---

## 5. Grant Deliverables

Recipients must:

- Obtain and maintain a valid School Age Care on School Grounds [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) licence<sup>1</sup> for the approved number of spaces
- Create and operate the approved number of new SACSG Spaces at the SACSG Program, for a minimum of 3 years from licensing (where demand warrants)
- Comply with eligibility requirements and participate in one of the following for the minimum funding award commitment period of the SACSG Program once the spaces become operational:
  - the [Child Care Operating Funding](#) program, the [Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative](#), and, where eligible, the [Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement](#)
  - the [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC program](#) (expansions only, at ministry discretion); or
  - other program or successor program identified by the Province as being a child care affordability initiative at such time that the recipient is eligible for
- Submit required financial and annual reporting documentation within timelines as set out in the Funding Agreement
- Maintain compliance with all Funding Agreement and program requirements for the duration of the commitment period

As set out in the Funding Agreement, non-compliance may result in repayment obligations.

## 6. Intake Process

**Step 1:** The Operator completes and submits the online OSU Intake Form for the SACSG Program associated with the approved Ministry of Infrastructure 2026-27 Child Care Capital project by **February 28, 2027**.

**Step 2:** The ministry reviews the intake form for completeness and may request clarification or missing information<sup>2</sup> (see [Appendix A – 7.5 Late Submission and Rectification](#)).

**Step 3:** Funding decision provided by the ministry. If approved, the Operator enters into a funding agreement and payment is issued (see [Section 3. Funding](#)).

Funding is subject to budget availability and ministry discretion.

---

<sup>1</sup> Recipient must pursue a SACSG licence at the time of licensing application. However, if a Group Child Care (School Age) licence is granted, an exception may be considered at the ministry's discretion.

<sup>2</sup> Intake forms will be reviewed based upon the accuracy and validity of the information provided. An intake form is not considered complete until the rectification period is over (if applicable).

---

# Appendix A – Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply to all Operators of the ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund. Submission of an intake form indicates acceptance of these terms.

## **7.0 Nature of the Process**

The ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund is a provincial grant program and not a procurement process. Submitting an intake form does not create any obligation for the ministry to fund or enter into a funding agreement.

## **7.1 Ministry Discretion**

The ministry may accept or reject an intake form at its sole discretion, including where mandatory language is used in these guidelines. The ministry may waive deficiencies and/or allow rectification. The ministry may close the intake, in whole or in part, at any time and without liability.

## **7.2 Operator Representations and Warranties**

By submitting an intake form, the Operator represents and warrants that all information provided is true, accurate, and complete. Misinterpretation may result in the intake form not proceeding and/or termination of the funding agreement.

## **7.3 Ministry Due Diligence and Verification**

The ministry may verify information provided in the intake form, including by seeking and/or confirming information from other government ministries. Where required, the ministry may seek consent to confirm information independently with third parties outside of government ministries.

## **7.4 Operator Responsibilities**

The Operator is responsible for submitting a complete intake form and for responding to requests within timelines set by the ministry. All intake forms must be submitted in English. The ministry will only accept Intake Forms from a single legal entity that will act as the main contact to the ministry in respect to the School Age Care on School Grounds program selection process. An Operator may withdraw an intake form by submitting clear written notice before entering into a funding agreement.

---

## **7.5 Late Submission and Rectification**

Intake forms submitted after **February 28, 2027**, may be rejected at the ministry's sole discretion. The ministry may, at its discretion, offer a rectification period to address deficiencies in an intake form and/or supporting documentation; if offered, the Operator is solely responsible for providing the requested information within the timeframe set by the ministry. During rectification, the ministry may provide clarification of identified deficiencies but will not provide other direct support. If the Operator does not respond within the rectification period, the ministry may assess the intake form based on the information on file, which may result in rejection. An intake form is not complete until the rectification period ends and all requested information has been received.

## **7.6 Additional Information**

The ministry may update portions of these guidelines and/or the intake process at any time. Updates will be posted to the program website. It is the sole responsibility of the Operator to check for updates on the web page.

## **7.7 School Age Program Viability**

The ministry may reject an intake form if, in the ministry's opinion, the SACSG program's viability is unsubstantiated. Viability considerations may include financial capacity, long-term sustainability, licensing compliance, and other risks or deficiencies that could limit the SACSG program's ability to meet program objectives.

## **7.8 Communication with Media**

The Operator must not communicate with the media about the ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund and approved SACSG program without the ministry's prior written approval. Requests for approval must be submitted to the ministry at least two weeks in advance of the planned communication.

---

# Appendix B – Additional Resources

[B.C.'s Early Learning Framework](#)

[BC Aboriginal Child Care Society](#)

[Child care health and safety](#)

[Child Care Licensing Regulation](#)

[Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#)

[Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres](#)

[Director of Licensing Standard of Practice – Active Play](#)

[Director of Licensing Standard of Practice – Safe Play Space](#)

[Director of Licensing Standard of Practice – School Age Care on School Grounds](#)

[Furnishings and Equipment Guidelines for Licensed Child Care Facilities](#)

[Inclusive Child Care resources and supports](#)

[Ministry of Infrastructure – Capital Plan Instructions](#)

[Open a licensed child care facility](#)

[Operating Model Toolkit](#)

[Workforce Development Toolkit](#)

## **Links to Local Health Authorities:**

[Fraser Health](#)

[Interior Health](#)

[Northern Health](#)

[Vancouver Coastal](#)

[Vancouver Island](#)

---

## Appendix C – Definitions

**Authorized Operator:** means a licensed school age care provider that has been authorized by a Board of Education to deliver the SACSG Program.

**Boards of Education:** means a board of school trustees constituted under the [School Act](#).

**Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI):** means a funding program that helps make child care affordable for families by providing funding to enrolled, licensed child care providers to reduce and stabilize monthly child care fees.

**Child Care Operating Funding (CCOF) Base Funding:** means funding that assists eligible licensed family, in-home multi-age, and group child care providers with the day-to-day costs of operating a licensed child care facility.

**Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement (ECE-WE):** means an hourly wage funding lift provided to early childhood educators working at eligible licensed child care centres. This initiative is part of a broader Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy to support the development of a stable, qualified, and skilled professional ECE workforce, and recognizes early care and learning as a sustainable and valued career. The ECE-WE is available to all ECEs (including ECEs who are also owner/Operators) directly employed by and working in eligible licensed child care centres.

**Funding Agreement:** means the agreement between the Ministry and the Recipient, under the [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#) under which the Ministry provides Operational Start-Up Funding.

**Guidelines:** means the ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund 2026-27 funding guidelines.

**Intake Form:** means a completed Intake Form submitted by the Operator to request funding under the ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund.

**Ministry:** The Ministry of Education and Child Care.

**Not-For-Profit Society:** means a “society” or an “extra provincial non-share corporation,” but does not include a “member-funded society” as defined in the [Societies Act](#).

---

**Operator:** means a Board of Education or Authorized Operator who requests funding under the ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund.

**Provincial Funding Amount:** means the maximum funding amount the Ministry provides to the Operator approved for Operational Start-Up Funding.

**Recipient:** means an Operator that has entered into a Funding Agreement and received funding under the ChildCareBC Operational Start-Up Fund.

**School Age Care on School Grounds (SACSG) Program:** means the initiative outlined in the Intake Form that supports the opening and/or operation of a licensed School Age Care on School Grounds program located on the grounds of the specific school identified in the Intake Form.

**School Age Care on School Grounds (SACSG) Spaces:** means licensed School Age Care on School Grounds spaces issued pursuant to the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, up to the maximum allowable capacity.