

Early Childhood Education Bursary Program 2006-2009

BURSARY PROGRAM

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Bursary Program is funded by the Department of Health and Community Services and delivered in partnership between the Department of Health and Community Services, Child Care Services and Department of Education, Student Financial Services.

The purpose of the ECE Bursary Program is to improve recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood educators in child care centres by reducing student debt. Well trained early childhood educators are an essential component of regulated child care services and are the main determining factor in the level of quality provided by these services. The ultimate goal of this bursary program is to increase the number of qualified early childhood educators within the province which will, in turn, improve the quality of child care services available to children and families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The ECE Bursary Program is offered to provide assistance to candidates who have obtained a diploma in Early Childhood Education through a recognized post secondary institution in Newfoundland and Labrador. Bursaries are available to graduates who meet the criteria set by the Department. In return, bursary recipients must commit to work in a child care centre in this province for two years after graduation.

Bursaries will be available in 2006-7, 2007-8 and 2008-9.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To qualify for the ECE Bursary, eligible candidates must:

- Graduate from a recognized 2 year Early Childhood Education program in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Obtain permanent fulltime or permanent part-time employment in a child care centre in Newfoundland and Labrador for a period of not less than 24 months immediately after graduation. Those working part time may require an extended period of service.

BURSARY AMOUNT

The Department of Health and Community Services will provide \$5000.00 to successful ECE graduates to assist with paying off student debt incurred during training.

RETURN SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Bursaries will be awarded to individuals who sign a contract upon graduation, agreeing to provide two years of service as an early childhood educator in a child care centre in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. This employment does not have to be all at one

particular centre if there is no break in service longer than 14 days. Applicants must begin working within 30 days of graduation. In the first year of the program, 2006-7, there may be exceptions made for graduates who did not begin working in a child care centre immediately after graduation.

Recipients must notify Child Care Services, Department of Health and Community Services at 709-729-3959, within 14 days if there is a break in employment or the recipient cannot fulfil the 2 year requirement. Recipients who do not fulfil the employment requirement must repay all or a portion of their bursary. The Provincial Director of Child Care Services may permit an extension of time to fulfil the two year employment requirement in extenuating circumstances, such as maternity leave, if the recipient intends to return to work. Recipients may contact Child Care Services to request an extension. Conditions regarding a time extension will be determined by individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Employment status will be verified on a quarterly basis through Educational Supplement records.

APPLICATION PROCESS

No application form is required. Graduates of a two year ECE program will be contacted by the Department of Health and Community Services. The Department of Health and Community Services will receive student graduation information from the educational institutions and will consult with Student Financial Services. Graduates who wish to be considered for the bursary will be asked to sign a contract agreeing to the 2 year service in a child care centre.

For graduates who are Student Financial Assistance clients, Student Financial Services will apply the bursary toward the federal portion of their student loan. Graduates who did not have a student loan will receive a cheque directly from Health and Community Services.

Frequently asked questions

How do I apply for the bursary?

You do not need to fill out an application form. You will be contacted by the Department of Health and Community Services and you will be asked to verify that you are working in a child care centre in Newfoundland and Labrador and agree to work for 24 months after graduation.

How long after graduation do I have to find employment in a centre?

You will have to begin working in a centre within 30 days of graduation. In the first year of the program this may be extended. Contact Child Care Services to discuss your circumstances.

When will the bursary be paid?

The bursary will be paid once graduation confirmation is received from the training institution, your employment is confirmed and you have signed the agreement to work in a child care centre for at least 24 months.

What happens if I get seriously ill and have to take some time off work in the two years?

If there is any change in your employment status you must contact Child Care Services at 709-729-3959 within 14 days to discuss the circumstances. If you intend to return to work you may be granted an extension of time to fulfil your two year commitment. Extensions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

What if I do not work for 2 years after graduation?

You will have to repay all or a portion of the bursary.

How is the bursary paid?

If you received student aid (a student loan), Student Financial Services will apply the bursary toward the federal portion of your loan. If you funded your training in other ways, you will receive a cheque from Health and Community Services.

What is considered permanent fulltime or permanent part-time?

Full time is defined as minimally nine months in a year and working for at least 120 hours per month; part time means minimally nine months in a year and working at least 60 hours per month.

Where can I find more information?

Information will be posted at www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/childcare/default.htm as it becomes available. You may also contact Child Care Services at 709-729-3959 for information.

