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SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY OFFICE OF
EDUCATION
DR. FARIS SABBAH • SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Date: July 13, 2020
To: Eligible Licensed Infant/Toddler Care Providers in Santa Cruz County
From: David Brody, Executive Director
Subject: **Fiscal Year 19/20 Thrive by Three Early Learning Scholarship Program Notification of Funding Availability**

Introduction

In January 2017, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted to establish the Thrive by Three (TBT) fund, dedicated to achieving improved outcomes for Santa Cruz County's youngest and most vulnerable children, prenatal through age 3 and their families.

Early Learning Scholarship Program

The Early Learning Scholarship (ELS) program is administered by First 5 Santa Cruz County (First 5) and is designed to provide an enhanced per-child reimbursement rate to licensed and state-subsidized infant and toddler care providers in Santa Cruz County. The purpose of this enhanced reimbursement is to help close the gap between the cost of high-quality infant and toddler care and available state subsidies.

Program Eligibility

Family child care and center-based infant/toddler care programs that meet all of the following criteria are eligible for ELS funding:

- Have current licenses with the Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services that are in good standing.
- Provide state-subsidized voucher-based or Title 5-funded care¹ to infants and/or toddlers² in Santa Cruz County. If your program is contracted by a local agency (e.g. Pajaro Valley Unified School District or Go Kids, Inc.) to provide infant and toddler care, please consult with that agency to confirm if the source of your funding is one of the State of California Title 5 contract types listed in footnote 1 below.
- Are currently participating, or willing to participate, in the Quality Counts Santa Cruz County quality improvement system.

Any program that received funding from the fiscal year 2017/2018 or 2018/2019 ELS Program, and subsequently declined to participate in the Quality Counts Santa Cruz County quality improvement system, is ineligible for this round of ELS funding. Any new provider must be willing to, at a minimum, participate in a 1-hour orientation to the Quality Counts Santa Cruz County Quality Improvement System, facilitated by First 5 Santa Cruz County.

¹ State-subsidized care is defined as voucher-based child care (CalWORKs Stages 1-3 and Alternative Payment) or Title 5 subsidized contracts (e.g. CCTR - General Child Care and Development and CMIG - Migrant Child Care and Development).

² Age group definitions: Infant: 0 to 24 months; Toddler: 24 months to less than 36 months.

ELS Rates

Programs that meet the criteria described above are eligible to receive ELS payments. In light of the COVID-19 Crisis, and in an effort to minimize the administrative burden on our child care community during the crisis, the monthly payment rates have been consolidated to include only two rates: Infant/Toddler Full-Day and Infant/Toddler Part Day. See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Per Child Monthly ELS Payment Rates

Infant/Toddler	Full-Day Monthly	Part-Day Monthly
Infant/Toddler Care	\$150	\$50

Funding Available

There is a total of \$70,000 available for ELS payments linked to services rendered in the 2019/2020 fiscal year up to and including the last full month of service prior to implementation of COVID-19 Shelter in Place Orders in Santa Cruz County (July 1, 2019 – February 29, 2020).

Availability of Funds

F5 SCC anticipates that payment requests will exceed funds available and therefore F5 SCC may not be able to pay all eligible requests. F5 SCC reserves the right to cap payments to any one organization or family child care provider in order to ensure an equitable distribution of funds. F5 SCC also reserves the right to refuse payment to anyone at its sole discretion.

Payment Process

All payment request forms must **be received** by First 5 Santa Cruz County no later than **11:59 p.m., July 24, 2020**.

To receive payment, eligible programs are required to complete the online ELS Payment Request Form completely and accurately to the best of their ability and to attest in writing that they are eligible to participate in the program. Below is an active link to the application form, which can be completed in English or Spanish, as well as a QR code that can be used to access the form via a smart phone, tablet.

Please note: If the program has not previously received payment for services from First 5 Santa Cruz County, **a completed W-9 must be submitted to First 5 SCC** via email to: bdana@first5scc.org, or a hard copy sent by mail to: First 5 Santa Cruz County, ATTN: ELS Program, 4450 Capitola Rd., Suite 106, Capitola, CA 95010.

Click on the link below to complete the online ELS Payment Request Form:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EK5UtiKWAUS2PugUVCFIai9-4A2XNYdCiCdfY0Xnd7VUMzJKU1VEQzQ1VIILUzhRQ0hWM1Q5QTdHNYQIQCN0PWcu>

Or scan this QR Code with your phone or tablet.



For assistance with this application and related forms please call:

English: Meghan Reilly @ 831-465-2476

Spanish: Frances Jimenez @ 831-