



MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE



2024-25 Child Care Stipend Program

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Child Care Stipend Program

Program Description

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to support Métis families by offering the Child Care Stipend Program. Our child care stipend program was developed in acknowledgement of families who do not have access to and/or whose needs cannot be met through formal child care (i.e. licensed or private child care).

The stipend program is available to Métis families with children 0-12 years old when all parents/guardians within the household work, attend school, or have documented medical needs that require childcare support. It is recognized that the stipend may not offset the total cost of alternative care. This program is not an income supplement but is intended to lessen the cost of informal child care.

Families with non-school-age children (0-4yrs) may be eligible for a childcare stipend of up to \$30 per day or \$150 per week per family. Families with school-age children who require before and/or after-school care may be eligible for a stipend of up to \$10 per day or \$50 per week per family. In addition, families with school-aged children may qualify for a stipend of \$30 per day, per family, for school holidays such as PD days, Christmas Break and March Break.

The stipend amount is provided on a PER FAMILY basis. The maximum available at any time is \$150/week per family.

Early Learning and Child Care Family Supports Administrators will work with families to obtain applicable documentation, confirm ongoing eligibility, and offer support. All Métis families who meet the qualifications are encouraged to apply.

Eligibility

- Children must be between the ages of 0-12 years.
 - The stipend ends the month prior to the child turning 13.
- The parent/guardian, or child, must be an MNO citizen eligible for direct support.
- Family must reside in the province of Ontario.
- The family does not have access to formal child care within the community, or the child care available does not meet the family's needs.
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) must be employed, attending school, or have ongoing medical needs that require child care support.
 - If the parent or guardian works from home, an alternate caregiver must be present during working hours.

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- A family member, friend, or other support person provides child care regularly (minimum average of 3 days/week)
 - Contact information must be provided to the MNO to verify the child care arrangement.
- Parenting agreement that describes parenting time (for example, 50/50 split)
 - The stipend is only available during the applicant's parenting time.

The following are examples of child care circumstances that do not qualify for stipend:

- Irregular child care (ex. night-out babysitters, PD days only)
- Requesting stipend during parent/guardian's vacation time or scheduled days off
- School closures due to weather-related events (e.g. snow days)
- Families during a parent/guardian's period of unemployment
- Care for an older sibling during a parent/guardian's maternity or parental leave.
- Parent/guardian's seasonal work layoff periods
- Licensed child care and camps
- Summer camps, day camps, PD day camps, etc.
- Private schools
- Homeschooling/ homeschooling pods

If you are unsure if your child care situation is within the parameters of the stipend program, please email elccsupport@metisnation.org

Application

Families must apply online to the Child Care Stipend Program on the MNO's application portal on SMAApply.

Families must provide the following information:

- MNO Citizenship
- Banking information
- Proof of employment, post-secondary school or medical necessity (for all parents/guardians living in the household)
- School calendar (if applicable)
- Contact information for the caregiver

After applying to the program, the ELCC Family Support Team will review it. They will contact you if they require more information. Please note that there is often a waitlist due to overwhelming interest in MNO's Child Care Stipend Program. The Métis Nation of Ontario does not offer retroactive payment to account for wait time. The outcome of your application will be disclosed in writing.

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The application portal will close for approximately the first two weeks of March of each year for annual maintenance.

The link to apply to the Child Care Stipend Program is below:

[MNO Child Care Stipend Program - Métis Nation of Ontario Program Application Portal \(smapply.io\)](https://smapply.io)

Program Guidelines

Once approved for our Child Care Stipend Program, a Family Supports Administrator will issue the Child Care Stipend bi-monthly. Families must report their childcare needs for the upcoming months within a two-week reporting window, considering their upcoming work schedules, school schedules and child custody arrangements (if applicable). Families will receive payment via direct deposit. Therefore, banking information must be provided to receive our child care stipend. Compensation varies based on each family's circumstances and the age of the child(ren) requiring care.

Each family must abide by the terms and conditions governing the program delivery. An example is provided when applying; a formal document is signed when accepted into the program. If a family is found to violate the terms and conditions, the stipend may be terminated without notice.

The following are general guidelines for the Child Care Stipend Program:

- The stipend program is only for children 0-12 years old. Support is terminated the month before a child turns 13.
- The MNO can request employment, school, or medical documentation to maintain the stipend.
- Families are to notify their designated Family Supports Administrator within five (5) business days of changes in address, child care arrangements, or employment.
- Families must immediately contact their Family Supports Administrator if errors are made in their bi-monthly report.
- Families must comply with reviews to confirm continued eligibility, at least annually.
- The stipend program may not be accessed in conjunction with other Early Learning and Child Care programs
- Adhere to our online check-ins bi-monthly (every other month) through SurveyMonkey Apply.
 - Families will be provided with a list of online check-in periods at the beginning of every fiscal year and when they sign the terms and conditions for the program.
- Families are ineligible on days when a parent or guardian can provide care for their children. Please refer to the Eligibility section of the guide for more information.
- Failure to complete the online check-in by the established deadline will result in delays and may lead to the termination of your stipend eligibility.

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- Accurate child care need reports are required. Falsified submissions will lead to missed bi-monthly payments and/or termination from the program.

Appeals and Complaints

- Every application is reviewed based on the parameters of the program based on individual circumstances and information provided in the program.
- You can request a review of the application by emailing Emma Langdon, Family Programs Supervisor, at emmal@metisnation.org or 807-627-7349. Please include your full name and the application number. The application will be reviewed by the ELCC manager, and it may take up to ten business days.
- The review is sent to the Director of Education and Training for the final decision.
- The Director of Education and Training reviews all final appeal decisions with no exceptions.
- The MNO ELCC team follows the MNO's Policies on Prevention of Workplace Harassment (POLICY NO. 3.030) and Violence and Respectful Workplace (POLICY NO. 3.020).
<https://www.metisnation.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/policies-and-procedures-manual-may-1-2020.pdf>
- While we understand your frustrations, yelling, harassing, or sending hurtful emails or phone calls to ELCC staff is never ok. This includes:
 - Not respecting response time guidelines and sending frequent phone calls or emails to ELCC staff with the expectation that they respond to you quicker.
 - Multiple calls and emails will not increase our response time and may create additional delays.
 - Calling ELCC staff derogatory words via phone call or email.
 - Make "threats" to go to your Community Council President, PCMNO Regional Councillor, or President of the Métis Nation of Ontario if you disagree with a decision made by the ELCC team.
 - Using frequent passive-aggressive language via phone or email.
 - Swearing or using racial slurs.
 - Threats of violence to ELCC staff or their families.
- Failure to comply with these policies will result in an incident report sent to the Director of Education and Training. It MAY result in your ELCC file being closed.
- Please be mindful that ELCC staff are people, too. There is a person behind that phone call or email. Negatively treating any ELCC staff member will not be tolerated. Many are also MNO citizens who love supporting other citizens and take great pride in their work. They have families and a life outside of their work hours. We kindly ask all families accessing this program to treat all ELCC staff with dignity, respect, and kindness.

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- ELCC staff strives to provide the best support possible to our citizens with kindness, respect, and dignity.
- If an ELCC staff member breaks the above policies, please email Emma Langdon, Supervisor of ELCC Family Supports (emmal@metisnation.org). Please provide the name of the staff person involved, the date, time, and a description of the incident. Emma will follow up within ten business days and may request additional information. Severe occurrences will be brought to the Director of Education and Training.

Frequently Asked Questions

I am having trouble accessing the portal. What can I do?

- The application portal is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- If you are having trouble accessing the site, try another browser, clear your cache, try another device, ensure a stable internet connection, etc.
- If you have forgotten your password, reset it on the portal or contact the SMAApply help desk from the portal site.
 - ELCC staff cannot make these changes as we do not have those site permissions.
- please contact your Family Supports Administrator or ELCCsupport@metisnation.org if your problem is unresolved.

I have barriers to completing the application. Can you help?

- please contact your Family Supports Administrator or ELCCsupport@metisnation.org for support.
- If the internet is a total barrier, please get in touch with our Team Lead, Tamara Robbins, at 905-414-3133 for support

A grandparent or sibling will be caring for my child. Are we eligible for the Child Care Stipend Program?

- If the grandparent or sibling provides regular, ongoing child care, you may be eligible for the stipend. Regular or ongoing child care is for at least three days per week or ten days per calendar month.
- If the grandparent or sibling provides irregular care (such as babysitting for a night out), this is not eligible for the child care stipend. Contact information must still be provided.

My employment is seasonal. Can I access the program all year round?

- If your employment is seasonal, you can only access the stipend when working. Your stipend is placed on hold when you are not working and will resume when your work restarts.
- This includes any staff employed by district school boards who are not actively employed during the summer months.

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Both my partner and I work shifts. The childcare facilities in our area are unable to accommodate our hours. Would we qualify for the stipend program?

- Yes, you may be eligible for the childcare stipend program. Please note that your Family Support Administrator will require your work schedules to approve your application.

I work full-time, but my partner is unemployed. Can we access the program?

- All parents/guardians in the household must be employed or in an education program. If you require childcare support for medical or mental health reasons, please email elccsupport@metisnation.org.

My youngest child is in licensed child care, but my neighbour watches my eldest child after school. Can I qualify for the stipend program?

- You may be eligible to receive a \$50/week stipend for your school-age child.

We just welcomed a new child, and I am on parental leave. Can I access the program?

- You cannot access the program if you are not currently working. This program supports families who require alternate childcare arrangements for employment or education purposes.
- If you require childcare support for medical or mental health reasons, please contact elccsupport@metisnation.org.

Do childcare receipts need to be submitted once approved for this program?

- Childcare receipts are not required. However, we reserve the right to request supporting documentation where necessary.

I entered my childcare needs incorrectly for the bi-monthly check-in. What do I do?

- Once submitted, your childcare needs cannot be changed.
- Please ensure that your childcare needs are accurately reported before submission.
- If you overestimate your child care need, your future stipend may be decreased to compensate for the overpayment.

I forgot to submit my bi-monthly check-in. Can I submit late?

- All families are provided with the dates the check-on portal opens and closes at the beginning of the fiscal year and when they sign the terms and conditions.
- If you do not submit it by the deadline, you will not receive the child care stipend for that period.

How do I receive payment?

- Payments are issued up to six times per year (April and May, June and July, August and September, October and November, December and January, February and March) and are

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typically directly deposited by the last Friday of the month (i.e., April, June, August, September, October, December and February).

- If you do not receive the payment by the last Friday of the month, please get in touch with your assigned Family Supports Administrator.

Is the payment taxable?

- Please consult a tax specialist, but tax slips are not issued for this program.

How will I receive the reimbursement?

- Funds will be reimbursed via direct deposit into your bank account on file.
- When applying, please ensure you are attaching accurate banking information. This includes:
 - Void cheque.
 - Direct deposit form.
 - Screenshot of banking information.
- Please note: Our finance team will NOT accept the following:
 - Savings account information.
 - Credit card information.
 - Handwritten banking information.
- Banking information MUST be in the name of the applicant or the MNO Citizen. If the information does not match, we will ask for it in the applicant's or MNO citizen's name.
- Please ensure that any changes to banking information are sent to the ELCC Family Supports Administrator as soon as possible to avoid payment delays.
- All banking information is saved on a secure drive that only the Manager of ELCC, Supervisor of ELCC, Team Lead, and the MNO Finance team can access. Please refer to the MNO's Financial Policies and Procedures. www.metisnation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MNO-Financial-Policies-and-Procedures-Updated-2021.pdf
- If you do not receive your reimbursement within three weeks of your approval email, please get in touch with the ELCC Family Supports Administrator, and they will investigate the status of your reimbursement.
- If you are new to the Early Learning and Child Care Programs and submit banking information for the first time, please allow up to six weeks from the date you receive your approval email for your reimbursement. This will enable our Finance team to add you to the MNO financial system.

We were just approved for the stipend program. Will we receive back payment for previous expenses?

- MNO does not offer retroactive payments for the stipend program.

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Why do I need to provide information on the caregiver for my child?

- We require this information for our records for quality assurance. We may contact the caregiver to verify the child care situation.

I have four children. How much is my weekly stipend?

- Our Child Care Stipend Program reaches maximum amounts per family, as follows:
 - For non-school-aged children, the stipend is per family, at \$150 per week.
 - For school-aged children, the stipend is per family – \$50 per week
 - For households with mixed age groups, the stipend is \$150 per week per family.

What happens if my situation changes?

- Once approved for our program, you will be assigned an ELCC Family Supports Administrator whom you can contact if your circumstances change.
- Upon entering our program, you will sign our Terms and Conditions confirming that you are responsible for notifying your Family Supports Administrator within five business days of a change in circumstances that will affect your childcare arrangements.

Is there support for families who can access formal childcare arrangements?

- The Métis Nation of Ontario offers a Child Care Subsidy Program for which you may be eligible.
- Please contact your Family Supports Administrator or elccsupport@metisnation.org for more information. You may also qualify for assistance within your municipality.

My Child has been accepted into childcare. What do I do?

- Advise your program administrator of these changes, then apply to our Childcare subsidy program.

My family only requires child care for March break and PD days. Are we eligible for the Child Care Stipend Program?

- The Child Care Stipend Program is reserved for the families of greatest need, those who require regular, ongoing child care.
- For our program, childcare must be accessed at least three days per week on average.

Is there support for families to send their children to camps over the summer and March break?

- The Métis Nation of Ontario offers an Extra-Curricular Reimbursement Program for which you may be eligible. Please get in touch with your Family Supports Administrator or elccsupport@metisnation.org for more information.

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I need before- and after-care for summer break, as day camp doesn't cover the full time I work. Can I access a stipend for this time?

- Yes, you may be eligible for the child care stipend program for before and aftercare

My child attends Day Camp (During the summer, March break, Christmas break or PD Days), and Extra Curricular reimburses the camp. Can I still access the stipend for these days?

- No, You may only access one program during this time. If your child is in a Day camp, you must submit these expenses through the extracurricular portal.

What are your staff's working hours?

- Most MNO staff work Monday to Friday from 8:30 am-4:30 pm, based on their time zone.
- Some of our staff flex their day outside of these hours. We will respond to you within two business days, and this does not include weekends, holidays, etc.
- Any communication sent outside MNO operational hours will not be responded to until business hours resume. This includes holidays and weekends. We will reply to you within two business days. We encourage a work-life balance for our coordinators.
- During high-volume times, ELCC Family Supports Administrators will set up an automatic reply informing families that our response time may be delayed.
- If you do not get a response back from your ELCC Family Supports Administrator within ten business days, please get in touch with Emma Langdon, ELCC Supervisor of Family Supports, at emmal@metisnation.org

I have questions for my Family Supports Administrator and see them publicly or at an event. Can I ask them about my applications?

- Staff will only answer programming questions during regular working hours and or when they have the capacity to during special events.
 - Staff working during events and camps may be unable to access your file during the event. Please email them your questions; they will follow up after the event.
- If you meet with a staff member outside of working hours, they are not obligated to answer your questions regarding our programs.
- Many staff are also citizens and may attend an event as citizens—not as staff. They are not expected to answer questions when they are not working.
- The MNO supports the Disconnecting from Work Policy. POLICY NO. 7.110: DISCONNECTING FROM WORK:
 - Disconnecting from work is defined as not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls, or the sending or reviewing of other messages, to be free from the performance of work.

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- Employees are not expected to engage in work-related communications outside of the employee's regular working hours, including those from clients, colleagues, People Leaders, or community communications.
- Employees are encouraged to stop performing their job duties and work-related tasks when their regularly scheduled hours end. Working hours are set in an employee's letter of offer upon hire or communicated upon changes to their role. Flexible hours are considered a part of established working hours. This includes working approved alternative hours outside of standard established hours to ensure specific work duties are met.
- As staff within the organization work to different schedules, all employees may disconnect from work in the context of their particular work pattern.
- This Policy applies to all employees (including People Leaders), volunteers, and interns, regardless of position, tenure, and work location.

I am on an MNO Community Council/PCMNO/ MNO Auxiliary Council. Can I still access this program?

- You can access the program if you have children between 0 and 12 years old.
- If you are concerned about privacy, please get in touch with Emma Langdon, Supervisor of Family Supports, at emmal@metisnation.org or 807-627-7349.

I am an MNO staff member but also an MNO citizen. Can I access this program for my children? If yes, what steps do I have to take?

- You can access the program if you have children between 0 and 12 years old.
- You complete the online application, and the Family Supports Administrator will contact you after your application is reviewed.
- If you are concerned about privacy, please get in touch with Emma Langdon, Supervisor of Family Supports, at emmal@metisnation.org or 807-627-7349.
- Once your application is approved, you must submit the expenses to our financial reimbursement portal (Databases). You are required to include the following:
 - Email your Family Support Administrator or Emma Langdon confirmation of approval.
 - All receipts
- Any reimbursement missing the required information will be fully declined in Databasics until the necessary attachments are submitted. This is for auditing purposes.

I am an MNO staff member working in another program supporting a client for application. What can I do to help?

- Contact elccsupport@metisnation.org, and we will work with you directly on a referral.
- We strongly recommend that staff outside ELCC connect with the ELCC team to support your client's needs.

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- Do not create an application for a client using your MNO email.

I am moving outside of the province. Are there still supports through the MNO I can access?

- The program can only be accessed by MNO citizens who live in Ontario.
 - If a family moves outside of Ontario during the fiscal year, they must notify their Family Supports Administrator 30 days before moving.
 - The program will only accept reimbursements dated before your moving date.
 - Failure to notify your FSA about moving will result in the closure of your entire Extra Curricular Support Program application. All submitted reimbursements will be declined in full.
- please contact your Provincial Métis Government for Early Learning and Childcare Support. Each provincial Métis government has different programs and supports to meet their community's needs.

Contact Us

If you need help with your application or would like to learn more about the programs available, please contact the Early Learning and Child Care Team by phone at 905-414-3133 or by email at elccsupport@metisnation.org. If you email us, please include the MNO region or municipality you live in so we can support you in a timely manner.

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