Early Childhood Council
of La Plata County

La Plata Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program

Preschool Eligibility & Wage Stipend Framework

Application will be available on November 2nd, 2026.

On behalf of the La Plata County community, thank you for the work you do with young children and families. The pilot rounds of the La Plata Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program will provide stipends to eligible educators to close the wage gap, with the goal of all educators earning a livable wage in La Plata.

Professional Eligibility (baseline criteria):

□ Confirm with your Director that your program is eligible to apply for the stipend.

□ Work full-time* in an early childhood preschool classroom.

□ Worked in your role for at least twelve months**.

□ Hold one of the following position titles:

a. Early Childhood Teacher
b. Early Childhood Teacher Assistant

□ Make less than $24 per hour (La Plata's liveable wage).

□ Complete Professional Development annual hours requirement (15 hours).

□ Maintain a PDIS Level 2 or higher.

□ Consent to the Early Childhood Council of La Plata County to verify employment information with my employer.

□ If you received a June 2026 stipend payment, you must also complete a ECE Wage Stipend Survey.

*Full time is defined as a minimum 32 hours per week. Professionals are not eligible for stipends during extended (more than 2 weeks) medical or family leave, or summer school closure. If a program is not open year round, educators will be eligible for a pro-rata stipend rate.

**Professionals meeting all other eligibility requirements are eligible for a 6-month, 50% stipend. They may only qualify for the benchmark stipend one time.

Funding for this program is generously provided by the Buell Foundation, the City of Durango, Michael and Elaine Moravan, the Moniker Foundation, and The Payroll Department. Please note: This program is contingent upon the availability of funding, and future cycles are not guaranteed.

Application Process

Application will be available on November 2nd, 2026.

Have the following documents ready when starting an application:

 Confirm with your Director that your program is eligible to apply for the stipend.

 Copy of a single paystub from the last 60 days.

 Screenshot of your PDIS homepage showing 15 hours of professional development in the last 12 months.

 Work verification letters from any La Plata County early childhood employers from the last 10 years (if applicable).

 Completed program retention survey (does not apply to first round application).

Note: Providing any falsified documentation will automatically disqualify you from participating in any future stipend program funding.

For questions about the EC Stipend Program or how to apply contact Stephanie Milner qinavigator@ecclaplata.org.

For help with applying for or increasing your PDIS Early Childhood Professional Credential contact Layne Wilkes support@ecclaplata.org.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR FUNDING FRAMEWORK

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Funding Framework

Eligible professionals will receive a baseline award based on their ECPC Level. They may then stack one or more professional recognition awards, the amount also determined by ECPC Level. 6-month Benchmark stipends are awarded at 50% of the amount shown.

All preschool professionals found eligible will be awarded the following amounts based on their Early Childhood Professional Credential:			
	ECPC Level 2	**ECPC Level 3-4**	**ECPC L5-6**
Meets baseline criteria	$600	$800	$1,000
Educators may stack an additional award for meeting one or more of the following components. You DO NOT need to qualify for any or all of the professional recognition components below; you'll receive an award based on those that you DO qualify for.			
Has worked in ECE in La Plata County for 10+ years **OR** **Has worked in ECE in La Plata County for 5+ years**	$300 **OR** $150	$400 **OR** $200	$500 **OR** $250
Employer does NOT contribute to health and/or retirement benefits	$180	$240	$300
Administrators that spend at least 50% of their working hours in a classroom.	$120	$160	$200

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