

About the Early Care and Education Retention Project (AB 212)

The Early Childhood Council of Kern is committed to ensuring that subsidized early care and education programs are offered in quality environments that are culturally, linguistically, age and developmentally appropriate. Critical to quality early care and education is continuity, specifically the retention of staff, ranging from the teacher assistant to the program administrator.

With this in mind, the Council provides an education and professional growth based retention program. This program provides incentives to qualified employees who work directly with children receiving care in State subsidized, center-based programs. The incentives are divided into two levels according to the following designations:

1. **Education Incentive:** Provide incentives to early care and education providers to progress on the Child Development Permit Matrix and increase the number of individuals with a teacher permit. To be eligible for a stipend, the course must be child development/early childhood education related or a general education course that is required for graduation. Ineligible courses include Work Experience, Continuing Education, ESL, Elementary Education, Cooperative Education, CPR/First Aid or courses not related to child development.
2. **Professional Growth Incentive:** Provide incentives to early care and education providers who may not be enrolled in college level classes but are enhancing their professional growth by participating with workshops and conferences. To be eligible for a stipend, the applicant must obtain the professional growth hours during non-paid time. Workshops must be child development specific. Workshops required for employment such as CPR/First Aid, those related to operating a family child care home or becoming a foster parent are not eligible.

In addition to either of the above, an applicant can submit for:

Professional Association Reimbursement: Provide reimbursement (up to \$75) for membership to a child development professional organization such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Professional Association for Childhood Educators and the Association for Childhood Education International. Union dues are not eligible for reimbursement.

Data from the bi-annual salary survey, conducted by the Early Childhood Council of Kern in the fall of 2014, revealed that the turnover rate of staff in state funded child development programs improved in the categories of Aide, Assistant Teacher, Associate Teacher, and Site Supervisor however the turnover rate increased in the category of Teacher. Please note that these changes are based solely on those centers responding to the 2014 survey. This data is compared to the survey data from the fall of 2012. Collaborative partnerships have been established to increase the training opportunities available including:

- Bakersfield College
- Taft College
- Cerro Coso College
- Cal State University, Bakersfield
- Kern Association for the Education of Young Children
- Professional Growth Advisors
- Fresno Pacific University
- First 5 Kern
- Community Connection for Child Care (resource & referral agency)

- California Preschool Instructional Network

These organizations play an active role in implementing, marketing, outreach, and providing technical assistance to potential applicants. In addition, the Early Childhood Council of Kern maintains an advisory committee that meets on an “as needed” basis, to provide oversight of the project, assist with the development of internal policies and address issues that may arise.

Although professional growth activities have a positive impact, studies indicate that individuals who obtain higher levels of formal education tend to remain within the field longer in addition to the tremendous benefit to children in having an educated/trained caregiver. Therefore the stipend amounts for the Education Awards are higher than the Professional Growth Awards as an incentive for individuals in the field to continue or return to school to increase their education and thereby provide higher quality care for the children entrusted to them.

Recognizing the importance of early care workforce stability the project implements a compensation program aimed at retaining highly qualified early care and education professionals.

For the 2016-2017 year, the project will continue with one application phase (spring).

Employment Requirement:

Applicant must work directly with children a minimum of 15 hours per week, every week of a full program year with the same agency.

Basic Eligibility:

Applicant must have completed a minimum of 6 CD/ECE units (with a grade of C or better) by the application deadline to be eligible for any award.

Professional Growth Incentive:

Applicant must complete a minimum of 18 hours of non-paid, professional growth within the specified timeframe (April 2016 to the application deadline in April 2017). Up to six (6) of the 18 hours may be obtained by participating in web based workshops or webinars offered by an approved source such as WestEd, NAEYC, etc. as long as a certificate can be provided to indicate the number of hours and date completed.

Award: up to \$800 (exact amount to be determined by the total number of applicants)

Education Incentive:

Award amounts will be based on the number of units completed or currently enrolled in during the specified time frame.

Award Category 1 - Applicant must have completed (or be currently enrolled in) a minimum of three (3) semester units or five (5) quarter units, within the given time frame (Summer 2016, Fall 2016, Winter 2017 or Spring 2017 semesters or quarters. Student must have earned, or are earning, a grade of C or better to be eligible.

Award: up to \$1,000 (exact amount to be determined by the total number of applicants)

Award Category 2 - Applicant must have completed (or be currently enrolled in) a minimum of six (6) semester units or ten (10) quarter units, within the given time frame (same as Award Category 1). Student must have earned, or be earning, a grade of C or better to be eligible.

Award: up to \$2,000 (exact amount to be determined by the total number of applicants)

Eligible courses must be child development/early childhood or general education (leading to graduation) – unrelated courses will not be accepted.

If the class is “In Progress” a course confirmation card must be signed by the instructor and submitted with application indicating that the student is enrolled and receiving a grade of C or better.

Professional Association Reimbursement

Applicants may be eligible for reimbursement (up to \$75) if proof of membership to a child development professional organization is provided with stipend application. Qualifying associations include the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Professional Association for Childhood Educators and the Association for Childhood Education International. Reimbursement will be made at \$50 for students and \$75 for non-students. This reimbursement has been designed to encourage individuals in the ECE field to learn more of the field beyond their community, keep abreast of ECE issues and trends and further develop their own professional status in the field. Union dues are excluded from eligibility.

Professional Growth Training Opportunities

The Early Childhood Council of Kern staff member will coordinate up to six (6) trainings throughout the fiscal year in order to provide ECE teachers with opportunities to obtain the required training hours needed to apply for the Professional Growth Award. Input has been received from State subsidized center directors regarding the training topics most needed for their staff. In addition, communication has been established with the California Preschool Instructional Network, the Resource & Referral Agency and the Kern Association for the Education of Young Children to enhance the professional development opportunities in Kern County and avoid duplication of topics. Council staff will coordinate all details of the trainings, process registrations and compile all training materials.

Possible training topics to include:

- Desired Results Development Profile 2015
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
- Professionalism in the ECE Field
- Infant Toddler
- Challenging Behaviors
- Relationships with Parents
- Outdoor Environments
- CLASS
- English Language Learners
- Math
- Language/Literacy
- Inclusion
- Emotional Intelligence
- Curriculum