



Ohio Revised Code

Section 5104.53 Early childhood education grant program.

Effective: October 09, 2026

Legislation: House Bill 455 - 136th General Assembly

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "Family services program" has the same meaning as in section 5101.35 of the Revised Code.

(2) "IEP" has the same meaning as in section 3323.01 of the Revised Code.

(3) "Ohio works first" has the same meaning as in section 5107.02 of the Revised Code.

(4) "Resource caregiver" has the same meaning as in section 5103.02 of the Revised Code.

(5) "Supplemental nutrition assistance program" means the program administered by the department of job and family services pursuant to section 5101.54 of the Revised Code.

(B) The early childhood education grant program is created in the department of children and youth. Subject to available funds, the program shall support and invest in early learning and development programs operating in this state by awarding grants to programs that meet the conditions of this section in an amount that corresponds to the number of eligible children served by the programs.

(C) To be eligible for a grant under this section, an early learning and development program shall meet each of the following conditions:

(1) The program is rated through the step up to quality program established under section 5104.29 of the Revised Code at the tiered rating specified by the department in rules adopted under this section.

(2) The program provides early learning and development services to one or more preschool-age children described in division (D) of this section.

(3) The program meets any other eligibility condition specified by the department in rules adopted under this section.

(D) A preschool-age child who meets all of the following conditions, as determined by the early learning and development program in consultation with the county department of job and family services, is eligible to participate in the early childhood education grant program if a slot is available:



(1) Either the amount of the child's family income does not exceed two hundred per cent of the federal poverty line or the child meets one of the following conditions:

(a) An IEP has been developed for the child;

(b) The child is placed with a resource caregiver as described in Chapter 5103. of the Revised Code, with such placement documented by either a family case plan or kinship permanency incentive payments;

(c) The child is homeless as described in division (V) of section 5104.01 of the Revised Code;

(d) The child has exited the state's part C early intervention services program implemented pursuant to sections 5180.30 to 5180.32 of the Revised Code as documented by an individual family service plan;

(e) The child is a medicaid recipient or is part of a household or assistance group that receives supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits or participates in the Ohio works first program.

(2) The child is a citizen of the United States or a qualified alien.

(3) The child meets any other eligibility condition specified by the department in rules adopted under this section.

(E) The family of a child who is eligible to participate under this section may elect to utilize the early childhood education grant program instead of another source of state funding for child care.

(F) An early learning and development program that utilized the education management information system established under section 3301.0714 of the Revised Code to track a child's attendance for the early childhood education grant program prior to the effective date of this amendment shall continue to use that system for attendance.

(G) Any funds appropriated to the department for purposes of the early childhood education grant program shall be used as follows:

(1) In each fiscal year, not more than two per cent of appropriated funds shall be used for program support and technical assistance.

(2) Appropriated funds other than those described in division (G)(1) of this section shall be distributed to grant recipients to be used to provide early learning and development services.

(3) Any remaining funds beyond those required under divisions (G)(1) and (2) of this section may be awarded to new or existing grant recipients under this section to allow more children to participate in the program or support program expansion, improvement, innovation, or new



pilot programs. Funds used under division (G)(3) of this section shall be targeted for high-need areas.

(H) In accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, the director shall adopt rules to implement this section and administer the early childhood education grant program, including rules addressing all of the following topics:

(1) Eligibility conditions and other requirements for participation in the grant program by early learning and development programs, including the tiered rating at which a program becomes eligible to participate;

(2) Eligibility conditions for children participating in the early childhood education grant program if a slot is available;

(3) Standards, procedures, and requirements to apply for and distribute funds to participating early learning and development programs;

(4) In the event funds are distributed in error under the program, methods by which the department may recover those funds.

(I) The award of an early childhood education grant under this section shall not be considered publicly funded child care or a family services program.
