



FSSA News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Indiana launches \$540 million grant program to support early childhood education programs

Child care, early childhood education and out-of-school time programs are eligible to apply for grants covering three months of operating expenses

INDIANAPOLIS – Today the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration announced new [Build, Learn, Grow Stabilization Grants](#), intended to support child care, early care and education and out-of-school time programs that have faced increased costs and challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds will be distributed across at least two grant rounds, with the first round covering three months of providers' operating expenses, allowing them to stabilize their operations and invest in their businesses to build capacity for the future.

Stabilization grants are made possible by funding Indiana received from the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely challenging to the early education industry, as providers have worked to remain open to safely serve children, while many families have chosen to keep children at home or with family which impacts providers' revenue,” said Nicole Norvell, director of FSSA's Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning. “In addition to enrollment challenges, providers continue to grapple with increased supply and material costs as well as staffing shortages. We are committed to helping them recover and strengthen their operations, as high-quality child care is critical to our whole state's recovery, allowing families to work and businesses and communities to thrive.”

Build, Learn, Grow Stabilization Grants are non-competitive and awarded on a rolling basis, but providers are encouraged to apply quickly to gain immediate access to funding. Providers can use grant funds to cover different expenses:

- **Personnel costs** focused on increasing employee compensation
- **Employee recruitment and retention** to attract and retain staff
- **Facility fees** such as rent, mortgages or utilities
- **Facility maintenance or improvements** such as playground upgrades or accessibility improvements
- **Business supports** such as new software or shared services arrangements
- **COVID-19 safety-related needs** to keep staff and children safe
- **Mental health supports** such as counseling for children and employees or health and safety training

Grant amounts are calculated per child care site, based on each provider's program type, average attendance, staffing costs, quality level and geography. Grant awards for this initial round will total approximately three months of a provider's operating costs. A provider's total amount of grant funding received through the *Build, Learn, Grow* Stabilization Grant program is capped at \$500,000 per site for the duration of the program.

More than 3,600 child care providers from all over Indiana, serving more than 100,000 Hoosier children from birth to age 12, will be eligible to apply. Programs (including licensed centers, child care homes, unlicensed registered ministries or legally-licensed exempt providers) must have been licensed or registered to operate in the state of Indiana at the time of the ARPA enactment on March 11, 2021, and must also be open and currently serving children and in good standing.

Build, Learn, Grow Stabilization Grants are the latest in a series of initiatives Indiana is undertaking to help child care providers recover and rebuild from the pandemic. These include *Build, Learn, Grow* Scholarships, which pay up to 80% of child care, early education and out-of-school costs for families, and child care closure assistance grants, which reimburse programs for lost enrollment and COVID-related closures.

Providers can learn more about *Build, Learn, Grow* Stabilization Grants and apply at Stabilization.BuildLearnGrow.org. The site contains an introductory webinar, application walkthrough, FAQs and [the link to apply](#). All applications must be received no later than Dec. 30, 2021, though providers are encouraged to apply right away to begin using their funds. Additional rounds of funding will be announced in the future.

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About the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning

The Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning is a division of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. The office oversees early child care, education and out-of-school-time programs.

The vision of the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning is that every Indiana community will have a strong network of Early Care and Education and Out-of-School Time programs that support the child, the family and local schools. Programs will be high quality, affordable and accessible to enable families to work effectively to obtain economic self-sufficiency. Children will thrive in programs that meet their developmental and educational needs and make them feel welcome, encouraged and supported. Professionals teaching and caring for children will have the resources, including training and education, needed to operate and maintain high-quality programs.

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Inquiries by providers and families should be made to 800-299-1627 or Stabilization.BuildLearnGrow.org.