

RESOURCES FOR INCLUSION SUPPORT IN EARLY LEARNING SETTINGS HANDBOOK

Overview

The Resources for Inclusion Support in Early Learning Settings (RISE) program represents a variety of wraparound services offered by The Regional Municipality of York (York Region) Children's Services to licensed Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) programs to support the inclusion of all children with varying abilities. The goal is to provide ongoing support, training and resources to ELCC professionals to help build their capacity to create inclusive classrooms and support the needs of all children.

This handbook outlines RISE reporting standards and procedures. It is designed to provide operators, who are receiving RISE, with important information about roles and responsibilities, requests for funding and reimbursement in relation to receiving RISE funding. Operators complete their applications online through the [RISE portal](#) within Ontario Child Care Management System (OCCMS).

The standards and procedures outlined in this handbook apply to all Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) participating operators and/or those who have a Child Care Services Agreement with York Region that offer School Age Programs (SAP). Operators should be attentive to specific instructions related to funding terms and processes related to where SAP is mentioned, as it applies exclusively to SAP operators.

By accepting RISE funding, the operator agrees to, and shall comply with, the provisions of this handbook; which may be amended by York Region at any time. Operators are required to access the York Region website for the most up-to-date version of the RISE Handbook.



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DEFINITIONS

Attestation	A formal agreement to complete the tasks as outlined as a condition of receiving RISE funding.
Classroom Assistant	An individual who supports the lead educator(s) in supporting inclusive practices, where the salary (to a maximum amount) is funded through RISE.
Classroom Plan	A list of goals developed in collaboration between the educator and Early Interventionist (EI) to build capacity in the classroom.
Endorsement	The formal support by Child Care Services staff as part of the CA funding application(s).
Individual Program Plan (IPP)	A list of goals developed in collaboration between the educator, parent/caregiver and EI to support a child's development and inclusion in the classroom.
Operator	For the purposes of this handbook, the term "Operator" encompasses all individuals (i.e., ELCC supervisor, owner, etc.) or organizations that are licensed with the Ministry of Education for child care centres or home child care agencies
School Age Program (SAP)	A licensed child care program that offers care to children aged four to 13 years old.
Positive Early Childhood Education (PECE)	PECE is a program offered through the Region that focuses on educators' confidence in managing classroom behaviours. This program provides educators with information and strategies that support all children in the classroom.
Undue Hardship	Undue hardship refers to the point in which the program has explored all reasonable accommodation options; worked collaboratively with Inclusion Support Services to actively implement strategies; and engaged in meaningful dialogue with the family, and further accommodation is not feasible. Refer to section on Undue Hardship .

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Acronym	Full Form
CA Funding	Classroom Assistant Funding
CBSIT	Capacity Building Support Identification Tool
CCS	Child Care Services
CCSC	Child Care Services Coordinator
CPC	Community Program Coordinator
EI	Early Interventionist
EIS	Early Intervention Services
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care
ISS	Inclusion Support Services
OCCMS	Ontario Child Care Management System
PECE	Positive Early Childhood Education
SAP	School Age Program
RISE	Resources for Inclusion Support in Early Learning Settings

YORK REGION'S COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

York Region is committed to a welcoming and inclusive community where diversity is celebrated and everyone can develop to their full potential, participate freely in society, and live with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination. These same expectations extend to those organizations receiving funding, such as licensed child care programs.

INCLUSION

The purpose of RISE funding is to enhance ELCC professionals' capacity to support all children with varying abilities. The operator shall ensure they provide fair and equal treatment of all members of their community without discrimination, in accordance with all applicable laws. The operator shall work in collaboration with York Region and York Region's Inclusion Support Services (ISS) with the intent for all involved to have a positive impact/outcome on high quality, inclusive supports and services for children and families in the Region (7.1 Child Care Services Agreement – January 2022).

DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE

[The Human Rights Code of Ontario](#) protects people from discrimination and harassment because of past, present and perceived disabilities.

It is the responsibility of the service provider (i.e., Operators), receiving funding from the Region to comply with the [Code](#) and Section 7 and Section 80.49 of the [Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#).

Operators must accommodate children with disabilities so that they can receive an equitable level of service as their peers, whether that is the child in the classroom, or their parent/caregiver.

Under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), child care providers have a legal duty to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities. Education environments should be designed inclusively and must be adapted to accommodate the needs of a child with a disability, in a way that promotes integration and full participation.

The duty to accommodate people with disabilities must consider the following principles:

- **Respecting the dignity of the individual:** Accommodation must be provided in a way that most respects the dignity of the person, if doing so does not cause undue hardship.

- **Individualization:** Each person's needs are unique and should be considered when an accommodation request is made. What worked for one person, may not work for another.
- **Integration and full participation:** Achieving integration and full participation requires barrier-free and inclusive design. Where barriers cannot be removed, accommodations should be provided, unless this causes undue hardship.

Costs incurred to provide accommodation are the responsibility of the operator and cannot be passed down to the family of the child in need of accommodation.

UNDUE HARDSHIP

Operators have a duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship. Accommodating all children can be challenging, and some degree of hardship may be expected. The [Code](#) prescribes only three considerations when assessing whether an accommodation would cause undue hardship:

- **Cost:** The cost to accommodate must be quantifiable, related to the accommodation and so substantial that it would impact the viability of the operator.
- **Outside sources of funding:** All efforts have been made to offset costs by seeking out outside sources of funding.
- **Health and safety requirements:** Service providers have an obligation to protect the health and safety of all their employees and clients (i.e. the other children in the classroom). If accommodation is likely to cause health and safety risks, it can be considered undue hardship.

Factors such as business inconvenience, employee morale and customer or third-party preferences are not valid considerations in assessing whether an accommodation would cause undue hardship.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES STAFF

Early Interventionists, Community Program Coordinators and the Child Care Services Coordinator work together in supporting Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) programs (this includes School Age Programs) who are receiving RISE funded supports.

Early Interventionist (EI)

- Responds to and supports referrals from ELCC programs to ensure the inclusion of all children.
- Observes classroom and discusses ISS services available with educators/ELCC supervisors.
- Supports ELCC programs in completing a plan to support the classroom or child's developmental needs.
- Works with program for at least 30 business days to support implementation of inclusive strategies prior to endorsing RISE Classroom Assistant (CA) applications.
- Provides consultations to ELCC programs based on various factors, such as the needs of individual classrooms and children and incorporates inclusive practices in the classroom to help transition from CA support.
- Provides coaching opportunities, including the Positive Early Childhood Education (PECE) program, which is designed to build the capacity of ECEs to support the classroom.

Community Program Coordinator (CPC)

- Educates ELCC supervisors and staff on RISE funded supports and how they can be used in their program.
- Conducts on-site visits to ELCC programs and completes the RISE checklist with the ELCC supervisor.
- Discusses with the ELCC supervisor opportunities for capacity building training, including the PECE program that may support the classroom.
- Shares community resources with ELCC supervisors and staff.
- Collaborates with the EI, if one is assigned to support ELCC programs.

Child Care Services Coordinator (CCSC)

- Supports ELCC supervisors with the RISE application process and directs them to appropriate supports.
- Responds to inquiries in the RISE general mail box.
- Processes RISE applications within OCCMS and informs operators via email of funding decisions.
- Verifies monthly billing.

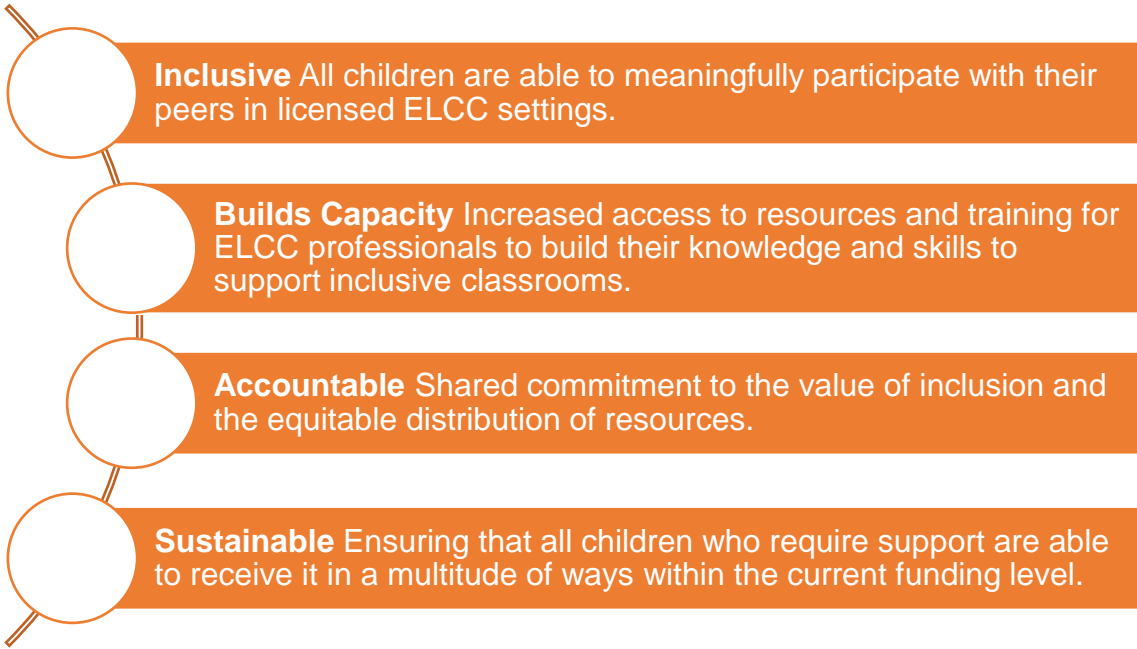
ABOUT THE RESOURCES FOR INCLUSION SUPPORT IN EARLY LEARNING SETTINGS (RISE) PROGRAM

RISE VISION

The vision for the program is:

- Early learning and child care professionals have the knowledge and skills they need to support all children with varying abilities.
- Families/guardians and caregivers of all children can access child care.
- Children of all abilities are seamlessly included in the classroom.

RISE PRINCIPLES



RISE SUPPORTS

RISE encompasses an umbrella of supports and services available from York Region Children’s Services.

Short-term funding supports the following:

- [Classroom assistant \(CA\)](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Positive Early Childhood Education Program \(PECE\)](#)

Wraparound Supports include:

- Capacity Building Support Identification Tool (CBSIT)
- Development of a classroom plan or Individual Program Plan (IPP)
- Classroom consultations
- PECE coaching
- Classroom resources
- Capacity building workshops
- Community resources and referrals to community providers of services and supports, such as children's mental health agencies

RISE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for RISE, ELCC programs must:

- Be a CWELCC participating site or offer a School Age Program.
- Have entered into a Child Care Services Agreement with York Region.
- Have attended the OCCMS Web Record of Attendance Training.
- Be a licensed child care program working with ISS and offering care for children between birth to 13 years of age.
 - If you are not connected with ISS, complete the [Inclusion Support Services Consultation Request Form](#) for a referral. Refer to the [Operator Manual](#) for support.

ELCC PROGRAM/OPERATORS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the ELCC Supervisor

- Commitment to [inclusion](#) as outlined in this handbook.
- Ensure all components of the submitted application(s) are complete and accurate (including training plan and strategies, consent signatures, etc.).
- Notify York Region of any changes that would impact their ongoing eligibility for RISE funding.
- Hire and on-board a classroom assistant within four weeks of application approval.
- Ensure an operator/designate attend Record of Attendance (ROA) training
- Complete RISE ROA by the eighth of every month in order to receive payment.
- Have program supervisor(s) and all program staff working in the classroom participate and complete the [RISE Inclusion series modules](#) and [Enhance Staff e-modules](#). ELCC supervisor(s) will maintain a copy of the staff certificates to provide verification of completion to CPC during classroom visits.
- Work collaboratively with their ISS Early Interventionist (EI), to develop a classroom plan or Individual Program Plan.

- Actively implement strategies to promote inclusive practices for all children and maintain placement of all children.
- Acknowledge that CA funding is short-term support that offers the opportunity for regular program staff to implement strategies and build relationships with all children.
- Complete applicable surveys to indicate how the temporary classroom assistant has increased their capacity to include all children, and/or how training has mitigated barriers identified at the start of funding.
- Have supervisor/educators collaborate with the EI to develop and prepare implementation strategies, in the event that RISE funding is reduced or discontinued. This proactive planning will help ensure continuity of support to the classroom.

WAITLIST

York Region manages RISE application approvals within limited annual funding.

- If funding is at capacity, applications will be waitlisted and reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. Operators will be informed of application status via a status change in the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS. If you have questions about your application, contact rise@york.ca.
- Extension requests are prioritized over new applications.
- Operators that have already utilized the maximum annual amount for training and submit additional requests for funding within the same year will be placed on a waitlist.

CLASSROOM ASSISTANT (CA) FUNDING

CA funding is intended for licensed centre-based programs to provide short-term support to assist regular classroom staff in implementing strategies and fostering relationships within the classroom. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) are qualified experts in child development and classroom assistants provide general support or assistance to the classroom under the guidance of the RECEs.

- **CA funding is not intended to support:**
 - One-on-one support for any particular child
 - Classroom ratios or assigned to cover breaks for other program staff
 - Floating between multiple classrooms where approval has not been given
 - Classrooms that are operating below 80% capacity

NOTE: Employment contracts are the sole responsibility of the operator, including any conditions around employment or contract ending. CA funding is intended to support the hourly wage. Any employment related expenses, such as Canada Pension Plan and/or

Employment Insurance, is the responsibility of the employer. Operators have the option to submit statutory holiday hours based on their internal policies and employment standards. Hours paid for statutory holidays will be deducted from the RISE approved hours.

STEPS TO APPLY FOR A CLASSROOM ASSISTANT (CA)

1. ELCC program connects with EI to discuss classroom supports available.
2. ELCC program works with the EI on the development and implementation of a classroom plan/Individual Program Plan (IPP). EI provides ongoing wraparound supports and ensures the program demonstrates its progress on the plans.
3. After a plan has been in place for 30 working days, the operator can discuss the need for a classroom assistant with the EI. The EI will evaluate whether the classroom has demonstrated progress and is actively implementing strategies.
4. If EI and operator agree that CA funding is required, they will discuss how the classroom assistant and other classroom funded supports will be used throughout the funding period and how the use of the assistant will be reduced.
5. ELCC staff complete the Capacity Building Support Identification Tool (CBSIT) provided by the EI.
6. Application for CA funding can be submitted through the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS Operators once the above steps have been completed.

NOTE: If your program does not have access to OCCMS Operators, contact rise@york.ca

7. Once the application status is changed to pending, the operator receives an email notification and the operator must complete the attestation in the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS Operators.

NOTE: Whenever the status of an application is changed, the operator will receive an automated message from noreponse@missioninc.com directing them to check the status of the application in OCCMS. Details of the status change will be noted in the Status Reason tab.

8. Once the attestation is complete and the EI has endorsed the application, Child Care Services processes the application and sends the approval letter via email, confirming the total number of hours, weeks and rate of pay that the operator will receive.
9. The operator emails rise@york.ca confirming the classroom assistant's start date, within 30 days of receiving the approval letter.

NOTE: The confirmation of the start date for classroom assistant is required prior to the actual start date for funding to begin. Payments cannot be made retroactively.

Applications will be denied if:

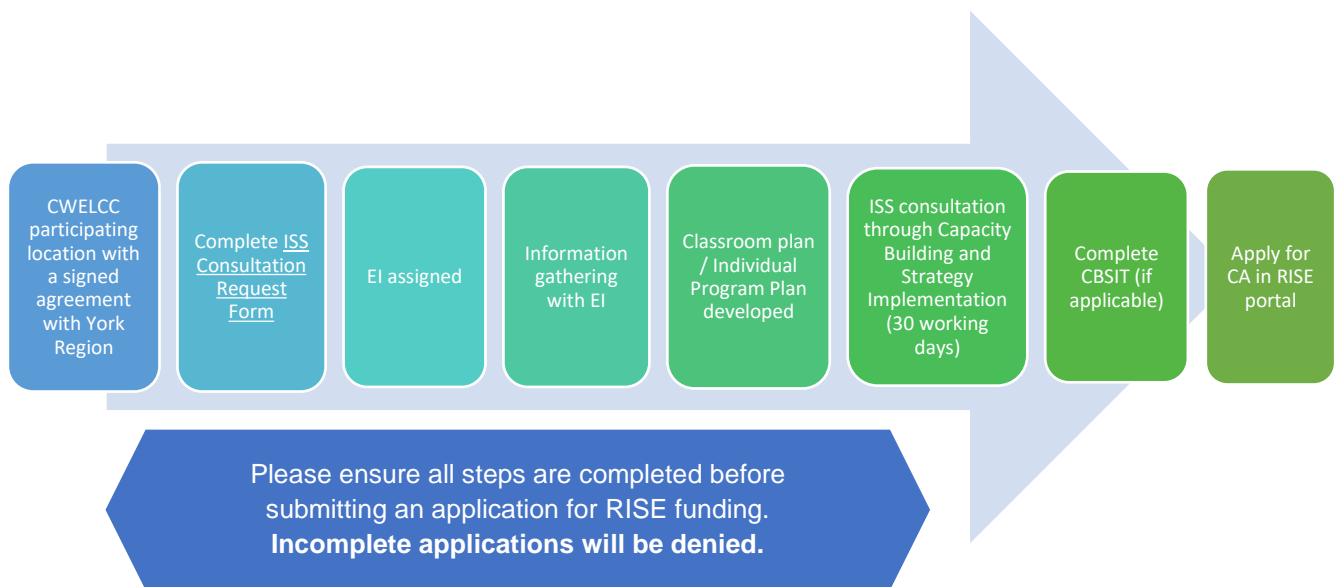
- The EI does not support the application (i.e., a classroom plan has not been developed, the classroom is not demonstrating use of discussed strategies, etc.).
- The classroom is operating below 80% capacity.
- The following information is not provided within 30 days following the EI's endorsement:
 - Classroom attestation is not completed in the RISE portal in OCCMS.
 - The classroom assistant start date has not been provided.

Refer to the OCCMS [RISE portal](#) Help Menu for documents on how to complete the CA application.

NOTE: Once approved for CA funding, the operator will be able to view the following in OCCMS:

- Application(s) history for your site
- Calendar for attendance, including the number of hours remaining on application
- Number of approved hours
- Payments
- Start and end date of the funding period

PROCESS MAP FOR APPLYING FOR RISE CA SUPPORT



TIMELINES

Approved applications will be funded for a 12-week period. An exception to these short-term funding periods may be available to classrooms under extenuating circumstances, if supported by Children's Services.

Fourteen (14) days prior to the end of the funding period, the operator will receive an automated email informing them of the funding period end date. There is a six-month waiting period before a new application can be submitted for the same classroom, including for classrooms that did not receive an extension. ELCC’s who have received funding previously will be asked to update their progress on goals, demonstrate the strategies implemented in the classroom, identify the steps taken to build capacity and highlight what has changed which requires the renewal request for support.

Classroom assistants are short-term supports to help ELCC staff implement strategies and build their knowledge and skills to support all children in the classroom. If there are concerns with the funding period ending, and/or has been significant change that impacts functioning of the classroom, this can be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the EI to determine what additional supports may be appropriate.

Timelines for SAP applications before the end of the school year

These timelines are for new SAP applications submitted in May and June of any year and operators must adhere to the following timelines.

May	June
<p>A new CA application, where the classroom has completed steps 1 through 5 in the application process, must be submitted by the tenth business day in May.</p> <p>This deadline is intended to allow enough time for the classroom plan to be in place for 30 working days and to hire a classroom assistant before the end of the school year.</p>	<p>Classroom assistant must be in place by the first business day in June.</p>
<p>NOTE: The number of CA funding weeks will be reduced to coincide with the end of the school year, at which point, funding will end, and the application will be closed. Any unused hours do not carry into the summer or fall school terms. (Refer to Summer CA Process).</p>	

EXTENSIONS

The operator must demonstrate their progress through active implementation of the plan and indicate how they will continue to utilize the funds to transition away from the continued need. In order to apply for an extension, the operator will discuss the need with their EI.

Operators may apply for a one-time extension to their current CA funding as they work towards the goal of meeting classroom needs without the support of the classroom assistant. If approved, the extension period will be for 12 weeks, and eligible hours will be reduced by 50% of the original approved hours.

Considerations when applying for an extension to the current CA funding application:

- Extensions should be submitted **prior** to current application end-date and should be consecutive to the current application.
- Any extension requests submitted **after** the end-date cannot be back-dated beyond the current month the extension is received.
- The operator will be responsible to cover the cost of the classroom assistant until the extension has been approved.

If an operator has a change in EI prior to their initial funding application ending and would like to request an extension, operators are to connect with their new EI (if assigned) or email rise@york.ca to ask for the name of the ISS supervisor supporting their geographic area.

If an ELCC program has completed consultations with their EI and have been discharged from ISS consultation prior to their initial funding application ending, the operator should complete the following steps if they would like to request an extension:

1. Submit another [ISS Consultation Request Form](#) at least **three weeks before** the current application end date. Refer to the [Operator Manual](#) for support.
2. Once connected with the EI, discuss the need for the extension and plan to transition away from the continued need.
3. With the EI's support, operator can request an extension to their CA application through the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS Operators.

NOTE: If another [ISS Consultation Request Form](#) has not been submitted, the request for extension application will be denied. Refer to the [Operator Manual](#) for support.

Refer to OCCMS [RISE Portal](#) Help Menu for documents on how to submit an extension.

TRANSFER AND CHANGES TO RISE CA FUNDING

There may be situations when CA funding would require change or termination. The operator is required to inform their EI when there is a change that would impact their eligibility for CA funding.

Some of the scenarios could be:

- The needs or composition of the classroom change (i.e., children or classroom assistant)
- The program not using the funding properly after it has been explained by York Region staff
- The program is not working in partnership with ISS

- The program is not meeting its Child Care Services Agreement with York Region
- ELCC staff are not meeting their obligations to York Region

Transfers

RISE funding is not transferable between ELCC sites or classrooms. Any known transfer of a child to a new site should be communicated to the EI and Child Care Services staff, who can then help with the application process for the new ELCC site.

If a child with significant needs is moving classrooms within the same site and it is expected that RISE support may be required, a conversation with the EI can take place to determine what supports may be available through RISE.

Termination

Should York Region determine that the ELCC is not meeting the guidelines for RISE funded supports, a Children's Services Manager will inform the operator of the decision to terminate funding.

CA ATTENDANCE AND PAYMENT

The operator is responsible for completing and submitting CA attendance records by the eighth of each month for the previous month's attendance. CA funding reimbursements are processed in OCCMS through the [RISE portal](#) and is available on the first of the following month.

Operators can view the following information in the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS:

- Attendance
- Current support
- Number of funding hours remaining
- Payments received to date
- Start and end date of funding application

Refer to OCCMS [RISE portal](#) Help Menu for documents on how to complete attendance and payment requests.

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS (SAP) SUMMER RISE CLASSROOM ASSISTANT (CA) FUNDING

Many SAPs run full-day, camp style programming in the summer months. The hours of attendance, schedules, activities and routines vary from that which are offered throughout the regular year. SAPs that operate a summer program and anticipate requiring additional staffing support to build classroom capacity, can apply for summer RISE CA funding, if funds are available. SAP operators will receive a memo from Child

Care Services in the late winter indicating the process and timelines for application submissions, if summer funding will be available.

NOTE: A referral to ISS is not required as part of the summer application process. Operators can submit an [ISS Consultation Request Form](#) to request support during the summer months. CPCs will conduct site visits during the summer months.

TIMELINES FOR SAP SUMMER CA FUNDING

The timelines below are approximate and subject to change.

February	Mid-April	Mid-May
<p>A memo to all operators informing of summer SAP funding and timelines, if available.</p> <p>Operators must submit an application by the deadline specified in the memo.</p>	<p>Operators will receive an email with a pre-survey, including instructions and deadline for submission.</p>	<p>An email indicating approval or denial to operators is sent by the date indicated in the memo.</p>

STEPS TO APPLY FOR SAP SUMMER CA FUNDING

The SAP operator will:

1. Submit an application in the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS by the deadline outlined in the memo, and identify “**summer**” before the name of the classroom (e.g., summer school age 1 classroom).
2. Complete the questionnaire received via email from the RISE team by the deadline specified.
3. Complete the attestation in the RISE portal.
 - a. Check all boxes in the attestation. **NOTE:** Number five and eight in the attestation do not apply to summer RISE CA funding but must still be checked.
4. Receive a letter of decision of approval or denial of application by the RISE team via email.
5. Submit a request for payment in the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS.
6. Complete the post-survey received via email from the RISE team at the end of the funding period.

NOTE: Approved summer CA funding is time limited and will not transfer into the school year (Refer to [Steps to Apply for Classroom Assistant](#)).

Refer to OCCMS [RISE Portal](#) Help Menu for documents on how to complete attendance and all payment requests.

FUNDING FOR TRAINING

Operators may apply to have the cost of training reimbursed, up to a maximum of \$1,500 per year (taxes included), to support staff training around capacity building (i.e., engagement, environment, inclusive practices, etc.). Funding is limited to one application per site.

Applications will be approved based on funding availability and the following criteria:

- Topic/content of training is not currently available through [York Region's Early Learning and Child Care Professional Development](#) sessions or other no-cost community workshops.
- Training should be for groups and may include 'guest speakers', provided it aligns with goals identified in the classroom plan/Individual Program Plan (IPP) and have been discussed with the EI.
- Operator is able to demonstrate they have accessed all means of support/training including PECE.
- Operator has not already received funding for training within the current calendar year.

STEPS TO APPLY FOR FUNDING FOR TRAINING

1. Operator requests Funding for Training on the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS.
2. Child Care Services (CCS) reviews availability of funds and whether the application meets the required criteria. Eligible applications will have their status changed to pending and receive a letter from CCS informing the operator their application has been approved, pending completion of the following steps:
 - a. Training is completed within three months of receiving pending notification.
 - b. Training survey and acknowledgement is completed on the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS.

NOTE: Whenever the status of an application is changed, the operator will receive an automated message from noreponse@missioninc.com directing them to check the status of the application in OCCMS. Details of the status change will be noted in the Status Reason tab.

3. Once training is complete the operator will send a copy of the invoice to rise@york.ca
4. Once the operator invoice is received, the CCSC will change application status to approved.

5. The operator must submit a request for reimbursement within 30 days, through the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS.

NOTE: Operators who do not submit their invoice or request reimbursement within the required timelines outlined in the steps will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Refer to OCCMS [RISE portal](#) Help Menu for documents on how to complete CA application.

POSITIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (PECE) CODE REIMBURSEMENT

ELCC programs enrolled with ISS and participating in the Positive Early Childhood Education (PECE) Program may submit an application for reimbursement of the cost of a PECE code. Operators can access a maximum of four codes per child care site. Educators must complete at least two coaching sessions with the EI prior to receiving reimbursement of funds.

STEPS TO APPLY FOR PECE CODE REIMBURSEMENT

1. Operators submit applications for PECE code reimbursement on the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS and completes the pre-survey.
2. Child Care Services confirms availability of funding and changes the application status to pending. The ELCC's staff is expected to complete the PECE training within three months.
3. Once PECE modules and coaching have been completed, the operator completes the post-survey on the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS and sends a copy of the PECE certificate to their EI.
4. EI verifies that the pre and post-surveys were completed in OCCMS and will endorse application for payment.
5. Once the operator receives email notification of status as approved, they can then request reimbursement through the [RISE portal](#) in OCCMS within 30 days.

Refer to OCCMS [RISE portal](#) Help Menu for documents on how to complete all payment requests.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Should you require support related to RISE please contact RISE@york.ca.