Who is the Early Childhood Qualifications Fund for?
The Early Childhood Qualifications Fund is for people currently employed in a licensed children’s service or approved education and care service who wish to upgrade or attain an early childhood qualification.

Qualified primary teachers not currently working in a licensed children’s service or approved education and care service wishing to attain an early childhood teaching qualification will also be considered.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement to successfully complete the qualification and, upon completion, work for a minimum period of time in a licensed children’s service or approved education and care service.

What qualifications will be supported?
• Early Childhood Teaching Degree
• Certificate III in Children’s Services
• Certificate IV in Outside School Hours Care
• Diploma of Children’s Services
• Diploma of Outside School Hours Care
• Advanced Diploma of Children’s Services
• Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education
• 4th Year of Early Childhood Teaching Degree
• Postgraduate Qualification

Early childhood educators wishing to obtain a Certificate III, Diploma or Advanced Diploma in Children’s Services may study at any Registered Training Organisation (including TAFE).

Staff wishing to obtain a tertiary qualification may study at any university that delivers a qualification that is approved for employment in a licensed children’s service or approved education and care service in Victoria.*

* You should check that the course of study you intend to undertake is on the approved list of early childhood qualifications available at www.education.vic.gov.au/careers/earlychildhood/

How do I apply for support?
Complete the application form and return to the address on the form. You must also submit the following:

• Employer form
• Proof of offer/enrolment in an approved course of study
• Academic transcripts for current or previous study claimed on your application.
• Evidence in the form of a statement or receipt from the training organisation of the total fees to complete your course

How do I know if I am eligible for support under the Early Childhood Qualifications Fund?
To be eligible for support through the Early Childhood Qualifications Fund you must:

• Be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia
• Be employed in a Victorian licensed children’s service or approved education and care service, or a qualified primary school teacher wanting to attain an early childhood teaching qualification
• Have been accepted into a course leading to an approved early childhood qualification
How will successful applicants be chosen?
All applications will be assessed by a Departmental assessment panel.

I have been awarded a scholarship from another organisation. Will this affect my eligibility for the scheme?
If you are in receipt of a scholarship from another organisation your eligibility for this scheme may be affected. However, you are still encouraged to apply for support through the Early Childhood Qualifications Fund. Your application must include details of the funding, funding body and value of the scholarship you have been awarded.

If my application is successful, what do I have to do?
If your application is successful, you will be required to:

- Enter into an agreement with the Department accepting the scholarship offer, terms and conditions
- Remain enrolled in an approved course of study until successful completion of the course
- Provide evidence of satisfactory academic progress throughout your course of study
- At the completion of your course, work in a licensed children’s service or approved education and care service for a minimum period of time.

If I am successful, what will I receive?
A scholarship payment will be made to all successful applicants. The Early Childhood Qualifications Fund no longer offers study leave. The amount of support available will depend on the course you are undertaking. Refer to the application form for detailed information about the support available.

If I am successful, will I have to pay tax on my scholarship payment?
The Department has an obligation to withhold tax on scholarship payments. Payment will be made through the Department’s payrol system and you will receive a Group Certificate at the end of the financial year detailing the payment made to you.

What happens if I fail my course?
You must maintain satisfactory progress throughout your course of study. If you fail to maintain satisfactory progress, support may be terminated. The Department will consider the circumstances and advise if this will affect your support.

You may be required to repay some or all of the scholarship payment made to you.

What if I don’t complete my course?
If you terminate your course of study before completion, you must notify the Department immediately. The Department will consider the circumstances and advise if this will affect your support.

You may be required to repay some or all of the scholarship payment made to you.

When will I receive my money?
The qualification level will determine whether you receive your scholarship payment in a lump sum or instalments.

The first payment will be made upon signing the Agreement.

How long will I be required to work in a licensed children's service or approved education and care service?
The length of time recipients are required to work in a licensed children's service or approved education and care service following the successful completion of the course is related to the qualification level undertaken.

On completion of the course, recipients of support for the following qualifications are required to work with children in a licensed children’s service or approved education and care service for the indicated length of time:

- Certificate III in Children’s Services – 1 year
- Certificate IV in Outside School Hours Care – 18 months
- Diploma of Children’s Services – 18 months
- Diploma of Outside School Hours Care – 18 months
- Advanced Diploma of Children's Services – 1 year*
- Early Childhood Teaching qualification (all) – 2 years
- 4th year of an Early Childhood Teaching Degree – 1 year

On completion of the course, recipients of support to undertake a Postgraduate Qualification will be required to work for two years, either with children in a licensed children's service or approved education and care service, or in a teaching position at a Registered Training Organisation or University.

*Recipients who have undertaken an Advanced Diploma in Children's Services will not be required to work directly with children.