



Mini-Grant Application Guide



County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care

Fiscal Year 2007-2008

Table of Contents

1. Steps to Excellence Project Overview.....	3
2. Purpose of STEP Mini-Grant Awards.....	3
3. Eligibility Criteria.....	3
4. Amount of Mini-Grant Awards.....	4
5. Use of Mini-Grant Funds.....	4
6. How to Apply for a STEP Mini-Grant.....	4
7. Important Deadlines.....	5
8. Submitting Your Mini-Grant Application.....	6
9. Approving Mini-Grant Applications.....	6
10. Additional Help.....	7
11. Sample Mini-Grant Application.....	8
12. Mini-Grant Application Form.....	14



1. Steps to Excellence Project Overview

The Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) is a new child care quality rating and support system being piloted in Los Angeles County. STEP examines six areas of a child care program's operation. These areas have been shown by research and best practice to impact the quality of care, and include:

- 1) Regulatory Compliance
- 2) Teacher/Child Relationships
- 3) Learning Environment
- 4) Identification and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs
- 5) Staff Qualifications and Working Conditions
- 6) Family and Community Connections

The County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care is implementing this three-year project between July 2007 and June 2010 in the following nine pilot communities: Inglewood, Palmdale, Pomona, Florence/Firestone, Pacoima/Arleta, Wilmington, Long Beach, Pasadena, and Santa Monica.

2. Purpose of STEP Mini-Grant Awards

The Office of Child Care is offering STEP Mini-Grants to: 1) provide financial support to help child care providers make improvements to their business and programs prior to receiving a STEP rating and 2) provide an incentive for providers to meet and maintain standards related to any of STEP's six quality areas.

3. Eligibility Criteria

STEP Mini-Grants may be awarded to child development programs and licensed child care providers caring for children ages 0-5 that:

- Are located in any of the nine STEP pilot communities indicated above;
- Have been licensed for at least one year; and
- Have completed a STEP application and are enrolled in STEP.

Private for-profit, non-profit, publicly subsidized programs, faith-based, school districts and any other licensed child care and early education programs are all eligible STEP applicants.



4. Amount of Mini-Grant Awards

STEP Mini-Grant awards will be limited to **\$5,000** per each family child care home or child development center participating in STEP.

If a school district or other agency that operates several child care and/or child development centers participates in STEP, each individual center will be eligible for a Mini-Grant award up to the stated limit.

5. Use of Mini-Grant Funds

Mini-Grant monies may be used only to purchase items or services that improve quality in any of the six areas that the STEP rating system will assess. The six STEP Quality Areas are:

- 1) Regulatory Compliance
- 2) Teacher/Child Relationships
- 3) Learning Environment
- 4) Identification and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs
- 5) Staff Qualifications and Working Conditions
- 6) Family and Community Connections

Items or services purchased with STEP Mini-Grants must be directly related to any one or a combination of any of these six quality areas.

6. How to Apply for a STEP Mini-Grant

To apply for a STEP Mini-Grant, you must do the following:

- 1. Enroll in the STEP Project.**

Complete a STEP application form and send it to the Office of Child Care via fax or mail. Our fax and mailing address can be found on page 5 of this guide.

To obtain a STEP application packet, download a copy from our website (www.childcare.lacounty.gov) or call the Office of Child Care at (213) 974-4103 to request a copy via mail.



Instructions: How to download a STEP Application Form from our website:

1. Go to our website: www.childcare.lacounty.gov.
2. Click on the Steps to Excellence Project link (located on the left-hand side of the screen).
3. Click on the *Application Materials* link to download a STEP application packet.
Note: Be sure to select the appropriate packet (either center or family child care home) for your program.

2. Complete and submit a STEP Mini-Grant Application Form.

The STEP Mini-Grant Application Form is found on pages 14-19 of this guide. Please answer every question as indicated on the form. We have created a sample Mini-Grant Application (found on pages 8-13 of this guide) to help you write your own. If you feel you need additional assistance, please call Helen Chavez, STEP Program Specialist, at (213) 893-0505.

7. Important Deadlines

STEP Mini-Grant Applications will be processed in the order received. **Although there is no set deadline for applications to be submitted, the Office of Child Care will continue to award STEP mini-grants as long as funding is available.** Mini-Grant applicants will be notified by either mail or telephone once Mini-Grant funding has been exhausted. If this occurs, applicants will still be eligible to receive a quality assessment site visit and attend free STEP trainings sponsored by the Office of Child Care.

8. Submitting Your Mini-Grant Application

Please send your completed Mini-Grant Applications via mail or fax.

Mailing Address: Steps to Excellence Project
County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care
Attention: Helen Chavez
222 South Hill Street, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Fax Number: (213) 687-1152
Note: Please write "Attention: Helen Chavez" on your cover page.



9. Approving Mini-Grant Applications

All Mini-Grant Applications received will be reviewed by Office of Child Care staff. The review categories used to determine whether a Mini-Grant Application will be approved are: 1) initial screening review; and 2) scoring criteria. Details of the criteria for each category are described in detail below.

1. Initial Screening

- a) *Has the applicant submitted a STEP Application Form to participate in the project? (Refer to page 4 for more information).*
- b) *Has the applicant completed the entire STEP Mini-Grant Application and submitted an accompanying timeline, budget, and proof of expenses?*

2. Scoring Categories

- a) *Has the applicant clearly identified how the Mini-Grant money will be used and what changes or improvements will be made?*
- b) *Has the applicant clearly linked each of the proposed changes or improvements to any of the six STEP Quality Areas? (Refer to page 4 to review STEP Quality Areas).*
- c) *Is the timeline for implementing these changes or improvements realistic? Will they be able to be implemented within a three month timeline?*
- d) *Are the costs listed on the budget supported by some documentation, such as catalog or other pricing information?*

10. Additional Help

Your local Resource and Referral Agency can offer you additional support if you need more help completing your STEP Mini-Grant Application. You may contact any of the following individuals identified below. **You may also choose to contact the Office of Child Care directly at (213) 893-0505 if you need assistance. Please ask to speak with Helen Chavez, STEP Program Specialist.**

Florence/Firestone

Crystal Stairs
Contact: **Yuovene Whistler**
Telephone: (323) 421-1177
Email: ywhistle@crystalstairs.org

Inglewood

Crystal Stairs
Contact: **Yuovene Whistler**
Telephone: (323) 421-1177
Email: ywhistle@crystalstairs.org



<p>Long Beach Children's Home Society Contact: Joelle Landazabal Telephone: (562) 256-7400 ext. 3127 Email: joellel@chs-ca.org</p>	<p>Pacoima/Arleta Child Care Resource Center Contact: Julie Castillo Telephone: (818) 717-1000 ext. 4621 Email: jcastillo@ccrcla.org</p>
<p>Palmdale Child Care Resource Center Contact: Terri Hess Telephone: (661) 949-0615 ext. 116 Email: thess@ccrcla.org</p>	<p>Pasadena Child Care Information Services Contact: Christine Meyer Telephone: (626) 204-3517 Email: cmeyer@ccispasadena.org</p>
<p>Pomona Pomona Unified School District Contact: Peter Pinon Telephone: (909) 397-4740 ext. 5398 Email: peterpinon@pusd.org</p>	<p>Pomona Pomona Unified School District Contact: Zora Johnson Telephone: (909) 397-4740 ext. 5287 Email: zora.johnson@pusd.org</p>
<p>Wilmington Children's Home Society Contact: Joelle Landazabal Telephone: (562) 256-7400 ext. 3127 Email: joellel@chs-ca.org</p>	<p>Santa Monica Connections for Children Contact: Alicia Guerra Telephone: (310) 452-3325 ext. 275 Email: aliciag@cfc-ca.org</p>





Sample Mini-Grant Application

STEP Mini-Grant Application Form

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

1. Name of Family Child Care Home or Center: Happy Hearts Family Child Care
2. Telephone: (909) 222-2323 Date: 11/26/07
3. Address: 1234 Lovely Street Pomona 91765
Street City Zip Code
4. Contact Person: Helen Chavez Email: none

Describe the policy, practice or product to be changed or created. State which component of the STEP Rating Scale this activity is related to.

I want to improve my dramatic play area. I only have a few toys in this area, and I would like to have more variety for the children to play with. This improvement is related to STEP Quality Area 3 "The Learning Environment."

I also want to purchase a computer for my child care business. This will help me access internet resources and enable me to take online child development classes. This improvement is related to STEP Quality Area 5 "Staff Qualifications and Working Conditions."

My child care business doesn't currently have a parent handbook. I intend to hire a child development consultant to create one for my business, in Spanish and English. This is related to STEP Quality Area 6 "Parent and Community Connections."



Describe how this change will be implemented.

I will add more variety to my dramatic play area by buying a kitchen set, kitchen toys, and some costumes for the children to dress-up. I intend to order my materials from Playtime Inc.

I will purchase a computer from an electronics store and install it in a special area in my home where I complete paperwork.

I will hire a bilingual consultant to create a Parent Handbook for my business. Once it's ready, I will make copies and distribute one to each parent and all new parents.

Describe how this change will impact staff performance, development, and/or retention.

Adding more materials to the dramatic play area will improve staff performance because my assistant and I will have more opportunities to play with the children in a way that is both fun and promotes language and thinking.

Buying a computer will help staff development by making more resources like trainings and online classes available.

Creating a Parent Handbook will improve staff performance by making sure that our philosophy and approach to caring and educating children is clear. This will help keep interactions between parents and staff positive.



Provide a timeline for implementing this change, including key milestones. All Quality Improvement Plan activities must be completed within a three month time-frame.

Date	Activity
January 2008	Receive STEP Mini-Grant check.
January 28, 2008	Order dramatic play materials from Playtime Inc. Delivery will take 10 days.
February 11, 2008	Unpack and assemble materials.
February 18, 2008	By this date I will select and buy a computer for my business.
Week of February 18, 2008	By this date I will install the computer.
January 2008	By the end of January I will contract a bilingual child development consultant.
February 2008	The Consultant will interview me and write the Parent Handbook.
February 24, 2008	By this date I will place an order at a copy store to make 50 copies of the Parent Handbook (25 English and 25 Spanish). The order should take 1 week.
March 1, 2008	I will distribute Parent Handbooks to all parents and store extra copies for new parents.



Provide a detailed budget of resources needed to implement this change.

STEP Mini-Grant Budget

A). Equipment/Supplies			
Description	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total
<i>Pretend & Play Combo Kitchen</i>	<i>\$349.00</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$349.00</i>
<i>Best-buy Kitchen Playset</i>	<i>\$ 29.95</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$ 29.95</i>
<i>Funtime Career Costume Set</i>	<i>\$265.00</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$265.00</i>
<i>Computer</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$1,500</i>
			SALES TAX: <i>\$176.88</i>
			SHIPPING/HANDLING CHARGES: <i>\$ 96.59</i>
			SUBTOTAL (A): <i>\$2,417.42</i>
B). Consultants/Subcontracts			
Name	Hourly Rate	Number of Hours	Total
<i>Elsa Chavez</i>	<i>\$50.00</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>\$300.00</i>
			SUBTOTAL (B): <i>\$300.00</i>
C). Other			
Description	Cost	Additional Information	Total
<i>Copies of Parent Handbook</i>	<i>\$2.50 per book</i>	<i>I will order 50 copies</i>	<i>\$125.00</i>
			SUBTOTAL (C): <i>\$125.00</i>
			GRAND TOTAL: <i>\$ 2,842.42</i>

Proof of Cost

- a. If you plan to purchase equipment, provide a justification for using a particular vendor, and identify the catalogue and page number listing the item.

You may complete the following table to provide this information:

Item	Vendor Selected	Why This Vendor Was Selected	Catalogue Name	Page No.	Item Price	Shipping Cost
Pretend Kitchen	Playtime Inc.	Offers good variety	Playtime Catalog	121	\$349	15%
Kitchen Playset	Playtime Inc.	Offers good variety	Playtime Catalog	123	\$29.95	15%
Costume Set	Playtime Inc.	Offers good variety	Playtime Catalog	124	\$265	15%
Computer	Egghead Computers	Lowest price, best quality	Egghead Advertising Flyer	3	\$1,500	N/A

- b. If you plan to hire a consultant, provide a justification for using this consultant, the hourly rate and hours needed to complete each deliverable.

You may complete the following table to provide this information:

Description of Service	Consultant's Name	Why This Consultant Was Selected	Consultant's Hourly Rate	Total Number of Hours Needed to Perform Service
Create and translate Parent Handbook	Elsa Torres	She has a M.A. in child development and over 15 years experience in the field.	\$50.00	60

- c. If you plan to print materials, specify the materials to be printed and provide at least two quotes.

You may complete the following table to provide this information:

Description of Printed Materials	Quote Information			
	Printer Name #1	Price Quote #1	Printer Name #2	Price Quote #2
50 copies of a Parent Handbook	Copy Place	\$2.50 per book	Copy Mart	\$2.75 per book

Important Notice: Please allow approximately 8 weeks for processing of your Mini-Grant application. Once it has been reviewed, you will receive a letter notifying you whether your Mini-Grant application was approved or denied. The Office of Child Care reserves the right to reject Mini-Grant Applications that are incomplete or do not clearly relate to a component of the STEP rating scale.





Blank Mini-Grant Application Form

STEP Mini-Grant Application Form

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

1. Name of Family Child Care Home or Center: _____

2. Telephone: (_____) _____ - _____ Date: _____

3. Address: _____
Street City Zip Code

4. Contact Person: _____ 5. Email: _____

Describe the policy, practice, or product to be changed or created. State which component of the STEP Rating Scale this activity is related to.

Describe how this change will be implemented.

Describe how this change will impact staff performance, development, and/or retention.



Proof of Cost

- a. If you plan to purchase equipment, provide a justification for using a particular vendor, and identify the catalogue and page number listing the item.

You may complete the following table to provide this information:

Item	Vendor Selected	Why This Vendor Was Selected	Catalogue Name	Page No.	Item Price	Shipping Cost

- b. If you plan to hire a consultant, provide a justification for using this consultant, the hourly rate and hours needed to complete each deliverable.

You may complete the following table to provide this information:

Description of Service	Consultant's Name	Why This Consultant Was Selected	Consultant's Hourly Rate	Total Number of Hours Needed to Perform Service

c. If you plan to print materials, specify the materials to be printed and provide at least two quotes.

You may complete the following table to provide this information:

Description of Printed Materials	Quote Information			
	Printer Name #1	Price Quote #1	Printer Name #2	Price Quote #2

Return completed STEP Mini-Grant Applications to:

County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care
Steps To Excellence Project
Attention: Helen Chavez
222 South Hill Street, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Important Notice: Please allow approximately 8 weeks for processing of your Mini-Grant application. Once it has been reviewed, you will receive a letter notifying you whether your Mini-Grant application was approved or denied. The Office of Child Care reserves the right to reject Mini-Grant Applications that are incomplete or do not clearly relate to a component of the STEP rating scale.

