



Early Learning for All

Early Childhood Facilities Expansion, Replacement, and Conversion Policy

Updated February 2026

The intent of this policy is to:

- Acknowledge that *current* ELFA Centers and Family Childcare Homes may make facilities changes in order to adapt to growth, relocation, and/or changing populations they serve
- Establish clear and transparent requirements and processes
- Maintain continuity of ELFA program services and supports where possible.

The policy covers three “change scenarios:”

1. Expansion
2. Replacement
3. Conversion

Below are the definitions, requirements, procedures, and wage support/compensation implications for each scenario.

Expansion

Definition

Each of the following is considered an expansion:

- A *current* Early Learning for All (ELFA) Program (Center or FCC) that plans to add an additional program at a different location
- A *current* ELFA Center that plans to add more classrooms.
- A *current* ELFA FCC that plans to add a Center

- A **current** ELFA site that takes over the administration/operation of another current ELFA Center or FCC
- A **current** ELFA FCC with a small capacity license that plans to close their current program and open an FCC in a different location with a large capacity license.

Requirements & Procedures

1. The program should contact ELFAFacilities@sfgov.org to notify DEC of the desired expansion.
2. DEC and its partners will work with the program to determine fiscal feasibility and alignment with DEC budget and programmatic priorities.
3. If the expansion is approved, the expanded site or classroom must undergo DEC quality validation. The validation process includes:
 - a. An Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) coach-guided self-assessment
 - b. A CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) assessment conducted by an independent, certified assessor
 - c. *For CSPP programs only*: ECE Programs that have a California State Preschool Program (CSPP) contract will also need to get a QRIS site rating.

If the program has a history of “good standing” with DEC, then they will be able to enroll families either through ELFA vouchers or their existing MRA funds to facilitate enrollment during the validation process.

Wage Support & Compensation Policies for Expanding Programs

When can expanded programs receive compensation support?

All programs must first complete the validation* process for expanded sites before educators working therein can participate in CARES or EESSG.

**Exception:* Agencies who have at least one site participating in EESSG and their center expansion site is funded by CSPP, CCTR and/or Head Start funding and in good standing may begin providing compensation support through EESSG prior to completion of the validation process. However, if the expansion site does not pass validation, the site may be subject to review to determine continued participation and may be asked to return EESSG funding (please reference EESSG MOU).

How will tiering determination work?

Upon completion of the validation process, sites will participate in the CARES wage support program at the Orange Tier* until the site is tiered again in their 2nd year of ELFA participation.

**Exception:* CARES-participating sites only expanding a classroom may continue receiving CARES at the same Tier level before validation process is completed.

Replacement

Definition

A **current** ELFA program that closes an existing site and opens a new site in a new location while **keeping** the same number of children and staff.

Requirements & Procedures

1. The program (Center or FCC) should contact ELFAFacilities@sfgov.org to notify DEC of the move.
2. The new Center or FCC must undergo a coach-guided Environmental Rating (ERS) self-assessment.

Wage Support & Compensation Policies for Replacement Programs

For replacements that include consistent elements, such as a center replacing another center OR a CARES-participating center replacing an FCC; the new program's eligibility for wage support would stay consistent as the teaching staff will remain the same.

If the replacement site is an EESG participating center moving to an FCC, the program's eligibility for Wage Support will move to CARES as an Orange Tier site.

Conversion

Definition

A **current** ELFA program that is converting a classroom to serve a different age group (for example Preschool to Infant/Toddler).

Requirements & Procedures

1. The program (Center or FCC) should contact ELFAFacilities@sfgov.org to notify DEC of the conversion.
2. The converted classroom must undergo a coach-guided Environmental Rating (ERS) self-assessment.
3. Any new lead teacher must meet [ELFA Quality Standards](#) teaching qualifications.

Wage Support & Compensation Policies for Conversions

The program's eligibility for Wage Support would stay consistent as long as the teaching staff are the same.

Other Facilities Policies and Information

Facilities Changes Requiring a New License

Programs that close and re-open (FCC to Center) or an Agency adding additional centers must follow Community Care Licensing process and once they receive their license would be eligible for DEC funding *for enrollment and wage/compensation*.

Contact Information

For general questions about facilities changes contact: ELFAFacilities@sfgov.org

For questions about Wage or Compensation impacts related to facilities changes contact: ecestipend@sfgov.org