



# Mini-Grant Application Guide



County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care

October 29, 2007

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## 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. Complete and submit a STEP Application Form.**

This three-page form can be downloaded from our Web site [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov). You may also request an application packet be mailed to you by contacting us directly at (213) 974-4103.

➤ ***Instructions: How to download a STEP Application Form:***

1. Visit our Web site [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://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 can be found in the STEP application packet. To obtain a copy of this form, follow the instructions detailed above to download a copy or contact the Office of Child Care to request one via mail.

The instructions on the Mini-Grant Application Form direct you to answer three questions, create a timeline and budget, and provide proof of budgetary expenses. Refer to page 9 to review a **sample completed Mini-Grant Application**. You can download a blank copy of this sample document from our website [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov).

➤ ***Instructions: How to download a Blank STEP Mini-Grant Form***

1. Visit our Web site.
2. Click on the Steps To Excellence Project link (located on the left-hand side of the screen).
3. Click on the *STEP Mini-Grant Materials* link.
4. Click on *Blank Mini-Grant Application Form* link.

## 7. Important Deadlines

**December 1, 2007:** STEP Mini-Grant Applications must be received by the Office of Child Care by this date. Applications may be mailed, faxed or hand delivered. Our office closes at 5 p.m.

**March 1, 2008:** Quality improvements made possible through the use of STEP Mini-Grant funds must be fully implemented by this date.

**May 1, 2008:** As a pre-requisite to receiving STEP Mini-Grant funds, providers must agree to schedule a STEP Quality Rating Site Visit by this date.



## 8. Submitting Your Mini-Grant Application

You may submit your completed Mini-Grant Applications via mail, fax, or by hand delivering a copy by **December 1, 2007**.

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

**Fax Number:** (213) 217-5106

## 9. Approving Mini-Grant Applications

Mini-Grant Applications received by the due date 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 by the March 1, 2008 deadline?*
- 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. Please ask to speak with Helen Chavez, STEP Program Specialist.

<p><b>Florence/Firestone</b> Crystal Stairs Contact: <b>Yuovene Whistler</b> Telephone: (323) 421-1177 Email: ywhistle@crystalstairs.org</p>	<p><b>Inglewood</b> Crystal Stairs Contact: <b>Yuovene Whistler</b> Telephone: (323) 421-1177 Email: ywhistle@crystalstairs.org</p>
<p><b>Long Beach</b> Children's Home Society Contact: <b>Joelle Landazabal</b> Telephone: (562) 256-7400 ext. 3127 Email: joellel@chs-ca.org</p>	<p><b>Pacoima/Arleta</b> Child Care Resource Center Contact: <b>Julie Castillo</b> Telephone: (818) 717-1000 ext. 4621 Email: jcastillo@ccrcla.org</p>
<p><b>Palmdale</b> Child Care Resource Center Contact: <b>Terri Hess</b> Telephone: (661) 949-0615 ext. 116 Email: thess@ccrcla.org</p>	<p><b>Pasadena</b> Child Care Information Services Contact: <b>Christine Meyer</b> Telephone: (626) 204-3517 Email: cmeyer@ccispasadena.org</p>
<p><b>Pomona</b> Pomona Unified School District Contact: <b>Peter Pinon</b> Telephone: (909) 397-4740 ext. 5398 Email: peterpinon@pusd.org</p>	<p><b>Pomona</b> Pomona Unified School District Contact: <b>Zora Johnson</b> Telephone: (909) 397-4740 ext. 5287 Email: zora.johnson@pusd.org</p>
<p><b>Wilmington</b> Children's Home Society Contact: <b>Joelle Landazabal</b> Telephone: (562) 256-7400 ext. 3127 Email: joellel@chs-ca.org</p>	<p><b>Santa Monica</b> Connections for Children Contact: <b>Alicia Guerra</b> Telephone: (310) 452-3325 ext. 275 Email: aliciag@cfc-ca.org</p>



## 11. Contact Information

The County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care is located at 222 South Hill Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012. We can be reached by telephone at (213) 974-4103 or via the Web at [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov).

## 12. Resources Section

The following Resource Section contains the following supporting documents:

- *A Sample Mini Grant Application.*
- *A Blank Mini-Grant Application Form* that includes timeline and budget templates. You may choose to use these template documents, or create your own.

These supporting documents are available at [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov).





# 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 Lakeshore.

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 by March 1, 2008.

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

<b>A). Equipment/Supplies</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Pretend &amp; 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>
			<b>SALES TAX:</b> <i>\$176.88</i>
			<b>SHIPPING/HANDLING CHARGES:</b> <i>\$ 96.59</i>
			<b>SUBTOTAL (A):</b> <i>\$2,417.42</i>
<b>B). Consultants/Subcontracts</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Number of Hours</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Elsa Chavez</i>	<i>\$50.00</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>\$300.00</i>
			<b>SUBTOTAL (B):</b> <i>\$300.00</i>
<b>C). Other</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Copies of Parent Handbook</i>	<i>\$2.50 per book</i>	<i>I will order 50 copies</i>	<i>\$125.00</i>
			<b>SUBTOTAL (C):</b> <i>\$125.00</i>
			<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b> <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

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# 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

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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, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90012**

**Important Notice:** All Mini-Grant Application Forms are to be submitted to the Office of Child Care by **December 1, 2007** to allow time for processing of the request and implementation of the plan. 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.

