



# Micro-Grant Program Handbook

*for Child Care Programs*

**Updated 1/1/18**

**Funding for the Micro-Grant Program is provided by the  
Department of Children and Families (DCF)**

**The Micro-Grant Program is administered by Supporting Families Together Association.**

**To learn more, visit <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar> or  
<http://supportingfamielsttogether.org/youngstar-micro-grant-program/>.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEFINITIONS .....	3-4
OVERVIEW .....	4
ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT AMOUNTS .....	5
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS .....	6
DUE DATES.....	6
PURCHASING POLICY .....	6
<i>Child Materials</i> .....	7-9
<i>Portal Ordering System</i> .....	9
<i>Provider/Professional Resources</i> .....	9-10
<i>Return Policy</i> .....	10
<i>Vendor Discount Structure</i> .....	11-12
REIMBURSEMENTS .....	13
<i>Curriculum and Assessments</i> .....	13
<i>Professional Development</i> .....	13-14
<i>Registry Certificates</i> .....	14
<i>Accreditation Fees</i> .....	14
<i>Additional Technical Assistance</i> .....	14
<i>Staff/Substitute Time</i> .....	15
<i>Improvements to the Physical Environment</i> .....	15-16
<i>Other Approved Reimbursements</i> .....	16-17
<i>Items Not Approved</i> .....	17
<i>Documentation for Reimbursements</i> .....	18-19
DAY CAMPS .....	19
TIMELINES .....	19
EXPIRATION OF FUNDS .....	20
CHANGE OF LOCATION, OWNERSHIP, OR TYPE OF CARE .....	20
PROGRAMS OUT OF COMPLIANCE.....	20
CONTACT INFORMATION .....	20-21
FORMS .....	22-31
<i>Purchase Plan</i> .....	22-25
<i>Check Request</i> .....	26-28
<i>Electronic Device Waiver</i> .....	29
<i>Construction/Renovation Form</i> .....	30
<i>Acknowledgement of Grant Forfeiture</i> .....	31
RESOURCES .....	32
FAQS .....	33-35



## Micro-Grant Definitions

**Bill.com** is the company selected to process reimbursement payments. All reimbursement checks will be sent by Bill.com. Programs may receive a confirmation email that their check is being processed.

**Case Management System (CMS)** is an online system created and managed by the Department of Children and Families which tracks YoungStar participation for all providers in the state of Wisconsin.

The **Check Request** form is a cover sheet that programs attach to proof of payment in order to receive reimbursement. All documents for reimbursement, including this form, should be sent in a single submission directly to micro-grant staff. The Check Request does not replace or serve as a substitute for the Purchase Plan.

A grant's **Expiration Date** is one year from the first day of the YoungStar service year. The service year will begin when the Off-Year Services Form, YoungStar Renewal Contract, or YoungStar Contract are uploaded into CMS. While Purchase Plans are due on or before the date of the final technical consultation visit, all grant funds must be completely expended by the expiration date, including any remaining funds after orders are placed and reimbursements. See pages 6 and 20 for additional details.

The **Location Number** is a 3-digit number that typically follows the Provider Number to indicate the unique geographic location of a particular site within a program. The Provider and Location Numbers should be included on any micro-grant documents or communications.

The **Portal Ordering System** is a method for ordering materials in which a program, assisted by their Technical Consultant, places an order directly with one of the designated micro-grant vendors. Each order is forwarded by the vendor for approval of micro-grant staff before being processed.

The **Provider Number** is a 10-digit number assigned to programs by the Department of Children and Families. The Provider and Location Numbers should be included on any micro-grant documents or communications.

A **Purchase Plan** is a form through which providers indicate the manner in which they would like to utilize micro-grant funds to support their quality improvement goals. The Purchase Plan is due on or before the final technical consultation visit. For programs undergoing Formal Rating, the final feedback session may count as the final consultation visit.

The **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)** is a tool in which programs document their quality improvement goals. This plan drives the choices made by the program regarding how micro-grant funds are utilized.

Programs are out of **Regulatory Compliance** when they receive notice from the Department of Children and Families that their license or certification has been revoked, denied, or suspended. For programs that are found to be out of regulatory compliance, the rating will be changed to a 1 Star on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following the non-compliance effective date, subsidy payments will stop, and their micro-grant will be put on hold.

**Self-Assessment** is a manner of self-study through which providers evaluate their quality of programming on an ongoing basis.

The YoungStar **Service Year** is a method of marking the annual period of time between rating years in which a program may request technical assistance and become eligible to receive a micro-grant. The service year corresponds to the year-long period on the current episode tab in CMS.

A **Technical Consultant (TC)** is a highly qualified professional with a combination of credit-based education and experience who assists child care programs in Wisconsin in meeting their quality improvement goals.

**The Registry** is an organization which maintains a career level system that recognizes the professional achievements of the early childhood care and education profession in Wisconsin. The Registry documents verified formal and informal education for individuals in the early care and education field.

**Vendor** refers to the company or companies from which items will be purchased.

## Overview

*This section is provided as a brief overview to the Micro-Grant Program. More detailed information is available throughout the remainder of this handbook. Please refer to the table of contents to locate a specific topic.*

The goal of the YoungStar Micro-Grant Program is to use grant funds to support the Quality Improvement Plans developed by child care providers in collaboration with their Technical Consultants. Only programs that have actively participated in technical assistance are eligible for a micro-grant. Accredited programs have several options available for receiving a micro-grant with technical assistance and should contact their local YoungStar Office for details.

The amount of a micro-grant will be determined by the type of program participating. Grant use is limited to the policies established in this handbook. Funds may be utilized following one of three plans:

- Plan 1: Materials (Micro-grant staff purchases.)
- Plan 2: Reimbursement (for certain materials, professional development, services, etc.)
- Plan 3: Split (Program would like both materials ordered by micro-grant staff and to purchase some items or services and go through reimbursement.)

The Micro-Grant Program is administered by staff of the Supporting Families Together Association office in Madison. Completed documents will be submitted to the program's local YoungStar Office or Technical Consultant, who will then submit the documents to the Micro-Grant Program through the YoungStar Case Management System (CMS) or via email, according to documentation requirements. Additional materials or questions may be submitted either to the program's Technical Consultant or to micro-grant staff.

Micro-grant requests are generally processed in the order received, as long as documentation is complete. Micro-grant staff will notify Technical Consultants and/or programs if additional documentation is needed. Grants generally take 4-8 weeks to complete, depending on volume of requests received.

A program may receive one micro-grant per YoungStar service year, as funding allows, if the program continues to meet all YoungStar and micro-grant guidelines and expectations as outlined by the policies of the Department of Children and Families and this handbook.

The YoungStar Micro-Grant Program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Wisconsin Department of Children and Families licensing rules require providers to inform parents of any religious components of child care programming. YoungStar builds on the foundation of regulation, and identifies the sharing of the program philosophy through two-way communication as a quality component of programming.

## Eligibility and Grant Amounts

### **Eligibility**

Every program that actively participates in technical consultation is eligible to apply to receive a micro-grant if they complete a Quality Improvement Plan, a Self-Assessment, and a Purchase Plan, and have their purchases approved by a Technical Consultant and/or the micro-grant staff. These documents must be uploaded to CMS by the TC. A program must complete 75% of their available on-site consultation hours prior to being eligible to receive a micro-grant, except in the case of Licensed Day Camps. Accredited programs have several options available for receiving a micro-grant with technical assistance and should contact their local YoungStar Office for details.

A program receiving technical assistance will no longer be eligible for a micro-grant if the program:

- Cancels more than ONE technical consultation visit without appropriate prior notification. This includes “no-show” visits.
- Cancels more than THREE technical consultation visits total (this includes cancellations with or without appropriate prior notification, and no-show visits).

If a program becomes ineligible for a micro-grant, the Local YoungStar Office should collect a signed *Acknowledgement of Grant Forfeiture* form from the program.

### ***YoungStar-recognized accreditations:***

Programs with a current YoungStar-recognized accreditation have several options for receiving a micro-grant through technical assistance and should contact their local YoungStar Office for further details. The accredited program must complete and submit a Self-Assessment, Quality Improvement Plan, and Purchase Plan to their local YoungStar Office. A current list of YoungStar-recognized accreditations, as well as the full YoungStar Accreditation Policy, may be found at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/accreditation-policy.pdf>

Programs are eligible for one micro-grant per regulated site per service year. Each individual site must be actively participating in technical assistance through YoungStar, or be accredited and requesting a micro-grant through their local YoungStar office. Programs with multiple locations may not pool their funds to share purchases.

### **Grant Amounts**

\$1000 for a Licensed Group Child Care Program or School-Age Program

\$500 for a Licensed Family Child Care Program

\$250 for a Certified Family Child Care Program

\$200 for a Licensed Day Camp

The complete YoungStar Participation Policy may be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/participation-policy.pdf>

## Documents

### Required for All Programs

All programs must have the following three documents in CMS to receive a micro-grant:

1. A completed Self-Assessment.
2. A completed Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the program site.
3. A completed Purchase Plan (pages 22-25) to indicate the program's use of micro-grant dollars.

Note: Programs who complete portal orders with their consultant do not need to complete a Purchase Plan. The Check Request may not be used in place of the Purchase Plan.

The program's Technical Consultant will collect these documents and submit them for the program.

Additional documents may be needed based on the micro-grant request. Technical Consultants have received detailed information on required documents.

## Due Dates

Programs must submit their Purchase Plan for the full amount of their grant to their Technical Consultant **on or before the date of their final consulting visit**. Technical Consultants should upload the Purchase Plan into CMS within one week of receiving it from the program so as not to delay the program's grant. **Note: For programs undergoing Formal Rating, the final feedback session may count as the final consulting visit.**

Purchase Plans are due on or before the date of the final technical consultation visit. This notifies micro-grant staff that there is a micro-grant outstanding for a program. Micro-grant staff will track timelines on outstanding grants and notify TCs and/or programs if any funds are close to expiration and if additional documents are required for completion. Programs should submit any completing documents (e.g, receipts, certificates) a minimum of 30 days prior to grant expiration to ensure that all funds are spent before grant expires.

**If the Purchase Plan is not submitted in its entirety on or before the final consulting visit, the micro-grant may be forfeited, and the program will not be eligible again until the next YoungStar service year.** In this case, programs need to complete and sign the *Acknowledgement of Grant Forfeiture* form.

## Purchasing Policy

**All requested purchases must match a goal or key objective on a program's Quality Improvement Plan.** Purchases that do not match goals on a QIP will not be approved.

Micro-grant funds may be used for the purchase of new materials only; no used or repaired items will be funded through micro-grants. An exception may be made in the case of refurbished computers, if the purchase is made through a business that specializes in such repairs.

All purchases made with micro-grant funds must meet regulatory standards. **Note: It is the program's responsibility to know and understand the regulatory statutes governing their type of care. Neither Technical Consultants nor micro-grant staff are regulatory specialists. Any question about whether an item meets regulatory standards should be directed to the program's licensor or certifier.**

The following sections on pages 7-17 provide detail on approved purchases for micro-grant use.

## Child Materials

Child materials must be age-appropriate. Age-appropriate means books, materials and practices are accessible to children in their primary language. The content is suitable to the ages of the children in care (i.e. simpler books and games are available for younger children and more complex items are available for older children). Books and materials that are accessible to infants, toddlers, or preschool age children should include no violent or frightening content or pictures.

To maximize the impact of grant funds, orders for child materials are generally made through the six designated micro-grant vendors. These vendors have offered the best deals on discounts and shipping costs to providers participating in the YoungStar program. The designated vendors are:

<b>Constructive Playthings</b>	<a href="http://constructiveplaythings.com">constructiveplaythings.com</a>
<b>Discount School Supply/Environments</b>	<a href="http://discountschoolsupply.com">discountschoolsupply.com</a>
<b>Lakeshore Learning</b>	<a href="http://lakeshorelearning.com">lakeshorelearning.com</a>
<b>Kaplan</b>	<a href="http://kaplanco.com">kaplanco.com</a>
<b>School Specialty</b>	<a href="http://EarlyChildhoodDirect.com">EarlyChildhoodDirect.com</a> or <a href="http://schoolspecialty.com">schoolspecialty.com</a>
<b>-Childcraft</b>	<a href="http://Childcraft.com">Childcraft.com</a>
<b>-Abilitations</b>	<a href="http://Abilitations.com">Abilitations.com</a>
<b>-Sax Arts &amp; Crafts</b>	<a href="http://SaxArts.com">SaxArts.com</a>
<b>-SportTime</b>	<a href="http://Sporttime.com">Sporttime.com</a>
<b>S&amp;S Worldwide</b>	<a href="http://ssww.com">ssww.com</a>

*Note: A list of vendors and the discounts they offer is available on pages 11-12).*

**There are exceptions through which a provider can request child materials from a vendor not on the designated vendor list above:**

1. **“Big Ticket Items”** with an individual item list price of \$200 or more can be purchased at other vendors.
2. **Montessori or Waldorf Curriculum Materials:** If the Technical Consultant has verified that the program uses a Montessori or Waldorf Curriculum, items may be chosen from vendors that specialize in Montessori or Waldorf children’s materials.
3. **Materials in languages other than English:** Items may be chosen from vendors that specialize in children’s materials in various languages.
4. **Child materials for children with special needs:** Items may be chosen from vendors that specialize in materials for children with special needs or child materials needed to support special needs of the provider.
5. **Child materials for implementing gardens and natural playscapes.** **Note: Plants and seeds are consumables, and may not account for more than 10% of grant total. Programs should consult the list of poisonous plants before purchasing. (A link is provided on page 32.) Any items that cannot be shipped will need to be purchased by the program and go through reimbursement. No electric or power tools, chemicals, compost materials, or items containing creosote (e.g., railroad ties) may be purchased using micro-grant funds.**

Programs are encouraged to consider purchases that will affect long-term quality improvement. Programs should focus on the purchase of durable, long-lasting materials. However, up to 10% of the grant total may be spent on consumables such as crayons, paper, paint, foam, fabric, or yarn for art.

There are limits to the number of vendors a program can use:

- Day Camp Program \$200: Program may use only one vendor.
- Certified Family Program \$250: Program may use up to two vendors.
- Licensed Family Program \$500: Program may use up to two vendors.
- Group or School-Age Program \$1000: Program may use up to three vendors.

**Note: Micro-grant requests exceeding the number of allowable vendors will be declined. Programs should be aware that splitting their funds between multiple vendors may result in fewer savings. A request for reimbursement will be counted as one vendor.**

If you would like to request an exception for materials NOT available through one of the designated vendors, and you do not meet the exception criteria above, requests for approval can be made through the Purchase Plan, in the *Plan 1: Materials* section. **Note: Programs should only request exception approval for items NOT available through one of the designated vendors. Anyone choosing to order from an off-list vendor should be aware that they may not receive discounts, and the vendor may or may not allow returns or exchanges. Additionally, requests for off-vendor purchases may take longer than purchases from designated vendors.**

### **Special notes on playground installation**

Group programs: Items must be approved for commercial use. The equipment must be rated for a non-residential setting and as such, the equipment or materials purchased should not indicate for “residential use only.” The equipment/materials should also NOT have a statement that prohibits commercial use. (Ex., PlayStar, based on the manufacturer’s recommendations, is not rated for a non-residential setting.)

Family Programs: Items for playgrounds can be for either commercial or residential use.

The licensee must be sure to observe the manufacturer’s recommendations for the number of children.

DCF rules for playgrounds prohibit concrete and asphalt under climbing equipment, swings, and slides. Energy-absorbing ground cover beneath slides, climbing equipment and swings should be in a depth and fall zone as recommended by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission: <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

**The provider assumes all responsibility for proper installation or construction. The provider must ensure any work meets Child Care Regulatory Standards, and meets building and zoning regulations, and must notify their licensor or certifier before the work takes place.** Programs must complete *Construction or Renovation of the Premises, Installation or Renovation of Indoor and Outdoor Play Structures* form and submit with Purchase Plan. This form is found on page 30.

Playground items often do not carry discounts or shipping offers, and are not available for ordering through portal sites.

## Child Materials Not Approved for Micro-Grant Purchase

The following non-exhaustive list of child materials may **not** be purchased with micro-grant funds:

1. Trampolines or bouncing surfaces (including hopper balls)
2. Toy weapons. **Note: Bats and bow and arrow sets may not be considered as weapons when they will be used as sporting equipment. Bows and arrows may be purchased for School-Age Programs and Day Camps, where the materials are age appropriate, and the activities are being carried out with appropriate supervision. Slingshots are not approved for micro-grant purchase.**
3. Videos, video games, computer games, software, or electronic devices designed for children (e.g., learning tablets)
4. Any item that could pose a significant safety hazard or risk, including (but not limited to) items such as ice skates and stilts. Consult your licensor or certifier if you are unsure about a particular item.
5. Any item that has been recalled. A list is available from [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov).

## Portal Ordering System

The **Portal Ordering System** is a method for ordering child materials in which a program, assisted by their Technical Consultant, places an order online from one of the designated micro-grant vendors. Each order is forwarded by the vendor for approval of micro-grant staff before being processed.

Portal orders are recommended if the program wishes to receive items quickly and is only purchasing materials from one vendor on the designated vendor list. Technical Consultants have received detailed portal ordering instructions and will place the order in collaboration with the child care program. Programs should not attempt to place portal orders on their own behalf, without the assistance of their Technical Consultant.

Programs who complete portal orders with their consultant do not need to complete a Purchase Plan.

## Provider/Professional Resources

Any purchase that will primarily be used by providers or to store provider resources, including break-room furniture, desks or chairs for adults, books on teaching strategies, activity books, curriculum and assessment tools, memberships in professional organizations, and computer hardware or software, is categorized as **Provider/Professional Resources**. This category also includes materials needed to support special needs of the provider in offering care, items the provider will use to improve the quality of the childcare environment, and items to create a breastfeeding friendly environment. Micro-grant staff are able to make many of these purchases on behalf of the provider for items categorized as **Provider/Professional Resources**.

The designated vendors offer a wide range of materials for the teachers and staff in a child care program, but it is important to note that **Provider/Professional Resources may be purchased at any vendor**. Additionally, the following vendor has committed to offering discounts for participating YoungStar providers and programs:

- Redleaf Press offers providers a 15% discount.

Some items may be purchased by the program, and documentation submitted for reimbursement:

- Curriculum, screening, and assessment tools
- Computer hardware and software (**Electronic Device Waiver required**).

Some items must be purchased by the program, and documentation submitted for reimbursement:

- KidCare and Procare software
- Memberships in professional organizations
- Other approved purchases where the total cost exceeds the grant amount. **Note: The Micro-Grant Program will only reimburse up to the grant amount. Any overage must be absorbed by the child care program.**

Computers, laptops, tablets, digital cameras, security cameras, and software may be purchased with micro-grant funds as teacher resources or as classroom resources if the adult is the primary user of the item. This means that **micro-grant funds may not be used to purchase these types of electronic devices for children as the primary user.**

If a program chooses to use their micro-grant to purchase electronic devices or software, they will need to sign a waiver to indicate that the purchase will only be used for legal, micro-grant approved purposes. The waiver form is located on page 29 in the back of this handbook.

Purchases from membership-based vendors (e.g., Sam's Club, Costco) must go through the reimbursement process, as the Micro-Grant Program does not have a membership with these organizations.

## Return Policy

If a program needs to return an item or items, they must contact micro-grant staff first to discuss return options. No returns should be initiated without contacting micro-grant staff. Micro-grant staff must abide by the return policy set by the vendor. It is in the program's best interest to review a vendor's return policy before ordering, as some vendors do not allow returns.

Deliveries should be examined immediately upon arrival, and micro-grant staff contacted within one week regarding any issues with an order. If an item arrives damaged, not as described, or in an incorrect size or color, micro-grant staff will work to assist programs with a return. Micro-grant staff are not able to return items when a program has simply changed their mind. Therefore, all items should be researched carefully before selections are made and Purchase Plans submitted. In the event a program needs to request a return, items should be kept in the original packaging, and photos of any damages provided to the micro-grant specialist who is assisting with the return.

The Micro-Grant Program is not able to guarantee that shipping costs will be refunded by the vendor in the event of a return. If return shipping is charged, or shipping is charged for a replacement item, the cost will be deducted from the program's grant funds.

All monetary credits will be returned to the Micro-Grant Program, to be re-spent on micro-grant purchases on behalf of the program. The provider will never receive cash for returned items. Programs should be aware that they may experience delays with returns, as the Micro-Grant Program may have to wait for a credit from the vendor before placing a replacement order.

All returns must be initiated within 60 days (2 months) from the time the program receives their initial order.

**Constructive Playthings**

**[constructiveplaythings.com](http://constructiveplaythings.com) (800) 448-1412**

- 15% discount on all regular-priced items (sale items will not receive additional discount)
- Free shipping with a minimum order of \$99, after discount. (excludes truck ship items)
- Truck ship items are charged a shipping fee based on order total. See website for additional details.

**Discount School Supply**

**[discountschoolsupply.com](http://discountschoolsupply.com) (800) 627-2829**

- 20% discount on all items
- Free shipping with a minimum order of \$99 on in-stock items. If \$99 minimum is not met, shipping will be charged at 15% of order total or \$8.50, whichever is higher.
- Drop ship items (pictured with a small truck icon 🚚 ) are charged a shipping fee of \$7.95 or 15% of order total, whichever is higher.

**Environments**

- Environments items now available through Discount School Supply, at Discount School Supply offer.

**Kaplan**

**[kaplanco.com](http://kaplanco.com) (800) 334-2014**

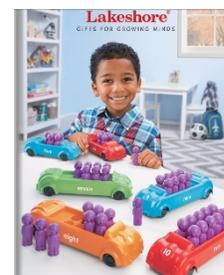
- 15% discount and free shipping on orders \$100 or more. If \$100 order minimum is not met, shipping will be charged at 15% of order total, or \$5.00, whichever is higher.

**Lakeshore Learning**

**[lakeshorelearning.com](http://lakeshorelearning.com) (800) 428-4414**

- 5% discount and free shipping on ALL orders, no minimum
- Items from the following catalog must be purchased by the program and reimbursed:

“Gifts for Growing Minds” seasonal catalog (changes in September of each year)



## Redleaf Press

[redleafpress.org](http://redleafpress.org) (800) 423-8309

- 15% discount

## S&S Worldwide

[ssww.com](http://ssww.com) (800) 288-9941

- 20% discount and free shipping on all in-stock items. Drop ship items will be charged shipping at 15% or \$7.95, whichever is higher.

## School Specialty

[schoolspecialty.com](http://schoolspecialty.com) (888) 388-3224

- 32% off all supplies
- 15% off all furniture
- Free shipping over \$49 (after discount)



Childcraft



SS Big Book



Sax Art Education



Sportime Phy. Ed



Abilitations Special Needs

**For additional information, contact your Technical Consultant or the Micro-Grant Program:**



YoungStar Micro-Grant Program  
Supporting Families Together Association  
700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 6. Madison, WI 53711  
[microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org)  
(608) 443-4310

## Reimbursement Overview

The Micro-Grant Program will reimburse for certain expenses that have been preapproved by the Technical Consultant and/or micro-grant staff, based on the policies outlined in this handbook. Reimbursement will be made only up to the allowable grant amount; any overage is the responsibility of the child care program. Purchases must be made during the program's current window to receive YoungStar services.

**Providers should always get permission from their Technical Consultant and/or micro-grant staff before making any purchases. Reimbursement is not guaranteed if approval was not granted.**

## Purchases Approved for Reimbursement

### Curriculum and Assessments

Reimbursement may be made for curriculum purchased to supplement the learning environment and tools for ongoing assessment of the program and the children in care.

Examples of curriculum include *Creative Curriculum*, *High Scope*, et cetera.

Examples of assessments include:

Child: *Creative Curriculum*, *High Scope*, *Portage Guide 3*. Other assessment resources available at: <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/curriculum-assessment-resources.php>

Program: *Environment Rating Scales* (ECERS-R, FCCRS-R, ITERS-R, SACERS-U), *Program Administration Scale* (for Group Programs) *Business Administration Scale* (for Family Child Care Programs)

A complete list of YoungStar-approved child assessments may be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/ys-self-assessment/approved-accepted-assessments-ys.pdf>

While micro-grant staff may purchase these items on their behalf, programs are encouraged to purchase directly from vendors and go through reimbursement to ensure that the best choice for the program is purchased. In cases where a subscription is required, micro-grant staff will not be able to order the materials on behalf of the program. The program will need to purchase the materials and go through reimbursement. In this situation, micro-grant funds may only be used for the first-year subscription. During subsequent years, programs should include the subscription as a part of their budget, and micro-grant funds may not be used.

Visit this website for guidance and resources when choosing high-quality curriculum and assessment for children:

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/documents/GuidelinesforselectingHighQualityCurriculumforYoungChildren.pdf>

### Professional Development

Staff trainings, workshops, conferences, and credit-based education are categorized as **Professional Development**, which can be instrumental in the continuous quality improvement of child care programs and may be reimbursed with micro-grant funds. Providers are responsible for researching, registering, and paying for any professional development. Only fully attended trainings or conferences and successfully completed credit-based education (with a grade of C- or higher) can be considered an approved purchase for micro-grant reimbursement.

All **Professional Development** fees/costs will be processed as reimbursements to the participating program. If a staff member made the original purchase, the program will be responsible for distributing funds to the appropriate parties. Micro-grant funds can only be applied to coursework and costs that are incurred within the YoungStar service year. Grant funds cannot be applied to outstanding balances or costs of failed courses.

### **Training**

Training must be training that is approved by the Registry's Professional Development Approval System (PDAS) and tiered. Trainings must go above and beyond minimum regulatory requirements (i.e., CPR, SBS, SIDS, start-up courses, and other required health and safety courses will not be approved for micro-grant reimbursement). **Exceptions will be made in the case of trainings pre-approved for YoungStar Quality Criteria. For additional information, see the list at this link: <https://supportingfamieliestogether.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Training-Calendar.pdf>. Exceptions will also be made for Conscious Discipline and Nature Pedagogy.**

### **Credit-Based Education**

All credit-based education is eligible for reimbursement if submitted as part of a program's micro-grant, regardless of regulatory requirement. For example, if a program chooses to send a staff member to a 3-credit child development course to meet the broad-based requirement for licensing, that would be eligible for reimbursement because it is for credit. However, if the program sends the staff member to a non-credit "Introduction to the Child Care Profession," it would not be eligible for reimbursement.

### **Conferences**

Conference registration fees are eligible for reimbursement if the program provides proof of full attendance. Lodging, meals, mileage, and other travel costs are not eligible for micro-grant reimbursement.

### **Registry Certificates**

Registry Certificates will need to be purchased by the provider/program and go through the reimbursement process. Whenever possible, application should be made online at <https://www.the-registry.org> to reduce cost.

### **Accreditation Fees**

Micro-grant staff will reimburse programs for fees expended to pursue **accreditation** by a YoungStar-recognized accrediting body. This may include expenses such as a one-time start-up of liability insurance in pursuit of accreditation, as long as each expense is not also a minimum licensing requirement. (Note: Micro-grant funds would only be approved for such use the first year. In subsequent years, the program would need to include the ongoing expense in the operating budget, and micro-grant funds could not be utilized for this purpose.) A current list of YoungStar-recognized accrediting bodies may be found at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/accreditation-policy.pdf>

### **Additional Technical Assistance**

The Micro-Grant Program will reimburse programs for costs to purchase additional technical assistance from a Registry Approved Technical Assistance Professional. The program must describe the plan for additional technical assistance in the Purchase Plan.

### **Staff/Substitute Time**

Micro-grant funds may be used to reimburse both group and family programs for paid staff or substitute time in the following ways:

1. If a staff member attends micro-grant approved professional development opportunities, micro-grant funds may be used for either the staff member's time or the cost of a substitute for the classroom or program during their absence.
2. If a program chooses to offer staff paid planning or prep time, micro-grant funds may be used to reimburse the cost of either the staff member's time or the cost of a substitute for the classroom or program during their absence.
3. If a program chooses to use their grant to support paid all-staff meetings, micro-grant funds may be used to reimburse the cost of the staff members' time, up to the grant amount.

The program will be reimbursed according to the staff member's or substitute's usual rate of pay, up to \$12.50 per hour. For group programs, reimbursement will be made to the program, not the individual staff member or substitute. For family programs, reimbursement will be made to the provider. The program will need to demonstrate that the staff member or substitute was paid for the time before reimbursement will occur.

**Note: Substitutes must meet all requirements outlined in the program's licensing or certification manual. The Micro-Grant Program will only reimburse up to the grant amount. Any overage must be absorbed by the child care program. Additionally, it is the program's responsibility to follow all regulatory and legal standards governing staff and pay. If overtime rates are required by law, it is the program's responsibility to absorb the cost of the overtime pay.**

The following types of documentation must be provided for reimbursement to occur:

1. The provider and individual staff members should document the hours, and all staff should sign the document to verify the information is accurate. A timesheet is included on the *Check Request* form (pages 26-28) for this purpose.
2. Copies of pay stubs will need to be submitted to demonstrate the program paid staff for the time before reimbursement will occur. For a Family Provider, this could mean a copy of the front and back of a processed check from their business account made payable to themselves. Micro-grant staff will work with family programs on an individual basis to determine appropriate documentation for proof of payment if no pay stubs are available.

### **Improvements to the Physical Environment**

Any purchases that change the physical space (indoor & outside environment) for higher quality are categorized as **Improvements to the Physical Environment**. The Micro-Grant Program will reimburse the provider/program for costs associated with improvements to the physical environment.

**The provider assumes all responsibility for proper installation or construction. The provider must ensure any work meets Child Care Regulatory Standards, and meets building and zoning regulations, and must notify their licensor or certifier before the work takes place.** Programs must complete *Construction or Renovation of the Premises, Installation or Renovation of Indoor and Outdoor Play Structures* form and submit with Purchase Plan. This form is found on page 30.

Micro-grant funds may not be used to cover purchases required to meet minimum regulatory requirements.

Improvements to the physical environment will be approved for first-time installations only. Anything that requires replacement or repair as part of the wear and tear of its natural life will not be covered by grant funds.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Wood chips or rubber mulch: can be purchased the *first time* they are put down at a facility. Grant funds *cannot* be used to replenish the wood chips or mulch purchased in previous years.
- Carpeting: Initial installation of carpeting for softer play space can be considered an allowable purchase. Replacement or repair of carpeting is not considered an allowable expense.
- Laminate or hardwood flooring: Initial installation of laminate flooring for cleaner and allergen-free environments can be considered an allowable purchase. Replacement of flooring due to natural wear and tear is not considered an allowable expense.
- Plumbing: Initial installation of sinks and toilets not required by licensing can be considered an allowable purchase. However, replacement or repair of these items would not be allowed.  
**Note: Portable sinks are not approved for micro-grant purchase.**

Reimbursements will cover improvements to the physical environment in the following ways:

1. If the program hires a professional, licensed contractor (e.g., builder, plumber, electrician) to perform the work, the micro-grant may be used for the cost of labor and materials, up to the grant amount.
2. If the program elects not to hire a professional, licensed contractor to do the work, the micro-grant may be used only for the cost of materials, up to the grant amount.

Programs will only be reimbursed up to the amount of their grant – any additional cost will be the responsibility of the program. Proof of payment must be submitted before the reimbursement will be processed.

**Providers should always get permission from their Technical Consultant and/or micro-grant staff before making any purchases. Reimbursement is not guaranteed if approval was not granted prior to purchase.**

### Other Reimbursements

**Other expenses that have been pre-approved may be eligible for reimbursement. Examples include, but are not limited to:**

- Devices that play music (radios, CD/tape players, iPods, etc.)
- Security devices, cameras, baby monitors
- Materials for making programs breastfeeding friendly (e.g., chairs, small tables, waste baskets, mini-refrigerators, art, breastfeeding resources)
- Small appliances that are implemented in the program or classrooms in ways that align with quality improvement criteria, as determined by Technical Consultant and/or micro-grant staff. Examples: blenders for nutritious snacks, coffee makers for dedicated space for staff or families, cooktops for School-Age Programs, laminators for staff workrooms or resource rooms

Programs should ensure that purchases for children are age and developmentally appropriate, and consistent with standards of regulatory compliance. Additionally, all appliances and installations must meet individual building codes. **Note: It is the program's responsibility to know and understand the regulatory statutes governing their type of care and location. Neither Technical Consultants nor micro-grant staff are**

regulatory specialists. Any question about whether an item meets regulatory standards should be directed to the program's licensor or certifier.

Providers should always get permission from their Technical Consultant and/or micro-grant staff before making any purchases. Reimbursement is not guaranteed if approval was not granted prior to purchase.

### Purchases NOT Approved for Reimbursement

1. Many **small appliances or electronic devices** will not be purchased or repaired with grant funds. The following non-exhaustive list of electronic devices will not be approved for purchase:
  - Telephones
  - Vacuums
  - Snow blowers
  - Vehicle alarms
  - Air purifiers/air filters
  - Smoke detectors/alarms, carbon monoxide detectors/alarms
  - TVs, DVD players, videos or video games for children
2. **Fences:** purchase or repair.
3. **Large Appliances:** purchase or repair. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Refrigerators (Exceptions will be made for mini-refrigerators for breastfeeding-friendly programs or programs in shared space with no access to refrigeration for healthy snacks.)
  - Freezers, stoves, microwaves, dishwashers
  - Washing machines, dryers
4. **Used or repaired items.** Exceptions will be made for refurbished computers, as long as the work is done through a business that specializes in such repairs.
5. **Weapons. Note: Bats and bow and arrow sets may not be considered as weapons when they will be used as sporting equipment. Bows and arrows may be purchased for School-Age Programs and Day Camps, where the materials are age appropriate, and the activities are being carried out with appropriate supervision. Slingshots are not approved for micro-grant purchase.**
6. **Portable sinks**
7. **Expenditures associated with basic operating costs.** This includes, but is not limited to: rent, utility bills, painting or repainting walls, cleaning supplies or equipment, replacing ceiling tiles, or any other general maintenance fees.

Providers should always get permission from their Technical Consultant and/or micro-grant staff before making any purchases. Reimbursement is not guaranteed if approval was not granted.

## Submitting Documents for Reimbursement

In order to request reimbursement, programs must submit certain required documentation. Documents should be collected and submitted in a single submission, only after all purchases are made. **Programs should not request multiple reimbursements over the course of the grant year. If the grant is being split between materials and reimbursement, the request for reimbursement counts as one of the allowable number of vendors.**

### Required Documents for Professional Development

- *Check Request form* (found on pages 26-28)
- *Proof of Payment:* This may take the form of an itemized receipt (including purchase date, vendor, list of items purchased, and total cost) or a copy of the front and back of a processed check (after it clears the bank). **Credit card statements and bank statements will not be accepted.** Handwritten receipts will not be accepted.
- *Proof of Full Attendance:* This may include providing the Registry Event ID or certificates for training and conferences, or transcripts or grade reports for credit-based courses

### Required Documents for Playground Equipment and Improvements to the Physical Environment

- *Check Request form* (found on pages 26-28)
- *Proof of Payment:* This may take the form of an itemized receipt (including purchase date, vendor, list of items purchased, and total cost) or a copy of the front and back of a processed check (after it clears the bank). **Credit card statements and bank statements will not be accepted.** Invoices, estimates, quotes, or copies of online shopping carts will not be accepted because they do not verify payment, only cost. Handwritten receipts will not be accepted.
- *Construction/Renovation Form* (found on page 30)

### Required Documents for Staff/Substitute Time

- *Check Request form:* This replaces the time sheet formerly used. Page 3 must be completed and signed by each staff member for whom paid time is being reimbursed. (found on pages 26-28)
- *Proof of Payment:* This may take the form of an employee pay stub or a copy of the front and back of a processed check to a substitute (after it clears the bank). **Credit card statements and bank statements will not be accepted.**

### Required Documents for Electronic Devices

- *Check Request form* (found on pages 26-28)
- *Proof of Payment:* This may take the form of an itemized receipt (including purchase date, vendor, list of items purchased, and total cost) or a copy of the front and back of a processed check (after it clears the bank). **Credit card statements and bank statements will not be accepted.** Invoices, estimates, quotes, or copies of online shopping carts will not be accepted because they do not verify payment, only cost. Handwritten documents will not be accepted.
- *Electronic Device Waiver form* (found on page 29)

### Required Documents for Other Reimbursements

- *Check Request form* (found on pages 26-28)
- *Proof of Payment:* This may take the form of an itemized receipt (including purchase date, vendor, list of items purchased, and total cost) or a copy of the front and back of a processed check (after it clears the bank). **Credit card statements and bank statements will not be accepted.** Invoices, estimates, quotes, or copies of online shopping carts will not be accepted because they do not verify payment, only cost. Handwritten documents will not be accepted.

**The Micro-Grant Program reserves the right to request additional documentation if necessary.**

All documents are due to the Micro-Grant Program a minimum of 30 days before the grant's expiration to ensure adequate time for processing. Electronic submissions are encouraged.

Documents should be submitted to the Micro-Grant Program at:

YoungStar Micro-Grants, Supporting Families Together Association  
700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 6, Madison, WI 53711  
Email: [microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org)  
Fax: (608) 441-5399

## Day Camps

Day camps will be able to use micro-grant funds in two possible ways: spending the full grant on materials with one vendor through the Portal Ordering System, or for Registry certificates by going through the reimbursement process. If the program chooses to purchase materials through one of the vendors, the order will be placed through a designated vendor portal in collaboration with the Technical Consultant. Programs should not attempt to place portal orders on their own behalf. If the program chooses to use their micro-grant funds for Registry certificates, the program should apply for the certificates online at <https://www.the-registry.org> and submit proof of payment for reimbursement.

Exceptions may be made in the case of reimbursement for items needed to meet quality improvement goals that are not available through the portals. For example, if a day camp wants to implement gardening, materials for gardening may be purchased, and documentation submitted for reimbursement.

Approval for exceptions may be requested in writing. All purchases must follow micro-grant policies and meet regulatory standards.

**Note: All micro-grant funds for Day Camps must be expended using ONE of the above methods. Day Camps will not be permitted to split their grant funds between multiple vendors, or between materials and reimbursement.**

The following micro-grant policies, as outlined in this handbook, also apply to day camps:

- Due Dates
- Expiration of Funds
- Change of Location, Ownership, or Type of Care

## Timelines

Micro-grant staff cannot guarantee an arrival time for any order or reimbursement. Programs should plan accordingly if materials are needed for implementation during technical assistance or in preparation for a rating. In these cases, approval may be sought for the program to purchase the materials on their own behalf and seek reimbursement from the Micro-Grant Program. Programs should ask their TC for assistance.

## Expiration of Funds

**Micro-Grant funds must be fully spent before the program's current YoungStar service year expires.** Any micro-grant funds that are not spent by the end of the service year may be forfeited. Programs cannot save one year's funds and put them toward the next year.

## Change of Location, Ownership, or Type of Care

Programs will only be eligible to receive one micro-grant per participating location per YoungStar service year.

If a program changes location, ownership, or governance, they may keep the grant already received, but will not be eligible for a new grant until the next YoungStar service year.

If a program changes the type of care they provide and/or changes rating tracks, one of the following two scenarios will apply:

1. If the change is made after services end and/or the rating process is complete, the program may keep the grant already received, but will not be eligible for a new grant until the next service year.
2. If the change is made before services end and/or the rating process is complete, the program may receive the difference in the grant amounts. For example, a licensed family provider (\$500) who changes to a licensed group track (\$1000) may receive the \$500 difference in micro-grant funds for the service year. They will not receive an additional \$1000 grant.

## Programs Out of Compliance

If a provider moves to a 1 Star rating while a micro-grant is being processed, the micro-grant will be put on hold. Any reimbursements due to the provider will be processed as long as the purchase was made while the provider was not in 1 Star status. Any pending orders will be cancelled while the provider is in 1 Star status. If the provider subsequently moves to a higher star level, the micro-grant will be resumed.

## Contact Information

**Programs should contact their Technical Consultant first for any of the following:**

**Submitting a Self-Assessment, Quality Improvement Plan, or Purchase Plan**

**Making changes to their Purchase Plan**

**To receive a copy of the Micro-Grant Handbook**

**For assistance or information regarding micro-grant policies**

**Obtaining copies of any documents for their records**

**To obtain approval for reimbursements**



# YoungStar Micro-Grant Staff Contacts

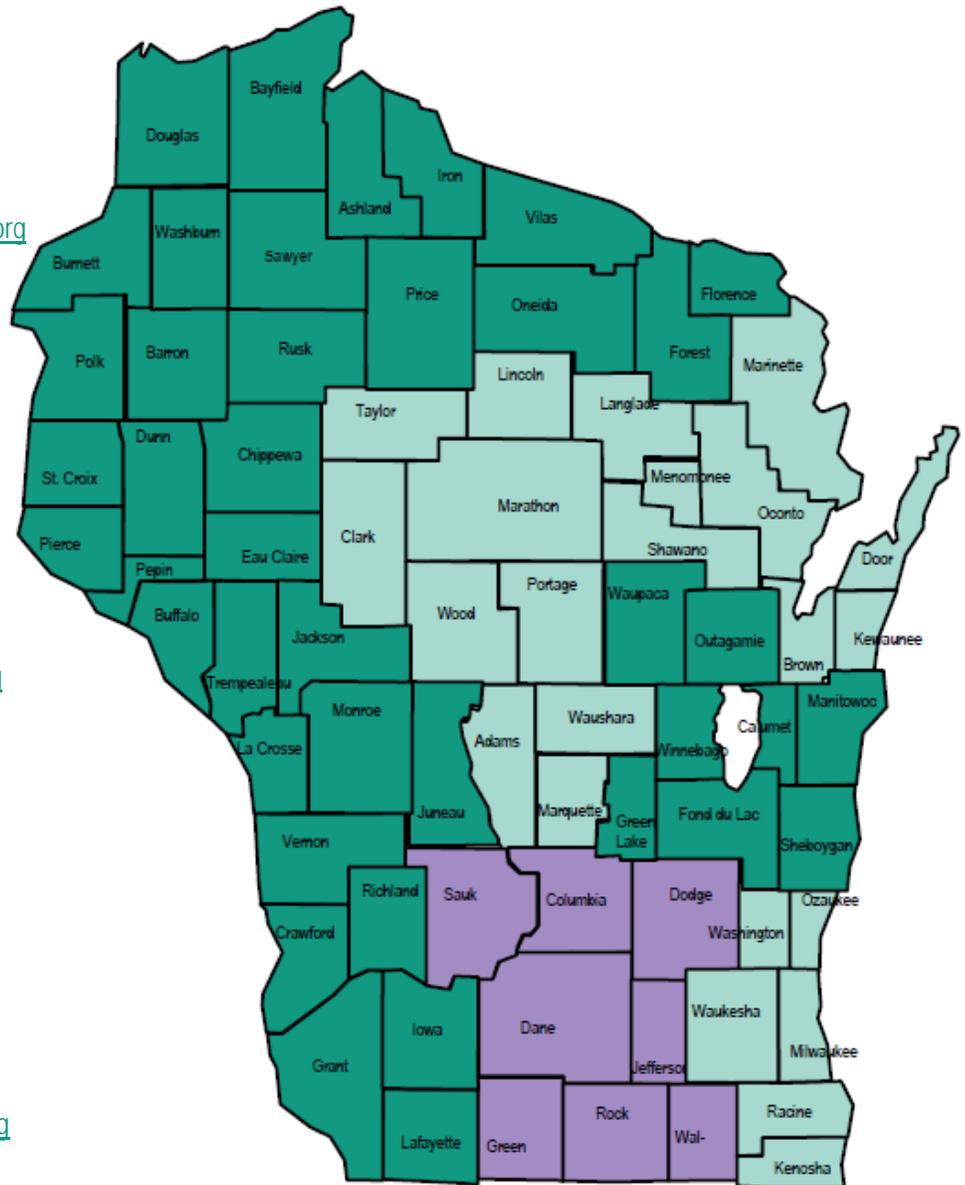
For general questions or information related to orders, timelines, or purchasing changes, contact the Micro-Grant Specialist assigned to your county.

## Micro-Grant Specialists

**Amanda Rose**  
 Purchasing Specialist  
 608-443-2127  
[amanda@supportingfamiliesogether.org](mailto:amanda@supportingfamiliesogether.org)

**Gloria Campos**  
 Purchasing Specialist  
 608-443-2122  
[gloria@supportingfamiliesogether.org](mailto:gloria@supportingfamiliesogether.org)  
 \*Spanish Language Services

**Sherri Underwood**  
 Micro-Grant Manager & Purchasing  
 608-443-2120  
[sherri@supportingfamiliesogether.org](mailto:sherri@supportingfamiliesogether.org)



## Financial Dept. & Returns

**Chanel Vang**  
 Reimbursement Specialist\*\*  
 608-443-2493  
[chanel@supportingfamiliesogether.org](mailto:chanel@supportingfamiliesogether.org)  
 \*\*Hmong Language Services

**Sarah Ross-Berry**  
 Financial Specialist\*\*\*  
 608-443-2121  
[sarah@supportingfamiliesogether.org](mailto:sarah@supportingfamiliesogether.org)  
 \*\*\*Return Support






<b>Shipping</b>	
<b>TOTAL (including shipping)</b>	

**Please note: If \$50 or less remains in your grant after this order, microgrant staff will select items to add to complete your grant.**

**List extra items here in case we have funds remaining or need a substitute for smaller out of stock or discontinued items. List a range of items from \$1 to \$50. (For quantity, REM=remainder of funds)**

Vendor	Product Number	Description	Size or Color	Quantity	Price	Total

**Optional: In case high priority items over \$50 are discontinued or out of stock, please provide alternate choices.**

Vendor	Product Number	Description	Size or Color	Quantity	Price	Total

I authorize micro-grant staff to order items from the above list on my behalf. I agree to minor substitutions where necessary (e.g., color, brand) at the point of purchase. I have been informed that items may be dropped or added where needed.

*Program Contact Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: It is the program’s responsibility to know and understand the regulatory statutes governing their type of care and location. Neither Technical Consultants nor micro-grant staff are regulatory specialists. Any question about whether an item meets regulatory standards should be directed to the program’s licensor or certifier.**

\*Please retain a copy of this and all other documents for your records.



**Complete this form and send it, along with all reimbursement documents, to:**  
 YoungStar Micro-Grants, Supporting Families Together Association  
 700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 6, Madison, WI 53711  
 Email: [microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org)  
 Fax: (608) 441-5399

<b>Program Name</b>			
<b>Provider &amp; Location #</b>			<b>Preferred Method of Contact:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Email _____  <input type="checkbox"/> Phone number _____  Best time of day _____
<b>Program Contact Name</b>			
<b>Technical Consultant</b>			
<b>Language Preference</b>	English    Spanish    Hmong Other: _____		

<b>Make Check Payable to:</b>	<b>Check Mailing Address:</b>

**Section I: Other—Improvements to the physical environment, accreditation fees, Registry certificates, other pre-approved purchases**

**List Each Reimbursement Requested**  
*(ex: Receipt 1—books from Amazon--\$103.60)*

Receipt	Description	Amount Requested
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
<b>Total Reimbursement Amount</b>		<b>\$</b>

***Unaccepted Proofs of Payment: Handwritten documents, credit card statements, bank statements, order forms/online carts, check stubs or copies of the front only of a check.***

I have been informed that my reimbursement check will come from Bill.com and that I may receive a confirmation email that my check is being processed.

Program Contact Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please keep a copy of this form and all supporting documents for your records.

**Receipt Checklist**

	Name of Vendor/Contractor	Date of Purchase	Description of Items or Services	Item Prices or Total	Shows Payment
Receipt #1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receipt #2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receipt #3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receipt #4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Receipt #5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section II: Professional Development—conferences, trainings, or credit-based courses**

Attach documentation for proof of payment and full attendance for each event. Use additional copies of this page if needed.

*Accepted Proofs of Payment: Receipts or copies of the front and back of a check showing it cleared the bank.  
Note: Reimbursement cannot be made for cancellations, no-shows, or partially attended events.*

**PD Reimbursement Event #1**

<b>Name of Event #1</b> (ex: Pyramid Model)	Choose only one type of verification for this event's attendance:		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate(s) of attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> Registry Event ID (_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Course transcript or grade report
<b>Name(s) of Attendee(s)</b>			
			<b>Amount Requested</b>

**PD Reimbursement Event #2**

<b>Name of Event #2</b>	Choose only one type of verification for this event's attendance:		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate(s) of attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> Registry Event ID (_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Course transcript or grade report
<b>Name(s) of Attendee(s)</b>			
			<b>Amount Requested</b>

**PD Reimbursement Event #3**

<b>Name of Event #3</b>	Choose only one type of verification for this event's attendance:		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Certificate(s) of attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> Registry Event ID (_____)	<input type="checkbox"/> Course transcript or grade report
<b>Name(s) of Attendee(s)</b>			
			<b>Amount Requested</b>

I have been informed that my reimbursement check will come from Bill.com and that I may receive a confirmation email that my check is being processed.

Program Contact Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please keep a copy of this form and all supporting documents for your records.

**PD Checklist**

	Name of Event	Attendees Listed	Proof of Payment	Proof of Attendance
Event #1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event #2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event #3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Program Name			
Provider Number		YoungStar Service Year	

This program is using Micro-Grant funds provided through the YoungStar program to purchase a computer device (desktop computer, laptop computer, netbook, or tablet), software, digital camera, or security camera.

Check the box next to all the ways this device will be used:	Please describe how this device or software will be used in your program:
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Business Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Professional Development</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Classroom resource for early childhood programs</b> Note: If this is going to be used as a classroom resource, the <b>adult</b> must be the primary user of the item. <b>Children are not permitted to be primary users of electronic devices purchased by the YoungStar Micro-Grant Program.</b>	

I will not use this media device or software for any illegal purpose and I am responsible for ensuring that my staff and/or household members do not use this electronic device for illegal purposes. If the Department of Children and Families discovers the electronic device purchased all or in part with YoungStar micro-grant funds has been used for any illegal purpose or in a manner that is not described above, the Department reserves the right to recuperate YoungStar micro-grant funds used for the purchase of the electronic device.

Signature		Title	
Print Name		Date	



**YoungStar Micro-Grant Program  
Construction or Renovation of the Premises,  
or Installation or Renovation of Indoor and Outdoor Play Structures**

Program Name			
Provider/Location Number		YoungStar Service Year	

**For licensed programs:**

Pursuant to DCF 250.04(3)(c) and DCF 251.04(3)(f), the licensee shall report to the department any construction or remodeling on the premises that has the potential to affect an area accessible to children or a condition of the license. Notification shall be provided in writing before the construction or remodeling begins.

**For certified programs:**

Pursuant to DCF 202.8 (1)(c), a certified family child care operator shall report as soon as possible, but no later than the county or tribal agency's next working day, to the agency any changes that affect the certified family child care operator's eligibility for certification under this chapter, including the following: Any construction or remodeling of the premises that might have an effect on health and safety of children in care.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that my Technical Consultant has informed me of my responsibility to notify my regulatory agency of the changes I want to make to the physical environment of my child care program.

Signature of authorized individual			
Print Name		Date	

Program Name			
Provider/Location Number		YoungStar Service Year	

In most cases, programs that receive technical consultation are eligible to receive a micro-grant if they complete a Quality Improvement Plan, a Self-Assessment, and a Purchase Plan, and have their purchases approved by a Technical Consultant. A program must complete 75% of their available consultation hours prior to being eligible for a micro-grant. A program receiving technical consultation will no longer be eligible for a micro-grant if the program:

- Cancels more than ONE technical consultation visit without appropriate prior notification (as stated above). This includes “no-show” visits.
- Cancels more than THREE technical consultation visits total (this includes cancellations with or without appropriate prior notification, and no-show visits)

According to the policies of the Micro-Grant Program, programs must submit their Purchase Plan for the full amount of their grant to their Technical Consultant on or before the date of their final consulting visit. If the Purchase Plan is not submitted to the program’s Technical Consultant for the full amount of the grant on or before the date of the final consulting visit, all or part of the program’s micro-grant funds may be forfeited for the remainder of the YoungStar service year. The program will not be eligible for grant funds again until their next YoungStar service year.

Questions regarding this policy may be directed to the program’s Technical Consultant, or to the Micro-Grant Program at:

**Phone:** 608-443-4310

**Email:** [microgrants@supportingfamiliesstogether.org](mailto:microgrants@supportingfamiliesstogether.org)

\_\_\_\_\_ *I understand that I am no longer eligible to receive the micro-grant for the \_\_\_\_\_ YoungStar service year as I have either not completed the Purchase Plan or required consultation hours.*

\_\_\_\_\_ *I am electing to waive the micro-grant for the \_\_\_\_\_ YoungStar service year for another reason (please explain):*

Signature		Title	
Print Name		Date	

## Resources

### **Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death from thousands of types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or can injure children. <http://www.cpsc.gov>

### **Kids in Danger**

Kids In Danger (KID) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety. Has a helpful e-newsletter, as well as information available in multiple languages.

<http://www.kidsindanger.org/>

### **YoungStar Early Childhood Inclusion**

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) wants all child care programs to feel confident in the quality of care provided to children with special needs and disabilities. DCF also wants parents to know that YoungStar programs are able and willing to care for *all* children!

The YoungStar Inclusion web pages provide helpful tips and resources for child care providers and families.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>

### **Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP)**

The WECCP website serves as the collaborative source of information on issues of cross sector interest, state initiatives and research based practices. The site contains information on trainings, initiatives, tools and resources over a variety of early childhood topics. [www.collaboratingpartners.com](http://www.collaboratingpartners.com)

### **Poisonous Plants List**

To learn which plants should be avoided in early childhood settings, please visit this link:

[https://www.uwhealth.org/files/uwhealth/docs/pdf/poisonous\\_plants.pdf](https://www.uwhealth.org/files/uwhealth/docs/pdf/poisonous_plants.pdf)

### **Playground Safety Information**

For information on playground safety standards, please visit these links:

<https://www.cpsc.gov/PageFiles/122149/325.pdf>

<http://www.cpsc.gov//PageFiles/122146/324.pdf>

[http://www.ersi.info/ecers\\_supmaterials.html](http://www.ersi.info/ecers_supmaterials.html)

<https://www.cpsc.gov/safety-education/safety-guides/playgrounds#resources>

### **Who makes purchases?**

Micro-grant staff will make purchases on behalf of the program, if possible. There are some instances where micro-grant staff cannot make a purchase on behalf of a program. These are explained in a matrix on pages 36-37 of the Micro-Grant Handbook. Example: if a program wishes to use their micro-grant toward training, the program must purchase the training and be reimbursed. Any purchase by the program that does not follow the guidelines of this handbook is not guaranteed reimbursement.

### **Why do we have designated vendors?**

The Micro-Grant Program has developed relationships with certain vendors over time. These are vendors who have offered discounts, shipping specials, and a variety of age-appropriate materials to meet the needs of programs in early care and education. These vendors have also demonstrated that they will work with programs on returns, exchanges, and credits for damaged items, items with issues of quality, or shipments that do not arrive. If purchases are made from vendors not on the designated vendors list, and something goes wrong with the order, the Micro-Grant Program is not able to guarantee that the vendor will allow returns, exchanges, or credits. Additionally, the set-up associated with new vendors can be time-consuming and may cause a delay in processing orders.

### **How long will it take to get my materials?**

Micro-grant staff cannot guarantee an arrival time for any order. Programs should plan accordingly if materials are needed for implementation during technical assistance or in preparation for a rating. In certain instances, programs may seek approval from their Technical Consultant to purchase materials needed for a rating on their own behalf and submit documentation for reimbursement. Technical Consultants and programs should not delay the completion of technical assistance or delay moving forward on a rating until micro-grant materials arrive.

The volume of micro-grants submitted statewide in a particular period of time directly affects wait times. Programs may encounter shorter waiting times when YoungStar volume is low, or they may encounter longer waiting times during periods of higher volume. Current average processing timelines may be found at: <https://supportingfamiliesstogether.org/youngstar-micro-grant-program/>. This information is updated weekly.

### **What does a program do when materials arrive?**

Programs should arrange to have someone available to receive items at the delivery address. The Micro-Grant Program is not responsible for loss of items left by delivery companies at the door.

Program staff should check packages upon delivery and sign where available, noting any possible damages that occurred during shipping.

Once materials are received, open them **immediately** to determine if anything has been damaged or if there are any errors on the order. Vendors usually have a short time frame in which items can be returned or exchanged. Review and keep all packing slips for your records. The program should then incorporate the materials as planned during their technical assistance process.

### **What should a program do if order is incorrect or damaged, material is missing, or items never arrive?**

If the material is incorrect or damaged, contact the Micro-Grant Program first. Programs should not initiate exchange or return without notifying the Micro-Grant Program. A micro-grant staff person will instruct the program on the next steps to take.

If material is missing, contact micro-grant staff, who will work with the vendor to ensure the correct material is delivered. If items never arrive, contact micro-grant staff directly. Micro-grant staff will contact the vendor for tracking and delivery information. **Note: Programs should arrange to have someone available to receive items at the delivery address. The Micro-Grant Program is not responsible for loss of items left by delivery companies at the door, and vendors will not always issue replacements at no cost.**

### **What if a program wants to return an item?**

Programs must contact micro-grant staff to discuss return options. No returns should be initiated without contacting micro-grant staff. Micro-grant staff must abide by the return policy set by the vendor. It is in the program's best interest to review a vendor's return policy before ordering, as some vendors do not allow returns.

If an item arrives damaged, not as described, or in an incorrect size or color, micro-grant staff will work to assist you with a return. We are not able to return items when a program has simply changed their mind. Therefore, please research items carefully before making selections.

The Micro-Grant Program is not able to guarantee that shipping costs will be refunded by the vendor in the event of a return. If return shipping is charged, or shipping is charged for a replacement item, the cost will be deducted from the program's grant funds.

All monetary credits will be returned to the Micro-Grant Program, to be re-spent on micro-grant purchases on behalf of the program. The provider will never receive cash for returned items. Programs should be aware that they may experience delays with returns, as the Micro-Grant Program may have to wait for a credit from the vendor before placing a replacement order.

All returns must be initiated within 60 days (2 months) from the time the program receives their initial order.

### **How does participation in the Micro-Grant Program affect a program's business taxes? Does the micro-grant have to be reported to the IRS?**

Micro-grant staff are not tax professionals and do not have the expertise to advise an individual or business on how to report anything on their taxes. The best advice is to contact your program's tax professional or the IRS.

### **Why do purchases have to go through the Micro-Grant Program? Why doesn't a program just get a check for the amount of their grant?**

Several reasons:

- The micro-grant staff has the ability to work with vendors to negotiate the best possible price on materials, and possibly even negotiate group discounts or free shipping.
- As a tax-exempt organization, SFTA, on behalf of the Micro-Grant Program, can in many cases reduce cost further by being exempt from paying sales taxes.
- The Department of Children and Families (DCF) requests that all purchases be made through one entity to guarantee proper use of dollars and to ensure funds are being expended to directly support quality improvement.
- By housing all micro-grant information in one place, the YoungStar Program is able to identify the purchases tied most to quality improvement, and learn how to better inform providers on best use of their grant dollars.

### **What if individual items end up being more than expected?**

If individual items on a Purchase Plan end up being *significantly* more than expected (like an item expected to be \$79 is now \$130), micro-grant staff will contact the program representative to confirm the purchase before it is made. The Purchase Plan may have to be adjusted in this circumstance. Small fluctuations in prices (like an item expected to be \$7.95 is now \$8.75) may be managed without contacting the program.

### **What if total purchases exceed the micro-grant amount?**

If the overall Purchase Plan exceeds the micro-grant amount itself – micro-grant staff will make purchases in the order that they are prioritized on the Purchase Plan, to the extent possible. Items at the end of a Purchase Plan, or other items based on price, may need to be dropped. While micro-grant staff work to honor program requests where possible, the final decision on which items are dropped from an order rests with the individual Purchasing Specialist.

Micro-grant staff cannot purchase all the items requested and bill the program for the overage. Micro-grant staff will only make purchases up to, but not exceeding, the full grant amount. If programs wish to make these remaining or additional purchases on their own, it is recommended that the program contact the vendors, as they will sometimes extend discounts provided to the Micro-Grant Program.

### **What if total purchases end up being less than expected?**

If micro-grant staff completes an order, and there is **less than \$50 remaining**, micro-grant staff will make purchases to complete the order. This may include adding duplicates of materials already ordered, or items that may complement or supplement the materials already ordered. Specialists may also send materials that have been identified as excellent resources to support quality improvement. Our staff will make decisions based on the Purchase Plan itself, a program's Quality Improvement Plan, and our experience and knowledge of materials.

This means that sometimes programs will get small bonus items that were not on the original Purchase Plan. This strategy is being used because micro-grant staff can order the additional items immediately and complete the grant, rather than place a second order at a later time. Programs may ensure that grant funds are maximized by adding extra items at the end of their list on the Purchase Plan.

**If micro-grant staff completes an order, and there is more than \$50 of the grant remaining**, the program will be contacted so they can plan how to use the remaining dollars. The program may receive a phone call or email, or be mailed a *Completing Purchase Plan* form from micro-grant staff. Instructions will be included.

### **What may cause my micro-grant request to be declined?**

The Micro-Grant Program allows for many possibilities. Staff are flexible and eager to partner with programs to help meet quality improvement goals. However, there are a few instances in which micro-grant requests may be declined:

- Request is for a purchase that does not follow micro-grant policy, including items that do not meet regulatory standards.
- Approval was not received from TC and/or micro-grant staff before purchase was made (for reimbursements).
- Reimbursement request is for purchase made in a previous YoungStar Service Year.
- Programs with multiple locations attempt to pool their funds to make a large purchase.
- Request is for items that do not align with the program's Quality Improvement Plan.
- Request is for items or costs that exceed grant budget. (For materials, items will be removed from order. For reimbursement, overage will not be reimbursed.)
- Request is submitted on incorrect or incomplete form.
- A program receives a non-compliance status from their licensing or certification body before micro-grant staff begin processing the request.
- Request exceeds the number of allowable vendors.
- Portal order is submitted with more than one vendor for a single program or split with a reimbursement.

## YoungStar Micro-Grant Purchasing Matrix

Description	Purchasing Track	Vendors	Documents Required
<b><i>Child materials—regular (puzzles, books, blocks, art materials, etc.)</i></b>	Micro-grant staff purchases	Constructive Playthings, Discount School Supply, Kaplan, Lakeshore Learning, S&S Worldwide, School Specialty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan only</li> </ul>
<b><i>Child materials—preapproved exceptions</i></b>	Micro-grant staff purchases, or program purchases and seeks reimbursement	any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• <i>If requesting reimbursement:</i> Check Request and Receipts or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b><i>Child materials—playground</i></b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipts or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b><i>Provider resources (books, furniture, technology, etc.)</i></b>	Micro-grant staff purchases, or program purchases and seeks reimbursement	any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• <i>If requesting reimbursement:</i> Check Request and Receipts or front and back of processed check</li> <li>• <i>If requesting technology:</i> Electronic Device Waiver</li> </ul>
<b><i>Curriculum, Assessments, and Screening Tools</i></b>	Micro-grant staff purchases, or program purchases and seeks reimbursement	any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• <i>If requesting reimbursement:</i> Check Request and Receipts or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b><i>Membership in Professional Organizations</i></b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	any professional organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipt or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b><i>Training, Conferences, and Credit-based Education</i></b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	Any <i>Note: childcare start-up classes, SBS/SIDS, CPR/First Aid, make and takes are not approved for micro-grant use</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipt or front and back of processed check</li> <li>• Registry Event ID or certificates for each attendee of training</li> <li>• Transcript or grade report for credit-based education</li> </ul>

<b>Additional Technical Assistance</b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	PDAS-approved consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipt or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b>Registry certificates</b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	The Registry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipt or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b>Accreditation fees</b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	YoungStar-recognized accrediting bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipt or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b>Staff or Substitute Time</b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Time sheet</li> <li>• Pay stubs or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b>Contracted services (strategic planning consultants, playscape designs, artists, etc.)</b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipt or front and back of processed check</li> </ul>
<b>Improvements to the Physical Environment (materials and labor)</b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	licensed contractor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipt or front and back of processed check</li> <li>• Construction/Renovation form</li> </ul>
<b>Improvements to the Physical Environment (materials only)</b>	Program purchases and seeks reimbursement	any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase Plan</li> <li>• Check Request</li> <li>• Receipt or front and back of processed check</li> <li>• Construction/Renovation form</li> </ul>

**For additional information, contact your Technical Consultant or the Micro-Grant Program:**

YoungStar Micro-Grant Program  
Supporting Families Together

Association



700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 6 Madison, WI 53711  
[microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org](mailto:microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org)  
 (608)443-4310