



Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) in Minnesota

The Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program in Minnesota helps you take advantage of many fun opportunities with your child.

All ECFE programs are designed to engage parents and families in their child's growth and development. You can also connect with other families in your community for friendship and support.



ECFE Eligibility and Programs

ECFE programs are available to all Minnesota expectant parents, new parents and relatives of children from birth to kindergarten enrollment. You can find the program in your neighborhood by contacting your local school district's community education department.

A typical ECFE program includes parent/child time with activities, stories, and parent-only discussion groups that take place at the same time as the child-only experiences. Additional services include special family events, home visiting and connections to other community resources. Licensed teachers provide high-quality services in all aspects of the program.

By taking part in ECFE, you can learn how to support your child as he or she grows:

- **Infant programming** often teaches about how babies grow, how the brain develops and how to support brain development in your infant. Learn how to keep your baby safe and some ways for you and your baby to have fun.
- **Toddler programming** may be a great help to get support for the new issues that toddlerhood brings your family. Toddlers often experiment with independence while maintaining a need for security and predictability. Your toddler may need lots of physical activity and begin to talk with you.
- **Preschooler programming** typically includes information about your preschooler's needs, how the brain develops and how to help your child get ready for kindergarten. As a parent of a preschooler, you have new opportunities to support your child's growth and learning.

Benefits of ECFE Programs

Minnesota parents often comment how important ECFE has been to their lives. Parents report how ECFE has linked them with other families and community resources, helped them better understand their infant's needs and development, and connected them with their school district.

Some of the benefits reported include:

- A greater sense of control over one's life
- Higher self-esteem and coping
- Better problem solving
- Increased knowledge of child development
- Increased recognition of a parent's role as the child's teacher
- Better techniques to control children's behavior
- Less use of restrictive behavior and severe punishment

To connect with your local ECFE program, contact your school district's community education department.

This content was adapted from an article by Eileen Nelson with Minnesota Department of Education, which originally appeared on the former Minnesota Parents Know website.