



## Helpful Tips for Using the Cost Estimation Tool

The Cost Estimation Tool is designed for existing or potential Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grantee representatives, together with their child care partners. It provides a structured approach to identifying the services and costs that should be added to the partner's program to meet the comprehensive requirements of Early Head Start. Explore the tool in full at [link](#).

Discussing costs and payments is a critical step in building your partnership. Like negotiating your provider agreement, this takes thoughtful preparation and a commitment to working together. Use the questions and answers below to get started.

### How can we prepare to use the tool?

We suggest that you and your partners review the tool before scheduling a time to complete it. Consider printing a PDF copy of the tool. Press the "Generate Report" button within the tool to review the questions asked throughout the process. It allows teams to gather the data they'll need to answer the questions. You may decide to meet together to review the tool and then schedule a different time to answer the questions.

### How long will it take to use the tool?

It may take you about two hours to complete the tool. Some questions can be skipped if they don't apply to your partnership; however, you may want to answer the question with a zero so that you know you've reviewed all questions. Remember, you don't have to complete this in one sitting.

### Should I use this tool with each of my partners?

It's possible that some of your partners provide the same core child care services and will be adding the same layers of Early Head Start services. If that is the case, it's possible that you can estimate the costs for each layer and that those costs will apply to all similar partners.

However, in most cases, we believe an individualized approach will strengthen your partnerships. Together, you'll discover what each of you will bring to the partnership and be sure to address services and costs that will be uniquely added by your partner.

### Are we required to use this tool?

No, this is just one resource available for your use. There are a variety of methods and resources available to help programs estimate the costs of high quality early care and education. Programs should choose whatever method works best for their individual needs and context.

### How can this tool assist me in developing my budget?

It's important to complete the tool in full to ensure you get accurate information about your partnership. Once you've answered all the questions, the final report compiles costs for services in each layer that can be added to line items within your EHS-CCP budget.

### What if our costs seem too low or too high?

There could be a variety of reasons for this. If there's a discrepancy between your assumptions and what the tool indicates, it may be that you've added costs for services already covered with child care resources, which could inflate your costs. It also may be that you've under-estimated costs. Perhaps you haven't identified all the costs for fully providing comprehensive services, such as costs associated with reducing group size or addressing inadequate staff to child ratios. You can always review your assumptions in the tool and generate a new report.

### Who do I contact for help?

If you need further assistance, contact your regional program specialist. Grantees may also reach out to other training and technical assistance (T/TA) providers, including regional T/TA providers or EHS-CCP implementation planners and fiscal consultants. To find one of these consultants, visit <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehs-ccp/implement.html>.