

**Provider Self-Assessment and Mentoring (PSAM)  
Purchasing Grant Program  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. What is the Provider Self-Assessment and Mentoring (PSAM) Purchasing Grant Program?**

The PSAM Purchasing Grant Program is a program that will let qualified child care agencies obtain ***certain kinds of materials, equipment and/or furnishings*** to help them meet some of the requirements of the Environment Rating Scales and improve the quality of their programs.

**2. Which child care agencies qualify for this program?**

To ***qualify*** for the PSAM Purchasing Grant Program a child care agency must:

- Be a Tennessee Department of Human Services licensed and approved facility that has been licensed for at least one year, has signed a PSAM Provider Agreement, and is actively participating in PSAM services, AND
- Have at least one child enrolled who is receiving services through the Child Care Certificate Program, AND
- Be in good standing with DHS Programs (Licensing, Child Care Certificate, Child and Adult Care Food Program)
  - To be in good standing with DHS Licensing, there must not be any litigation procedures currently being taken against the child care agency, including:
    - probation
    - denial, suspension, or revocation of license
    - civil penalties

**3. How does an agency apply for a PSAM Purchasing Grant?**

To apply for a PSAM Purchasing Grant, the agency and the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Specialist will complete an application and order form for items the agency needs based on the agency's program assessment and program improvement plan.

**4. When can an agency apply?**

All child care agency licenses expire on the last day of the month. Providers whose license expired on June 30, 2008 are the first to be eligible for the PSAM Purchasing Grant program. Their new licensing cycle

began July 1, 2008. Therefore, if the license expires in June 2008, or later, they are eligible to be considered for the program.

Agencies with licenses that expired earlier than June 2008 may be considered for the program when their license is renewed in 2009. We expect that PSAM Services and the PSAM Purchasing Grant program will be ongoing and that funds will be available for all child care providers who qualify.

**5. How often can an agency apply?**

Qualified child care agencies may apply one time during each licensing renewal year.

**6. How much money is available in the purchasing grants?**

Any agency that is eligible for a PSAM Purchasing Grant may order up to \$2000 in materials, equipment, and/or furnishings regardless of the size of the facility or the number of children served.

**7. Will DHS send the agency a check to purchase the items?**

No, DHS Purchasing Grant Program staff will order the materials, equipment, and furnishings requested and have them shipped directly from the vendor to the child care agency.

**8. How does an agency decide what to purchase?**

A CCR&R Specialist will work with the Director/Provider to review the agency's Report Card and assessment results along with their program improvement goals and together decide what to order to improve the quality of their program.

**9. What can an agency order from the PSAM Grant Program?**

PSAM Purchasing Grants can be used to purchase items needed based on the agency's most recent assessment results. Following are examples of products that can be ordered through the PSAM Purchasing Grant Program:

- blocks and block accessories
- books and pictures
- soft pillows, toys, and area rugs
- art and craft materials
- dramatic or dress up play materials and dolls

- fine motor materials
- math and number materials
- music and movement materials
- nature and science materials
- sensory play materials
- furnishings for play, learning, relaxation, comfort, and routine care including tables, chairs, shelves, cribs
- portable outdoor play equipment (but **not stationary** playground equipment or resilient surfacing)

PSAM Purchasing Grants **cannot** be used for:

- capital improvements like building additions
- kitchen or office equipment
- computers, TVs or VCRs
- improvements to meet basic licensing requirements, including fire, environmental, or ADA standards

## 10. How will the application be processed?

When the application and order forms are received, purchasing grant program staff at DHS and the University of Tennessee College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (UT-SWORPS) will review and process the purchasing requests.

The reviewers will consider:

- the size and type of the agency
- the type and amount of materials
- whether these items would help the agency meet the requirements of the Environment Rating Scales

## 11. What if the purchasing grant program staff has questions about the order?

If a reviewer has questions about any of the items in the order, the purchasing grant program staff will contact the CCR&R Specialist to discuss the item and why it was requested as part of the order. If necessary, the CCR&R Specialist will contact the agency to decide how to address the reviewer's concerns.

**12. Does an agency have to participate in the STAR-Quality Program or have stars to be eligible for the PSAM Purchasing Grant Program?**

No, any child care agency that meets the eligibility requirements for the PSAM Purchasing Grant Program can apply. An agency does not have to be in the Star-Quality Program or have stars in order to apply.

**13. What will happen if some items on the PSAM Purchasing Grant order are not available at the time they are ordered?**

All reasonable efforts will be made to purchase the items that have been requested. However, in the event items are not available, those items will not be ordered.

**14. What are the responsibilities of the agency once the items are received?**

Any agency that receives materials, equipment and/or furnishings purchased by the PSAM Purchasing Grant Program must also:

- agree to use all merchandise purchased with a PSAM Purchasing Grant in the child care agency listed in the application
- agree to keep all packing slips from all orders and mail these within two business days of receipt of the order to UT-SWORPS
- agree to continue to participate in PSAM with CCR&R