

Investing in RESPs



A Smart Way to Save for a Child's Education

A Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) is designed to help you save for post-secondary education for a child (the beneficiary). It offers flexibility, tax-deferred income and investment growth, and contributions are eligible for government grants.

Below are some commonly asked questions, and our answers, on RESPs. For more information, contact your credit union to speak with an investment advisor.

What are the Advantages of an RESP?

By opening an RESP and making regular contributions, the beneficiary may qualify for government grants such as the Canada Education Savings Grant, the Canada Learning Bond and provincial grants. The income earned within the plan is tax-sheltered until withdrawn. When income and grants are withdrawn for the beneficiary for educational assistance, he or she will be a student and likely to have a low marginal tax rate.

How Many Years Can I Contribute to an RESP?

For an individual plan, you can make contributions to an RESP for 31 years, following the year the RESP is opened (35 years for a beneficiary eligible for the Disability Tax Credit). Contributions under a family plan must cease upon the beneficiary turning 31. Note, however, that to qualify for government grants on an individual or family plan, you need to make contributions by the end of the year the beneficiary turns 17.

How Much Can I Contribute to an RESP?

The lifetime contribution limit for an RESP is \$50,000 per beneficiary.

How Much Grant Money is Available?

The amount of the grants received from federal and provincial governments will depend on a number of factors:

- How much you contribute.
- When you contribute—regular contributions beginning early in a beneficiary's life benefit from compounding growth on government grants.
- Where you live—not all provincial governments provide grants.
- Your family income (for Canada Learning Bond and additional CESG grant).

The following is an overview of the government grants available.

CANADA EDUCATION SAVINGS GRANT (CESG)

All children under the age of 18* who are resident in Canada automatically accumulate CESG contribution room. The Federal government contributes 20% annually on the first \$2,500 deposited into an RESP to the end of the year in which the beneficiary attains age 17*. The annual grant maximum is \$500 per beneficiary, or \$1,000 when the beneficiary has unused CESG contribution room. The lifetime CESG maximum is \$7,200 per beneficiary.

Some families are eligible for additional CESG on contributions, depending on family income.

** Some restrictions apply for RESP beneficiaries aged 16 and 17.*

20%
ANNUALLY

CANADA LEARNING BOND (CLB)

The CLB is available to children born on or after January 1, 2004. Eligible beneficiaries receive an initial grant of \$500 and subsequent grants of \$100 per year of eligibility. An RESP must be opened to receive the CLB; however, there is no requirement to make contributions to the RESP to receive the CLB. Eligibility for the CLB is determined by the child's family's net income. The lifetime CLB maximum is \$2,000 per beneficiary.



BRITISH COLUMBIA TRAINING AND EDUCATION SAVINGS GRANT (BCTESG)

The BCTESG is a one-time grant of \$1,200 paid directly to an RESP where the eligible child is a beneficiary. There is no requirement to make contributions to the RESP to receive the grant. Instead, the following conditions must be met:

- The beneficiary and a parent/guardian of the beneficiary is a resident of British Columbia at the time the application is completed.
- The beneficiary is born on or after January 1, 2006 and the application is completed between the day the beneficiary turns 6 and the day before the child turns 9.

Note that the eligibility deadline has been extended for children born in 2006 to August 14, 2019. For children born in 2007, 2008 and before August 15, 2009, the deadline is extended to August 14, 2018. For children born on August 15, 2009 or later, the deadline is the day before the beneficiary's 9th birthday.

SASKATCHEWAN ADVANTAGE GRANT FOR EDUCATION SAVINGS (SAGES GRANT)

The government of Saskatchewan has temporarily suspended SAGES effective January 1, 2018.

QUEBEC EDUCATION SAVINGS INCENTIVE (QESI)

The Quebec government provides beneficiaries who are residents of Quebec with an annual 10% grant on the first \$2,500 deposited into an RESP to the end of the year in which the beneficiary attains age 17, and the lifetime maximum of \$3,600 per beneficiary. The annual QESI Grant maximum is \$250 per beneficiary or \$500 when the beneficiary has unused QESI Grant room. Some families are eligible for additional QESI on contributions, depending on family income.

**Some restrictions apply for RESP beneficiaries age 16 and 17.*

Who Owns the Funds in the RESP?

The subscriber is the person who opens the RESP and is the registered owner of the plan. A plan can be opened by an individual—a parent, grandparent, family friend—or joint subscribers who are spouses—two parents or two grandparents, for example.

The contributions made by the subscriber, belong to the subscriber, though he/she may gift these contributions to the beneficiary/ies.

Can I Create One RESP for Multiple Beneficiaries?

Yes, however you will need to set up a specific type of RESP called a Family Plan. There is a limit of one beneficiary per plan, except under a Family Plan, which provides for multiple beneficiaries. The beneficiaries of a Family Plan must be a sibling of every other beneficiary and must be related to the subscriber(s) by blood relationship or adoption (this includes step children and step grandchildren).

Which Post-Secondary Institutions Qualify for EAPs?

Most Canadian post-secondary institutions and programs, including correspondence courses, qualify for the purpose of receiving RESP Educational Assistance Payments. Certain foreign post-secondary institutions may also qualify.

What Happens When a Beneficiary Pursues Post-Secondary Education?

The subscriber can request educational assistance payments to cover expenses for the RESP beneficiary—such as tuition fees, textbooks, room and board—associated with attending a qualifying post-secondary educational program. These payments are taxable to the beneficiary at his or her marginal tax rate.

How Many Years Does the Beneficiary Have to Use the RESP Funds?

An RESP must be terminated by the end of the 35th year following the year the RESP was opened. The mandatory termination date for an RESP with a beneficiary eligible for the disability tax credit is the 40th year following the year the RESP was opened.

What Happens if an RESP Beneficiary Does Not Pursue a Post-Secondary Education?

If the beneficiary opts not to pursue post-secondary education, there are several options for the RESP.

Note: Where an RESP has reached the mandatory termination date, #3 becomes the only option available.

- 1) **Change the plan beneficiary*.**
- 2) **Transfer funds to another RESP*.**
- 3) **Collapse the plan*.**

If you choose #3 you will have to return the unused government grants (i.e. CESG, CLB, BCTESG, SAGES Grant and QESI grants). The RESP contributions, which belong to the subscriber, can be withdrawn without penalty. The following options are available for disbursement of income earned within the plan:

- Transfer funds to the subscriber's RRSP or to a spousal RRSP*
- Withdraw the funds, subject to withholding tax*
- Transfer funds to the Designated Educational Institution

**Some restrictions and/or penalties may apply.*

Can I Rollover RESP Investment Income into an RDSP?

Investment income earned in an RESP can be transferred on a tax-deferred basis to a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) if the plans share a common beneficiary.*

** Subject to certain conditions.*



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