

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIP

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: APPLICATION FOR PATHWAY I - EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIPS

WHAT IS AN EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIP?

A Pathway I - Early Learning Scholarship can help you pay for high-quality child care and early education to help your child get ready for school. The scholarship money will be paid directly to the child care or early education program of your choice. A scholarship may be used at a three or four Star Parent Aware rated program. Parent Aware is a rating tool to help parents select high-quality child care and early education programs. For more information about Parent Aware, go to <http://www.parentaware.org>.

WHERE CAN MY CHILD USE A SCHOLARSHIP?

You may use your Pathway I - Early Learning Scholarship at any eligible child care or early education program in Minnesota with a **three or four star Parent Aware Rating**. It is expected that the scholarship is used for regularly scheduled attendance.

You do not have to choose a program when you apply for a scholarship. If you need help choosing a program, please contact your scholarship Regional Administrator listed below. If your child is currently attending a program but you would like to explore other options, they can help you with this as well.

Scholarship amounts are based on the Parent Aware rating level of the program you choose. The chart below shows the scholarship amount based on the rating level:

Parent Aware Program Rating Level	Scholarship Award
Four-Star Parent Aware Rating	Up to \$7,500 per child
Three-Star Parent Aware Rating	Up to \$5,000 per child

Effective July 1, 2016, programs must have a Parent Aware rating of 3 or 4 stars to be eligible to receive scholarships. Scholarships awarded prior to July 1, 2016 may continue to be used at lesser rated programs, at the maximum award below, until the scholarship renews.

One or Two-Star Parent Aware Rating	Up to \$4,000 per child
Signed up for Parent Aware, but has not received a Star Rating	Up to \$3,000 per child

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply for a Pathway I - Early Learning Scholarship for your child, follow these steps:

- Complete the information on pages 1-3. Information that is required is marked with an asterisk.
- Read and sign the program agreement and consent to release information on pages 4-6.
- Mail the completed application (pages 1-5 with required documentation) to the Regional Administrator in your area.

IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE?

To qualify for a **Pathway I - Early Learning Scholarship**, you must be the parent, legal guardian or agency worker of the child/ren and your family must meet the following requirements. **The application for children in foster care must be signed and submitted by the agency worker.**

LOCATION

You must have a Minnesota address in order to be eligible for scholarships.

INCOME

You must provide proof that:

- Your child currently participates in one of the following programs:
 - Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
 - Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
 - Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program (FRLP)
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
 - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
 - Food Support (SNAP)
 - Head Start
 - Foster Care

< OR >

- Your family's income is equal to or less than 185% of the federal poverty level in the current calendar year. The chart below based on FY2015 poverty guidelines published in the Federal Register on January 25, 2016:

<input type="checkbox"/> Family Size	Gross Income	Family Size	Gross Income
2	\$29,637	6	\$60,273
3	\$37,296	7	\$67,951
4	\$44,955	8	\$75,647
5	\$52,614	9*	\$83,343

For family units of more than eight members, add \$7,696 for each *additional* member.

*See Family Size of 9 as an example.

Household members include all people living in the household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends) who share income and expenses. The applicant must include themselves and all children who live with them. Households do not include other people who are economically independent, such as a roommate.

CHILD

You must be the parent, legal guardian or agency worker and the family must have:

- A child who is age three or four by September 1, 2016, and who is not yet eligible for kindergarten.

OR

- A parent under the age of 21, who is pursuing a high school or general education equivalency diploma (GED), and who has a child age birth through age two. You must provide written proof that you are pursuing a high school diploma or GED. Written proof means a copy of an official letter (on letterhead) from the organization (on their letterhead) you are currently attending. Income requirements apply.

- A younger sibling may be eligible for a scholarship if they attend the same program as their three or four-year old sibling that has a scholarship as long as funds are available. (*“Sibling” is defined as a child who shares one or both parents through blood, marriage or adoption, including siblings as defined by the child’s tribal code or custom.*)

CHECKLIST TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Review the checklist below to make sure you have everything you need for your application:

- Completed all required areas of the scholarship application. The sections marked with an asterisk (*) are required. All other information is optional.
- Staple all supporting documents to the back of the scholarship application. Supporting documents include:
 - Income verification:
 - Proof of child’s participation in a program listed on page 3.
 - OR
 - Proof of income.
 - If you are under 21 and requesting a scholarship for a child ages birth through age two:
 - Written proof that you are pursuing a high school diploma or GED – Copy of an official letter (on letterhead) from the organization you are currently attending.
- Carefully read the Agreement and Consent section, including the agreement to comply with program requirements, consent to release information, and to participate in the evaluation.
- Carefully read the Tennessen Warning.
- Initial, sign and date the scholarship application.
- Double check your scholarship application. Missing items may cause a delay. Keep a copy of the scholarship application and attachments for your own records.
- For children in foster care, the foster care agency worker must sign the application and indicate the resident school district for the child or children in the family.

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Mail or bring the completed application and all other required documents to the Regional Administrator at the location listed below. Faxed or emailed applications will not be considered for a scholarship. The Regional Administrator will send you a letter to let you know if your child or children qualify for an Early Learning Scholarship. If you have questions, contact the Regional Administrator.

SCHOLARSHIP/REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR: KAREN DEBOER 507-376-4195 EXT 231

Mail completed Early Learning Scholarship Applications to:

**Early Learning Scholarship Program
Southwestern MN Opportunity Council, Inc.
PO Box 787 1106 3rd Avenue
Worthington MN 56187**

DATA SHARING CONSENT

To approve your application and process your scholarship, we must share certain information you provide to us with other entities:

Who	What	Why	Required/ Optional
Child care / early education program where child is enrolled.	Child's name, address, demographic, parent education, and income information from application, eligibility for and the amount of any Early Learning Scholarship awarded.	To allow the scholarship to be paid to a child care or early education program on child's behalf.	Required Consent
Child's local school district	Child's name, address, date of birth, gender, as well as parent/ guardian's name & address as listed on application.	To assign child a unique Statewide Student Identification (SSID) number that will be used by the Regional Administrator and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to identify child and validate scholarship payments.	Required Consent
Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)	Child's name, address, demographic, parent education, and income information from scholarship application, child's eligibility for and amount of Early Learning Scholarship award, Parent-Aware rated program where child is enrolled, child's SSID number, and compliance with program requirements.	To determine child's eligibility for Pathway I - Early Learning Scholarship and to manage statewide scholarship program.	Required Consent
Scholarship Program Evaluator	Information from child's Pathway I - Early Learning Scholarship application, child's eligibility for and the amount of Early Learning Scholarship award, and the program where child is enrolled. (No public report will include specific identifying information about any individual child.)	To analyze how scholarship funds are spent, how families are informed about the scholarship program, and the program's impact on child development or school readiness.	Optional Consent

- All entities are bound by Minnesota's data practices and privacy laws when working with any information shared through this program.
- Information to be released does not include supporting documents attached to application.

Required Consent: I do not have to consent to this sharing of my information, but if I choose not to, I understand that my child/children will not be able to participate in the Pathway I - Early Learning Scholarship Program.

Optional Consent: Refusal to consent to participate in the evaluation does not impact my eligibility to receive a Pathway I - Early Learning Scholarship.