Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway I Application

Instructions

What is an Early Learning Scholarship?
An Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway I can help your child attend high-quality child care and early education to help your child get ready for kindergarten. The scholarship money will be paid directly to the program of your choice that is participating in Parent Aware. Parent Aware is a rating tool to help parents select high-quality early childhood programs. For more information, visit the Parent Aware website (ParentAware.org).

Note: Children may only receive one scholarship within a 12-month period and cannot receive a Pathway I and Pathway II scholarship at the same time.

Where can my child use a scholarship?
You may use your Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway I at any Parent Aware-participating early childhood program in Minnesota that your child attends on a regular basis.

Your child does not need to be enrolled in or attending a program at the time you apply for an Early Learning Scholarship. If you need help locating qualifying programs, please contact your scholarship Area Administrator or Parent Aware at 888-291-9811 or visit the Parent Aware website (ParentAware.org). 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Aware Program Rating Level</th>
<th>Scholarship Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Aware Four-Star Rating</td>
<td>Up to $7,500 per child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Aware Three-Star Rating</td>
<td>Up to $5,000 per child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Aware One- or Two-Star Rating*</td>
<td>Up to $4,000 per child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in a Full-Rating Pathway Cohort*</td>
<td>Up to $3,000 per child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Starting July 1, 2020, Early Learning Scholarships – Pathway I can only be used at programs with a Three- or Four-Star Rating.

Is my child eligible?
Early Learning Scholarships are available for children who are age 3 or 4 on September 1 and are not yet enrolled in kindergarten. Below is a chart you can use to determine if a child is eligible for an Early Learning Scholarship, given the child’s age on September 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age on September 1, 2019</th>
<th>Is the child eligible for a scholarship in state fiscal year 2020?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 years old</td>
<td>No, child is no longer age eligible for a scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years old</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years old</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-2 years old</td>
<td>No, under age unless the child meets criteria on the following page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Children birth to 5 years old are eligible if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- A parent of the child is under the age of 21 and currently pursuing a high school or general education equivalency diploma (GED)*; or
- The child is in foster care or in need of child protective services*; or
- The family has experienced homelessness in the previous 24 months*; or
- The child has a sibling who has already been awarded a scholarship and attends the same program, as long as funds are available.

Note: Families must also meet income eligibility requirements after meeting at least one of the criteria above. Awards are made as long as funds are available.

*Priority for funding is given to children who meet these eligibility criteria.

**Additional Requirements**

Only a parent or legal guardian of the child/children may apply for an Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway I, and your family must meet the following requirements:

- **Location:** You must have a Minnesota address (residing in the state of Minnesota).
- **Income:** You must have a family income equal to or less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level or be receiving certain publicly funded assistance in an approved state or federal public assistance program.

The chart below is based on the poverty guidelines published in the Federal Register on February 1, 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Gross Income</th>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Gross Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$31,283.50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$63,991.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$39,460.50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$72,168.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$47,637.50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$80,345.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$55,814.50</td>
<td>9**</td>
<td>$88,522.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**For family units of more than nine members, add $8,177 for each additional member.

**How do I Apply for an Early Learning Scholarship?**

1. Complete the application in ink. Information that is required is marked with an asterisk (*).
2. Attach the required documentation to demonstrate your eligibility. See Page 4 for requirements for Option 1 (proof of participation in a publically funded program) or Option 2 (proof of income).
   - If applying in the parent under 21 eligibility category, the applicant must provide written proof of the parent’s pursuit of a high school diploma or GED on the letterhead of the education organization providing the course(s) of study the parent attends.
3. Read the Agreement to Comply with Requirements and Tenessen Warning.
4. Sign and date the application in ink.
5. Submit your original application to the Area Administrator by following the instructions provided at the bottom of the Application Checklist on the next page.

This form was created by the Minnesota Department of Education and must not be altered or adjusted in any way.

Funding provided by the Minnesota Department of Education using state funding to support administration of early learning scholarships, Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.165.

Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway I Application, Revised 6/26/19
Application Checklist

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

- Complete all required areas of the application. The items marked with an asterisk (*) are required. All other information is optional.
- Complete this form in ink.
- Carefully read each line of the Agreement to Comply with Requirements section and the Tennessen Warning.
- Sign and date the application in ink.
  - Optional: Read the agreement to participate in the evaluation and initial to give consent.
- Staple all supporting documents to the back of the application. Supporting documents include:
  - For Option 1: Documentation demonstrating current participation in one of the approved public programs listed on Page 4.
  - For Option 2: Income documentation in addition to the Option 2 Income Verification Form on Page 5 of the application.
    - If none of the adult members of your household have any income, the Household Declaration of No Income form on Page 12 must be completed by one adult and submitted with your application.
  - If you are a teen parent under 21 and are pursuing a high school diploma or GED, you must provide written proof of your pursuit of a high school diploma or GED on the letterhead of the educational organization providing the course(s) of study you attend.
- Mail or bring the original application to the Area Administrator listed below. Photocopies or faxes will not be accepted.
- Keep at least one copy of the application and attachments for your own records.

Submit the Application: Area Administrator Details

Mail or bring your completed, original application to:

Think Small
ATTN: Early Learning Scholarships
10 Yorkton Court
Saint Paul, MN 55117

Phone: 651-641-6604

The Area Administrator will send you a letter to let you know the status of your child’s or children’s Early Learning Scholarship – Pathway I. If you have questions, contact the Area Administrator.

Missing documentation such as proof of program participation or income, or missing signatures may cause a delay.