



Early Learning Scholarships Opportunity

“This project is made possible by funding received through Grant Number 90TP0079-01, of the USDHHS-Administration for Children and Families, Office of Early Childhood; Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Nebraska Department of Education; and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, following grant requirements of 70% federal funding with 30% match from state and private resources.”

Purpose

The Early Learning Scholarships program is intended to support working families in meeting the high cost of quality care for children 6 weeks - 6 years in full day/full year settings (not attending kindergarten) or attending the Program due to a need for care that extends beyond the hours provided by a publicly funded program (i.e. wrapping hours around Head Start or Public Preschool).

Support includes increasing access to high quality care for young children in low and moderate earning families in Nebraska. Funding is being made available through communities to early childhood providers engaged in delivery of quality early learning environments and experiences for young children.

Community

Community Eligibility:

- Indicated interest in the Early Learning Scholarship opportunity on letter of interest and submitted by due date
- Developed a sustainability fundraising plan to continue scholarships after the PDG funds expire
- Based on all communities expressing interest in the ELS, the percentage of households whose income places them below the federal poverty line ranked highest by population level tiers
- Have at least one licensed child care provider that is nationally accredited and/or at a Step 1 (or higher) in the Step Up to Quality rating system with a plan to reach Step 2 or higher within 12 months

Community Requirements:

- Utilize the ECCC (or designated community coordinator) to manage and execute the requirements of the ELS opportunity which includes working with providers, families, data tracking and evaluation
- Have the ability to issue reimbursement to early learning scholarships to providers on a monthly basis

Providers

Provider Eligibility:

- Licensed and in good standing
- Enrolled in Step Up to Quality at Step 1 (or higher) and have a plan to achieve Step 2 or higher within 12 months, and/or nationally accredited
- Programs must have a contract (or be willing to obtain a contract) with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to provide care for families on child care subsidy and must be serving at least one child (or be willing to serve children) on subsidy
- Implementing or planning to implement social emotional curricula such as Pyramid Model, Second Steps, etc.
- Providing Infant/Toddler Care

Provider Requirements:

- Programs must have, or will agree to put a process into place, to assure that potentially eligible families are receiving state subsidized dollars before a scholarship is awarded
- Agree to provide and maintain systems for detailed records of tuition assistance provided to eligible families, including attendance records
- Agree to provide required data for a collective evaluation
- Agree to keep completed family applications for scholarship program current and on file for up to three years
- Agree to submit monthly reimbursement forms to Early Childhood Community Coordinator or designated community coordinator
- Regular communication with the Early Childhood Community Coordinator or designated community coordinator

Families/Children**Criteria for Children/Families:**

- Provide documentation that family does not qualify for full state subsidized care
- Enrolled and attending full day, full-year care or attending the Program due to a need for care that extends beyond the hours provided by a publicly funded program (i.e. wrapping hours around Head Start or Public Preschool)
- Child(ren) 6 weeks to six (6) years (Pre-K only)
- Fall into outlined income guidelines for under 200% Federal Poverty Guidelines (proof of income for all working adults in the household)

Funding

Funding amounts range from \$10,000 to \$65,000 per year depending on the population size and poverty level of the contracting community. Funds are intended to assist families at an average of \$5,000 per child. An Early Learning Scholarship Contract, or amendment if applicable, will be issued with the community's designated fiscal sponsor. Once this contract is in place, funds will be sent to the community's designated fiscal sponsor. An initial payment of two months, or 16.5%, of the total agreed upon amount will be sent as a start-up fund. The remaining amount will be based on reimbursement only and will be paid once all documentation is received and approved. The Fiscal Sponsor must establish a Memorandum of Understanding with each provider to receive funds for this activity. The Fiscal Sponsor will pay the provider(s) directly. If the Fiscal Sponsor is also the provider, required documentation for children served will be required for reimbursement.

Required Documents

- Submission of a community early childhood work plan that incorporates logic model components that align with Early Learning Scholarships
 - Logic model components create a road map for the project that include:
 - Inputs: The resources needed to implement the activities
 - Activities: What the program and its staff do with those resources
 - Outputs: Tangible products, capacities, or deliverables that result from the activities
 - Outcomes: Changes that occur in other people or conditions because of the activities and outputs
 - Impacts: (Sometimes)The most long-term outcomes
- Sustainability plan to continue Early Learning Scholarships after PDG funds expire
- Partnering provider form
- Scholarship application (if different from the one provided)
- Application(s) and letter(s) of commitment from child care providers

C4K+ Early Learning Scholarships Community Information

Communities will need to compile the data from their partnering providers who meet the criteria. Include (as attachments) each provider application.

Community Name: _____

Early Childhood Community Coordinator or Designated Community Coordinator: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Coordinator Email Address: _____

Coordinator/Office Phone Number: _____

Provider Information:

Provider 1 Information																																
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Mark One:</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Mark One:</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">_____ Licensed Child Care Center</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">_____ Licensed Family Home I</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">_____ Licensed Family Home II</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit</td> </tr> </table>	Mark One:	Mark One:	_____ Licensed Child Care Center	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit	_____ Licensed Family Home I	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit	_____ Licensed Family Home II	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="5" style="padding: 2px;">Number of children enrolled by age group:</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">Infant</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Toddler</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Preschool</th> <th style="width: 15%;">School Age</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Full-time</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Part-time</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				Number of children enrolled by age group:						Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age	Full-time					Part-time				
Mark One:	Mark One:																															
_____ Licensed Child Care Center	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit																															
_____ Licensed Family Home I	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit																															
_____ Licensed Family Home II	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit																															
Number of children enrolled by age group:																																
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age																												
Full-time																																
Part-time																																
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;">National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one): _____ Not Enrolled _____ Step 1 _____ Step 2 _____ Step 3 _____ Step 4 _____ Step 5 </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">National Accreditation: _____ Nationally Accredited </td> </tr> </table>	National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality	Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one): _____ Not Enrolled _____ Step 1 _____ Step 2 _____ Step 3 _____ Step 4 _____ Step 5	National Accreditation: _____ Nationally Accredited	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Total program enrollment: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"># of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"># of children receiving child care subsidy: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"># anticipated to receive ELS: _____</td> </tr> </table>				Total program enrollment: _____	# of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____	# of children receiving child care subsidy: _____	# anticipated to receive ELS: _____																					
National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality																																
Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one): _____ Not Enrolled _____ Step 1 _____ Step 2 _____ Step 3 _____ Step 4 _____ Step 5																																
National Accreditation: _____ Nationally Accredited																																
Total program enrollment: _____																																
# of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____																																
# of children receiving child care subsidy: _____																																
# anticipated to receive ELS: _____																																
<p>If not nationally accredited and/or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:</p> 																																

Provider 2 Information

Mark One:	Mark One:
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Child Care Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home I	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home II	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit

National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality

Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one):

Not Enrolled

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

National Accreditation:

Nationally Accredited

Number of children enrolled by age group:				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Full-time				
Part-time				

Total program enrollment: _____
of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____
of children receiving child care subsidy: _____
anticipated to receive ELS: _____

If not nationally accredited and/or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:

Provider 3 Information

Mark One:	Mark One:
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Child Care Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home I	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home II	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit

Number of children enrolled by age group:				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Full-time				
Part-time				

National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality

Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one):

Not Enrolled

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

National Accreditation:

Nationally Accredited

Total program enrollment: _____

of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____

of children receiving child care subsidy: _____

anticipated to receive ELS: _____

If not nationally accredited and/or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:

Provider 4 Information

Mark One:	Mark One:
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Child Care Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home I	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home II	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit

National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality

Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one):

- Not Enrolled
- Step 1
- Step 2
- Step 3
- Step 4
- Step 5

National Accreditation:

- Nationally Accredited

Number of children enrolled by age group:				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Full-time				
Part-time				

Total program enrollment: _____

of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____

of children receiving child care subsidy: _____

anticipated to receive ELS: _____

If not nationally accredited and/or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:

Provider 5 Information

Mark One:	Mark One:
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Child Care Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home I	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home II	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit

Number of children enrolled by age group:				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Full-time				
Part-time				

National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality

Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one):

Not Enrolled

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

National Accreditation:

Nationally Accredited

Total program enrollment: _____

of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____

of children receiving child care subsidy: _____

anticipated to receive ELS: _____

If not nationally accredited and/or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:

Provider 6 Information

Mark One:	Mark One:
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Child Care Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home I	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home II	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit

National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality

Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one):

- Not Enrolled
 Step 1
 Step 2
 Step 3
 Step 4
 Step 5

National Accreditation:

- Nationally Accredited

Number of children enrolled by age group:				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Full-time				
Part-time				

Total program enrollment: _____

of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____

of children receiving child care subsidy: _____

anticipated to receive ELS: _____

If not nationally accredited and/or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:

Provider 7 Information

Mark One:	Mark One:
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Child Care Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home I	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home II	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit

National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality

Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one):

Not Enrolled

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

National Accreditation:

Nationally Accredited

Number of children enrolled by age group:				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Full-time				
Part-time				

Total program enrollment: _____

of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____

of children receiving child care subsidy: _____

anticipated to receive ELS: _____

If not nationally accredited and/or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:

Provider 8 Information

Mark One:	Mark One:
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Child Care Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home I	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Licensed Family Home II	<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/> For profit

National Accreditation / Step Up to Quality

Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one):

Not Enrolled

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

National Accreditation:

Nationally Accredited

Number of children enrolled by age group:				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Full-time				
Part-time				

Total program enrollment: _____

of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____

of children receiving child care subsidy: _____

anticipated to receive ELS: _____

If not nationally accredited and/or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:

Provider Totals

<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Total number:</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Total number:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Licensed Child Care Center</td> <td>_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Licensed Family Home I</td> <td>_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Licensed Family Home II</td> <td>_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit</td> </tr> </table>	Total number:	Total number:	_____ Licensed Child Care Center	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit	_____ Licensed Family Home I	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit	_____ Licensed Family Home II	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="5" style="text-align: left;">Total number of children enrolled by age group:</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">Infant</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Toddler</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Preschool</th> <th style="width: 15%;">School Age</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Full-time</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Part-time</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Total number of children enrolled by age group:						Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age	Full-time					Part-time				
Total number:	Total number:																												
_____ Licensed Child Care Center	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit																												
_____ Licensed Family Home I	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit																												
_____ Licensed Family Home II	_____ Nonprofit _____ For profit																												
Total number of children enrolled by age group:																													
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age																									
Full-time																													
Part-time																													
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>Total Step Up to Quality Ratings:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Not Enrolled</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Step 1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Step 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Step 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Step 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Step 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Nationally Accredited:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ National Accreditation</td> </tr> </table>	Total Step Up to Quality Ratings:	_____ Not Enrolled	_____ Step 1	_____ Step 2	_____ Step 3	_____ Step 4	_____ Step 5	Total Nationally Accredited:	_____ National Accreditation	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>Total overall program enrollment: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total # of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total # of children receiving child care subsidy: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total # anticipated to receive ELS: _____</td> </tr> </table>	Total overall program enrollment: _____	Total # of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____	Total # of children receiving child care subsidy: _____	Total # anticipated to receive ELS: _____															
Total Step Up to Quality Ratings:																													
_____ Not Enrolled																													
_____ Step 1																													
_____ Step 2																													
_____ Step 3																													
_____ Step 4																													
_____ Step 5																													
Total Nationally Accredited:																													
_____ National Accreditation																													
Total overall program enrollment: _____																													
Total # of low to moderate income children served (not including subsidy): _____																													
Total # of children receiving child care subsidy: _____																													
Total # anticipated to receive ELS: _____																													

Community Information:

Does your community (collectively) or do specific programs within your community currently offer any assistance to families who are low income and struggle to pay their child care tuition? If so, please describe.

What is, or will be, your process to ensure that potentially eligible families are receiving state subsidized dollars before a scholarship is awarded?

What is the plan for your community to sustain an early learning scholarship program after the PDG funds are no longer available? Be as specific as possible on funders/funding and timelines for funding.

Provider Name / Logo
Early Learning Scholarship
Family Application

Date: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name(s): _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

of adults in your household _____ # of children in your household _____

Child(ren)'s Name (only those attending child care)	Birthdate	Age	Child Care Program Name/Provider	FT	PT	Monthly Rate

***Copy of child care subsidy determination letter must be included with application**

Reason for not qualifying for State Subsidy: Over income Graduate school Other (please explain below)

Monthly gross income (before taxes) from employment: Adult #1 \$ _____ Adult #2 \$ _____

How often are you paid? Adult #1 _____ Adult #2 _____

(Please attach last three paycheck stubs of each adult living in the household. These must be provided to process this application)

Please indicate additional source(s) of income by filling in the amount received per month:

State Assistance \$ _____ ADC Unemployment Other (please specify) _____

Child Support \$ _____ Alimony \$ _____ Food Stamps \$ _____ Housing Assistance \$ _____

Other (Private) \$ _____

Have you received Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) assistance within the last six months? Yes No

Additional information you would like to share to help us determine your tuition assistance:

The information I have provided above is accurate to the best of my knowledge. Any discrepancies will affect the tuition assistance I may or may not receive. I also understand that it is my obligation to inform the program of any and all income changes.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Early Learning Scholarship Eligibility

“This project is made possible by funding received through Grant Number 90TP0079-01, of the USDHHS-Administration for Children and Families, Office of Early Childhood; Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; Nebraska Department of Education; and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, following grant requirements of 70% federal funding with 30% match from state and private resources.”

Eligibility Requirements for Families and Children

Tuition assistance – Early Learning Scholarships (ELS) may be available to families who meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Children between the ages of 6 weeks – 6 years (Pre-Kindergarten).
- Children enrolled on a full day/full year (full-time) basis or attending based on extended day needs, wrapping hours around a publicly funded program (i.e. Head Start, public preschool).
- Parents must be either working or attending school. Or caregiver is incapacitated and unable to work or attend school, yet unable to care for the wellbeing of the child.
- Families must show a financial need and fall within the set income guidelines.
- Tuition assistance funds could be used to assist a family with a portion of their family fee obligation when on the DHHS child care subsidy sliding fee scale.

Child Care Subsidy Application and Determination:

- Families who may be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) must first make application to DHHS-CCS and if approved, use public funds prior to use of Early Learning Scholarship funds.
- Current income levels are found on the DHHS website, <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/392-000-200.pdf>. Income is not the only consideration and there may be circumstances that would enable the family to receive DHHS child care assistance, so making an application is an important step.
- Proof of denial of child care subsidy support may be required by the Child Care Program when it appears the family would be within the income range of qualifying for such subsidy.

Tuition Assistance – Use of Early Learning Scholarships (ELS):

- To be considered for tuition assistance families must:
 - Complete all sections of the Program’s tuition assistance application form
 - Provide three most recent paystubs for each working adult in the household
 - When a family has no income to document, that family must submit a signed statement declaring that they have no income.
 - It is expected that families with no documentable forms of income should be referred to local public assistance programs such as ADC, the Child Care Subsidy and SNAP in order to access other services the family may need.
 - Families could be assisted in making such applications by the Program.
 - Submit a copy of child care subsidy determination letter

Tuition assistance is determined based on the family’s monthly gross income (income before taxes, insurance, and any other deductions are subtracted), which includes both earned income (e.g. wages, which must be verified by paystubs) and unearned income (e.g. child support, Social Security payments, Unemployment Insurance). The family income is then compared to the total number of household

members (dependent care—typically parents and their children). If there are two parents in the family, both parents must be participating in one of the activities listed above.

Once a child of any age is awarded tuition assistance, they are eligible to continue to receive this assistance for a 12-month period. Families must reapply in order to be eligible for another 12-month period. Tuition assistance may be cancelled earlier if the family is unresponsive to requests for updated activity or if funding should no longer become available.

Income must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline based on family size. 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.

Programs may offer exceptions to these guidelines for tuition assistance due to unforeseen circumstances creating a severe hardship to the family. Exceptions must be documented.

Tuition Assistance Processing Guidelines:

- Families will receive a copy of an application from the qualifying Program to complete and return to the Program.
- A written communication will be shared with the parent/guardian explaining the decision regarding receipt or denial of tuition assistance, and if approved, will include the amount to be covered by the ELS Fund, and effective dates for coverage. A copy of this communication will be kept on file with the child care Program.
- If the number of eligible families is larger than funds available, the Program will track the child's age and months on a wait list. This information will be reviewed on a periodic basis through an evaluation process of the Early Learning Scholarship initiative.

Child Attendance:

The ELS Fund is intended to meet the needs of care for working families. Children should be enrolled on a full-time basis or attending the Program due to a need for care that extends beyond the hours provided by a publicly funded program (i.e. wrapping hours around Head Start or Public Preschool). Drop in or back-up care is defined as care that is used intermittently when the primary program the child attends is not available. Tuition assistance cannot be used for drop in or back-up child care.

Tuition assistance is to be awarded based on an enrollment status, not specific to attendance only. For consistency in application across all programs, if a child is not in attendance for five consecutive days and the family is unreachable after a minimum of three attempts, Programs may opt to cancel the assistance to the family. Additionally, if the child is receiving tuition assistance and is absent for more than 25 days in a year's time without ample notice to the Program, this also may prompt the Program to cancel the assistance to the family. If the participating community is aware of legitimate extenuating circumstances (such as a family or provider needing to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure or infection), community leads can make individual decisions about when it is appropriate to extend this attendance policy.

**Early Learning Scholarship
Application / Letter of Commitment
for Child Care Providers**

The goal of the Early Learning Scholarship is to increase access to high quality care for young children in low and moderate earning families in Nebraska. Funding is being made available to providers engaged in delivery of quality early learning environments and experiences for young children. Participating child care providers are providing ongoing learning, continuous quality improvement, and supporting their early childhood professional workforce through improvements in wages and benefits.

The Early Learning Scholarship is intended to support working families in meeting the high cost of quality care for children six weeks through age 6 (pre-school only) in full day/full year settings or attending the Program due to a need for care that extends beyond the hours provided by a publicly funded program (i.e. wrapping hours around Head Start or Public Preschool).

Eligibility for Child Care Center and Family Child Care Homes:

Child care providers interested in participating in the Early Learning Scholarship opportunity must meet the following qualifications:

- Licensed and in good standing
- Enrolled in Step Up to Quality and have a plan to achieve Step 2 or higher within 12 months, and/or nationally accredited
- Offer full-time, year-round services
- Programs must have a contract (or be willing to obtain a contract) with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to provide care for families on child care subsidy and must be serving at least one child (or be willing to serve children) on subsidy
- Implementing or planning to implement social emotional curricula such as Pyramid Model, Second Step, etc.
- Providing Infant/Toddler Care
- Programs must have or will agree to put a process in place to assure that potentially eligible families are receiving state subsidized dollars before a scholarship is awarded
- Agree to provide and maintain systems for detailed records of tuition assistance provided to eligible families, including attendance records
- Agree to provide required data for a collective evaluation
- Agree to keep completed family applications for scholarship program current and on file
- Agree to submit monthly reimbursement forms to Early Childhood Community Coordinator or designated community coordinator
- Regular communication with the Early Childhood Community Coordinator or designated community coordinator

Provider Name/Business Name: _____

Director/Primary Contact: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Provider Information

Mark One:	Mark One:
____ Licensed Child Care Center	____ Nonprofit ____ For profit
____ Licensed Family Home I	____ Nonprofit ____ For profit
____ Licensed Family Home II	____ Nonprofit ____ For profit

Step Up to Quality Rating (mark one):
____ Step 1
____ Step 2
____ Step 3
____ Step 4
____ Step 5
____ N/A (if Nationally Accredited)

Number of children enrolled by age group:				
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Full-time				
Part-time				

Years of service:
Total program enrollment:
Number of currently enrolled low-income children served (under 200% Federal Poverty Level) (not including subsidy):
Number of currently enrolled children receiving state child care subsidy:
Number of children currently receiving privately funded tuition assistance:
Number anticipated to receive Tuition Assistance/Early Learning Scholarship:

If not nationally accredited or at Step Up to Quality Step 2, please include narrative of plan to become nationally accredited OR reach Step 2 or higher in the next 12 months:

How will you provide information and outreach to attract low to moderate income working families?

What are your plans to continue to increase quality in your program?

Provider agrees to provide, as requested, aggregated data and information regarding:

- Numbers of low-income children served full-time (break out by ages served)
 - Retention of children in the program
 - Exit information on reason for leaving program
 - Annual parent satisfaction survey
- Race and ethnicity of children served
- Funding allocated per eligible child
- Kindergarten readiness/individual children’s development and growth.
- Level of quality as measured by Step Up to Quality
- Teacher pay and benefits
- Teacher education and training levels
- Teacher retention
 - Exit information
 - Satisfaction survey annually

Provider Commitment:

I/We agree to promote the Early Learning Scholarship to our stakeholders and agree that any funding from the Early Learning Scholarship will only be used for low-income children served by our program on a full-time basis. I/We agree to continue improving the quality of our program per the Step Up to Quality standards.

Director/Owner

Date

Early Learning Scholarship Provider Invitation Letter

«Contact_Person»

«Provider_Name»

«Adress»

«CityStateZIP»

Dear «Salutation»,

Would you like to have funds available to help more children from families in need of tuition assistance? With funding from the Preschool Development Grant and the Buffet Early Childhood Institute, the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation was able to launch Early Learning Scholarships to support early childhood education for children facing the greatest odds.

As an early childhood education provider in Nebraska, we are writing to let you know about the upcoming application phase for the Early Learning Scholarship 2021/2022. Children eligible for the Early Learning Scholarship tuition assistance must attend full-time or attend the Program due to a need for care that extends beyond the hours provided by a publicly funded program (i.e. wrapping hours around Head Start or Public Preschool) and be infants, toddlers, or preschoolers.

To be eligible to receive tuition assistance funding from the Early Learning Scholarship, **child care providers must be enrolled at a Step One or higher in the State's Step Up to Quality rating system (and/or nationally accredited).** Applications for Early Learning Scholarships will be due in _____ 2021. If you are not currently at Step 2, you will have 12 months to reach that level while participating in the Early Learning Scholarships.

Will you join us in creating opportunities for more of Nebraska's children to receive quality early childhood education? To join us, please complete the enclosed Letter of Commitment and return it to the Early Childhood Community Coordinator or other assigned Community Coordinator by _____, 2021. Please _____ with any questions about the Early Learning Scholarship.

Sincerely,

Early Learning Fund Provider FAQs

How can child care facilities use funding?

The Early Learning Scholarship will make funds available on a reimbursement basis to pre-qualified early childhood providers who are enrolled in [Nebraska's Step Up to Quality](#) rating system (and/or are nationally accredited) and are committed to accepting low-income families. Funding will be available to providers for tuition assistance for families who cannot afford some or all the tuition. The funding will be used to provide tuition assistance so more of Nebraska's infants, toddlers and preschoolers facing the greatest odds may attend quality early childhood programs.

Providers will determine how many additional infants, toddlers, and preschoolers from low-income families they will serve and what tuition assistance is needed for these children. Communities will request funding in an application to Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. Providers will work with their community coordinator to supply information for the community scholarship and request reimbursement funds.

Funding will be made on a reimbursement system based on the number of children the provider serves through the scholarship program. Any modifications to the award or number of children served needs to be submitted to the designated community coordinator in writing for approval.

What is the Federal Poverty Level?

The 2020 [Federal poverty level](#) (FPL) is a measure of income issued by the Department of Health and Human Services. Federal poverty levels are used to determine eligibility for certain programs and benefits.

The current FPL for a family of 4 is \$26,200/year. This is also considered 100% of the federal poverty level. Tuition assistance from the Early Learning Scholarship is available to eligible providers to help families who earn up to 200% of the FPL (for a family of 4 that is \$52,400/year).

If my child care facility has multiple locations, can I complete one application for all of them?

Providers must complete an Early Learning Scholarship application for each location/facility that is providing child care and meets the Early Learning Scholarship eligibility requirements. These applications will be submitted to the designated community coordinator.