

T.E.A.C.H.

Handbook and Organizer

weca Wisconsin Early
Childhood Association

2908 Marketplace Dr., Suite 101
Fitchburg, WI 53719

email: teach@wisconsinearlychildhood.org





TAKE US WITH YOU ON YOUR EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

Your T.E.A.C.H. scholarship experience is about to begin, and we are here to support you. Whether you're a student or program director who's sponsoring a student, you'll find information in this handbook that helps you get acclimated.

This handbook is designed to be a resource throughout your educational experience with T.E.A.C.H. In it, you'll find:

- A welcome letter
- A checklist to keep you organized
- Tips for success
- Information you need to know about the scholarship program
- Important forms and other resources
- Pockets for you to store copies of paperwork, including your contract, receipts, invoices, and copies of the things you've sent to us.

Another vital resource is your T.E.A.C.H. counselor. Think of your counselor as your own personal coach for T.E.A.C.H. success! Your counselor's card and contact information is enclosed. Reach out at any time via email, phone, or "chat" on the T.E.A.C.H. home page.

Welcome to T.E.A.C.H.!

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN is a licensed program of Child Care Services Association, North Carolina and is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

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WELCOME TO T.E.A.C.H.!

Congratulations on receiving a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. We look forward to supporting your efforts to advance your education in the field of early childhood.

You can count on the support of T.E.A.C.H., and if you work in a group program, the support of your employer to help you succeed. Most significant is financial support for tuition and books – the largest share comes from T.E.A.C.H. but you and your program are investing as well. It takes more than this, however, to succeed. Together with your sponsoring program, we also invest in your success by offering some paid time off to help you to manage school and work life, providing opportunities to implement new ideas with the children in your care, serving as a listening ear when the going gets tough, and awarding bonuses and/or a raise each time you complete a scholarship contract.

As you step into your coursework, you may have questions. As you progress, you may need help balancing work, school, and family commitments. For these needs and more, you've been assigned a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship counselor. (Past T.E.A.C.H. participants have said their counselors are "wonderful," "available" and that they "helped me have the confidence to get it done.") Think of your counselor as your personal coach for school success. Your counselor's name and contact information is listed on a card enclosed with this packet. Please stay in contact.

In the meantime, start working on your checklist. It's a critical first step and it's contained in this handbook, along with other valuable information and resources. Also, note that this handbook includes some pockets for storing important paperwork, including copies of your contract, forms you send to us, receipts and invoices.

Keep in touch. We wish you every success!

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is "Nar Doumbya" and the second is "Mary Erickson-Gerbig".

Nar Doumbya and Mary Erickson-Gerbig
Co-Directors, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN

A SCHOLAR'S CHECKLIST FOR T.E.A.C.H. SUCCESS

- Read your contract thoroughly and review it with your director or supervisor. Send the original signed contract to T.E.A.C.H. along with your "Personal Responsibilities Agreement." Make sure you keep a copy of your contract for your own records. *No payments will be approved until your signed contract is received.*
- One month before school starts choose your classes carefully, make sure your course schedule is doable, and tell your counselor what you've chosen. Your counselor will send a Direct Billing Authorization (DBA) to the school, who will invoice T.E.A.C.H. and we will pay for your tuition, specific to the classes you've chosen. Because all schools must bill us for courses within the semester they are taken, pay attention to the deadlines for requesting a DBA (see page 11). *Without a DBA you will be paying your own tuition and requesting reimbursement. DBA is easier!*
- Register for the classes at a Wisconsin school of your choice. Typically this is done online through the school's website. To explore schools, check out T.E.A.C.H. on the WECA website; we have a map of colleges and universities that take you instantly to their website. *Talk to your counselor if you need help.*
- If you are pursuing a Credential scholarship:** Before class begins, go to The Registry website (the-registry.org) and print out the "Project Preparation Guide" for your specific credential. *This guide prepares you for the commission process, which occurs at the end of your credential coursework.*
- Talk with your supervisor to schedule your release time; be flexible if you can. 15 hours of release time is allowed per semester and will be reimbursed to your program at the rate of \$12.50 per hour.
- Send us the following reimbursement request forms on or before their deadline:
 - Form B for most reimbursements, including books and non-credit computer training. Include your receipts and the titles of the books purchased.
 - Form C for release time.
 - Form D for travel stipend.
 These forms must be received by the following deadlines in order to be reimbursed:
 - February 1 – reimbursement requests for previous fall semester
 - June 1 – reimbursement requests for previous spring semester
 - September 1 – reimbursement requests for previous summer semester
- At the end of the semester, fax or email a copy of your grades as soon as they are released by your school; unofficial transcripts are accepted. *Bonuses are not processed until we receive your grades.*
- Celebrate the end of a successful semester, you did it! If you are interested in continuing coursework, talk with your counselor.

TIPS FOR T.E.A.C.H. SUCCESS

Get to know your educational partners

As a T.E.A.C.H. scholar, you will be interacting with T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN, your preferred college and/or university, and The Registry. Here's a brief overview of each:

- **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN** is the scholarship program that pays for expenses related to the completion of an educational path. T.E.A.C.H. also provides you with career, academic and/or personal counseling services.
- **Colleges and Universities** are the institutions that provide the coursework and award credits, and when sufficient credits are earned, degrees – either an Associate or Bachelor's degree. Colleges and universities schedule when and where courses take place, and determine if numbers are sufficient to run a course. Many also provide career, academic and/or personal counseling.
- **The Registry** is the agency that awards credentials based on credits earned through coursework which culminates in a Registry Commission review process. The Registry also awards professional recognition certificates based on educational advancements and professional contributions.

You will likely interact with all three entities on your educational path. If you have questions or get confused, feel free to contact your T.E.A.C.H. counselor for clarification.

Maintain a balance of work, school & family

This will undoubtedly be your biggest challenge. If you are struggling, you are not alone!

- Your Scholarship Counselor is here to help you. Talk to your counselor when things get tough. She or he may have some specific ideas to support you, to guide decision-making, or to give you just the encouragement you need.
- Talk to your instructors; they want you to succeed, too. They may be able to connect you to support services on campus or offer other options.
- There are resources available to help you. A few can be found in the resource section of this handbook (these are also available on our website).

Stay in touch

Check out **T.E.A.C.H. Talk** (our monthly online newsletter) and **Semester Preview** (a print newsletter distributed 3X/year); each provides reminders, important notices and other useful information regarding the scholarship program. Visit our website for up-to-date information on early childhood education and T.E.A.C.H. news. This is where you can also find our **T.E.A.C.H. live chat** feature. Finally, make sure we always have a current e-mail address and phone number for you; if they change, please let us know. If your employment or student status changes, let us know that, too.



WELCOME TO T.E.A.C.H.!

By participating as a sponsor to a scholarship recipient(s), you're positively affecting your child care program in many ways. As your staff becomes more skilled, the quality of your program improves. Staff retention can grow as staff complete a post-contract commitment period. Compensation improves as T.E.A.C.H. scholars get completion bonuses and perhaps become eligible for REWARD stipends. Perhaps most importantly, as a sponsor, you're supporting the educational aspirations and needs of your staff. Staff morale and loyalty often grow as a result.

Despite these benefits, however, we know that accommodating a T.E.A.C.H. scholar while addressing the demands of the day-to-day operation of your program can be tough.

The T.E.A.C.H. counselor assigned to your employee is available to you as well. A card with the counselor's name is enclosed. Your counselor is available to you by phone, email and online "chat" via our website. Contact her anytime you have questions, are seeking advice, or want to voice your concerns.

To begin, start working on your checklist. It's a critical first step and it's contained in this handbook, along with a variety of other resources and a couple pockets for storing your copy of the contract and other useful paperwork.

Stay in touch. We wish you and your staff every success!

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is "Nar Doumbya" and the second is "Mary Erickson-Gerbig".

Nar Doumbya and Mary Erickson-Gerbig
Co-Directors, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN

A SPONSOR'S CHECKLIST FOR T.E.A.C.H. SUCCESS

- Adjust your budget to meet your financial responsibility to T.E.A.C.H., especially if you have multiple recipients on contract.
- Read the entire contract carefully before you sign it. We recommend that you review it along with your scholarship recipient.
- Send the signed contract to T.E.A.C.H. as soon as possible, keeping a copy for your records. The contract is not valid and no payments will be approved until the original signed contract and the Personal Responsibilities Agreement are received.
- Negotiate a plan for providing release time that meets your needs and that of the T.E.A.C.H. scholar. As per the contract, you are responsible for providing 15 hours of release time per semester, all of which will be reimbursed by T.E.A.C.H. More information about Release Time is found in this handbook.
- Establish a routine for checking in regularly with the scholarship recipient(s) that you sponsor. "How are classes going? What are you learning that you could share with others? Are you keeping up with your school work? Are required forms, grades, etc. being sent in on time? etc." Our experience has taught us that your support can make all the difference in a student's success!
- Provide the bonus or raise as agreed upon in the contract no later than the end of the recipient's commitment period. As in all professions, advancement in education deserves advancement in compensation. T.E.A.C.H. will provide a bonus upon completion of the contract and receipt of grades. You have discretion to determine when you will provide enhanced compensation: you may pay at the same time we do, or at one or two intervals during the commitment period, or upon completion of the commitment period.
- Celebrate your employee's accomplishment! Discuss opportunities for contract renewal.

GETTING THE BEST FROM T.E.A.C.H. FOR YOUR PROGRAM

Carefully plan for the appropriate number of scholarship participants your program can financially manage per fiscal year.

- The T.E.A.C.H. Cost Calculator helps you estimate your scholarship expenses; average expenses are updated annually. If you have questions after trying the calculator, please feel free to contact us. (<https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/t-e-a-c-h/t-e-a-c-h-cost-calculator/>)
- Consider how you will manage the release time you are required to provide each semester.
- Determine when, within your employee's commitment period, the raise or bonus will be awarded to each recipient. It is helpful to budget now so that money is available to the recipient at that time.
- Decide if every employee who is interested can participate in T.E.A.C.H. this year, or if your program can only support a limited number. Consider carefully who you want to invest in and how staff can participate in your decision-making process.
- If you are concerned about managing expenses, consider capping the amount of credits an employee can take per contract and/or advise employees to choose their college carefully as costs can vary widely from one college to another.
- Consult with YoungStar TC regarding use of micro-grants for scholarship expenses.

Balance participation in short- and long-term scholarship models.

- Credential scholarships are either 3- or 4-semester contracts that can be extended by one semester if needed. All other scholarships are one-year contracts.
- Earning an associate or bachelor's degree will involve multiple T.E.A.C.H. contracts via a contract renewal process. Each contract renewal provides an opportunity for you to re-assess your program's ability to continue support.

If applicable, make a plan to establish or amend existing wage scales to provide raises by or no later than the end of one's commitment period.

Approaches program directors have used include:

- Setting a wage scale in coordination with Registry levels; or
- Setting wage increase increments on number of credits completed per year.
- Alternate using the raise or bonus options. Some programs prefer this; others use the same option for every contract.

Note: The 3-8 "limited option" scholarship may be a good starting point for sponsorship; your contribution is less in this model and no bonus or raise is required.

Amend or establish personnel policies, procedures and/or union contracts to address educational expenses and release time. This requires adequate budgeting of professional development funds allocated to staff each year to pay for T.E.A.C.H. expenses.

Take note of what you gain in return for your engagement with T.E.A.C.H.:

- **Quality improvements** depend on knowledgeable staff who have higher levels of education.
- **Greater staff retention and program stability** are results of the commitment period T.E.A.C.H. scholars make to your program.
- **Cost savings** from reduced staff turnover are typical in programs participating in T.E.A.C.H.
- **Leadership emerges.** Your T.E.A.C.H. scholars serve as leaders when they mentor or serve as a role model for their colleagues, try out innovative ideas, and implement new practices.
- **Market appeal** of your program grows. You can capitalize on the link between your staff's growing educational qualifications and the boost in your program's quality.

HOW PAYMENT WORKS

Payment of Application Fee

Currently all new applications are placed on the T.E.A.C.H. waiting list. At the time of processing an application, a \$20 non-refundable application fee is requested to support application processing costs and to ensure commitment to the scholarship process prior to enrolling in courses. Applicants will be notified when it is time to send in this fee. Online payments are also accepted: <https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/t-e-a-c-h/t-e-a-c-h-online-payment-portal/>.

Payment of tuition

In most circumstances, the T.E.A.C.H. scholar arranges with her/his counselor for T.E.A.C.H. to pay the full tuition directly to the college or university. This is done through a process called “Direct Billing Authorization” (DBA). The T.E.A.C.H. program sends notification to the school that we will pay the full tuition on behalf of the scholarship recipient. The school then invoices us for payment.

Because T.E.A.C.H. must receive a bill from the school for courses within the semester in which the coursework takes place, T.E.A.C.H. scholars must let their counselor know as soon as possible which courses they are taking, preferably before classes begin. Make note of the following dates for cut-off to report coursework in order to get a DBA:

- For Fall semester activity – October 1
- For Spring semester activity – March 1
- For Summer semester activity – June 1

No DBAs will be sent on a student’s behalf after we receive the college bill. If direct billing has not been arranged with the counselor before the cut-off date, the student should immediately contact the counselor to discuss the option of paying the tuition and requesting reimbursement from T.E.A.C.H. or waiting until the class is offered again.

Additional Note: Submitting a DBA for a student is contingent upon receipt of grades for previous coursework taken while on T.E.A.C.H. contract. If grades from two semesters prior have not been submitted to T.E.A.C.H., direct billings will no longer be authorized.

T.E.A.C.H. will bill the sponsoring program for their share of tuition.

Payments of other supports: books, travel stipend, release time, credential fees

Books, release time, and a travel stipend all require a request for reimbursement: Forms B, C, and D respectively. These can be submitted anytime within the semester after expenses have been incurred. All book reimbursements (Form B) require receipts along with the name of the course and title of the text. Payment goes to the student. Release time reimbursement (Form C) requires both the student and program sponsor to sign. Payment goes to the program. The travel stipend (Form D) is paid at the time tuition is paid. Credential fees are paid as described later in this handbook.

It may be up to 6 weeks between submission of forms and receipt of reimbursements. It is important to note that the reimbursement amount is first applied to any outstanding balance you may have. As a result, your actual reimbursement may be less than indicated on your request form. This can make for a confusing

invoice. If you do not understand your invoice, please call your counselor and s/he will connect you to our Financial Department and someone will talk you through it.

Deadlines for submitting requests for reimbursements for any given semester:

- September 1 – for the previous Summer semester
- February 1 – for the previous Fall semester
- June 1 – for the previous Spring semester

At the end of a scholarship contract

When all scholarship-related processes are completed, the T.E.A.C.H. sponsor is notified by mail that the scholar has completed a contract.

T.E.A.C.H. will then award their bonus to the T.E.A.C.H. Scholar. The program sponsor will also be asked to provide a bonus or raise, with the flexibility of providing it no later than the date of completion of one's commitment period. All appropriate taxes must be taken out of any bonus check paid out of a center's payroll. Receipt of a bonus or raise is verified when documentation is submitted through the Information Update Form and a paycheck stub.

For those programs who've chosen the raise option, note that a raise cannot replace, but must be in addition to, cost of living or planned longevity raises. However, when a T.E.A.C.H. scholar is approaching a change in Registry level that will result in a raise per the center's salary scale, the raise required by T.E.A.C.H. may be used as an educational advancement raise.

GRADES AND COURSEWORK

It's important to know that as a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipient you must

- pass courses with a grade of C- or better and
- submit grade reports to your T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Counselor at the end of every semester

These requirements ensure consistency between T.E.A.C.H. and other agencies and educational institutions, many of which specify minimum grade requirements in order to count towards the degree or credential being pursued. A grade of C- typically meets those requirements, but we recommend that you learn the requirements of the school you are attending. The program you work in may also have expectations regarding grades, after all they are making a financial investment in you, too. Although grades are not a total picture of a student's gifts and abilities, they do reflect general performance and comprehension of material presented in a course.

When coursework is a struggle

At times it may be hard to keep up with the work in a class, or maybe you're having a hard time understanding the material or experiencing difficulties outside of the classroom. The best strategy is to reach out to your T.E.A.C.H. counselor and your course instructor. Both understand the challenges of working and going to school and can assist in pointing you to the support you need. Options might include one-on-one tutoring, forming a study group with other classmates, working in conjunction with a writing center or lab, and/or speaking with an academic advisor for guidance and advice pertaining to concerns that may be interfering with your academic and personal growth. Many of these services are free of charge to students.

Dropping courses

After speaking with your instructor or counselor, you may decide to drop a course and take it another semester. Depending on when in the semester the course was dropped, there may be a tuition charge for which you will be responsible. With your T.E.A.C.H. counselor and course instructor, you may also want to look into the possibility of taking an "Incomplete" in your course, which may give you additional time to complete your coursework.

Sending in your grades

Grade reports should be emailed, faxed or mailed to your counselor as soon as they are received at the end of the semester. Your grade report must have your name, your school, your coursework and grades clearly identified. Contact your school if you are having trouble obtaining your grades.

If grade reports are not sent in, your bonus is delayed and tuition payments for future courses that T.E.A.C.H. makes on your behalf may be delayed. Direct Billing Authorizations (DBA's) will not be sent to colleges for you if grades from two semesters prior have not been submitted. (For example, grades for the previous fall semester must be on file in our office before a DBA can be sent for the summer semester.) Without a DBA, you will need to pay tuition and submit for reimbursement rather than T.E.A.C.H. paying tuition directly to the college.

In the event of completing with a grade of less than C-

Give your counselor a call immediately; s/he will help you think through next steps. First, be assured that you will continue to be eligible for scholarship. Your counselor may suggest that if your grade was very close to a C-, you discuss it with the instructor to see if there is any additional work you could do to raise the grade. An advisor at the school may also have some suggestions. Many times schools will require you to retake the course if it was not completed with a grade of C- or better. If you want to contest the grade, we recommend you inquire about the appeal process at your school.

Courses completed with less than a C- will not count toward credits needed to complete your T.E.A.C.H. contract. The number of credits specified within your contract may need to be adjusted or you may need to take another course to complete the required number of credits.

T.E.A.C.H. can only pay for a course once, so if you need to retake the course, you will retake it at your expense.

ONLINE COURSES

Online coursework is appealing to many students because it's very self-directed and free from the constraints of having to travel to a classroom for lectures. However, this style of learning is not for everyone.

Here are few questions that may help you know if this learning style is right for you:

- Do you work well independently and manage your time well?
- Are you persistent and self-motivated?
- Do you need convenience and an adjustable schedule?
- Are you comfortable asking for clarification when you need more information?
- Are you skilled in using a computer?
- Are you comfortable working primarily with written words (on screen and in course books that you read independently)?

If you answered "yes" to most of these questions, this may be a great fit. If you had more "no" than "yes" answers, consider alternatives with your T.E.A.C.H. counselor.

How to succeed in online learning

- Make sure you have access to a computer and internet service. It is helpful to have access to a printer as well. If you're new to computers, consider taking an introductory class to show you the basics you'll need to know: word processing, attaching documents, etc. Many libraries offer these types of workshops at low or no cost. Your college or other community venue may also provide basic computer training. *If you're on a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship, 75% of the cost of a non-credit computer class can be reimbursed by T.E.A.C.H. by using Form B, which is also used to claim reimbursement for books.*
- Before your online class begins, familiarize yourself with the software your school uses; this information can often be obtained at the time you register. Course instructions are often posted on the school's website.
- Participate regularly. This is essential in the online environment. Log on to the course frequently so you know if anything new has been posted. Keep up with discussions by offering your ideas and perspectives. Your comments add to the content of the course, enrich the shared learning and help create a sense of community in each class. Do your best to stay current with your assignments.
- Be thoughtful before hitting the "send" key. Being polite and respectful is crucial for a productive and supportive online environment. Identify the issue or topic that you are responding to and stay on subject. Always ask permission before forwarding messages.
- Remember, you won't have all those non-verbal cues that you get in the physical classroom, so if you run into difficulties, speak up! Communication is critical to success.

CREDENTIALS

An early childhood credential is a specialization awarded by The Registry and comprised of 12 to 18 credits. Depending on the number of credits, this scholarship is awarded on a 12-month or 18-month contract, with the option of extending it by one semester if needed. The Credential Scholarship may be approved for one of these Wisconsin Registry credentials:

- Infant Toddler
- Preschool
- Administrator
- Program Development
- Inclusion
- After-school & Youth Development
- Family Child Care
- Leadership
- Supporting Dual Language Learners

Earning a credential can focus you on a particular area of interest, help you meet YoungStar requirements, or be a step on your path towards earning a degree.

What you need to know

- Credential coursework is offered through various colleges and universities around the state, and in a variety of formats: in a classroom, online, or a combination of the two. Your counselor will have up-to-date information on when and where credential courses are being offered. The Registry can provide you with a credential guide.
- After completing the coursework, a final project or portfolio must be presented to The Registry for determination of a credential award. Typically, developing a portfolio or final project happens throughout the coursework or as part of the final “capstone” course.
- **The Commission process:** The instructor for your final course submits information to The Registry indicating that students will soon be ready to commission. When a commission date is scheduled, your instructor will share directions with you and your classmates about submission of portfolios/projects. Then you submit a Registry “Request for Commission Form” provided by your instructor. Upon receipt, The Registry will confirm and provide any additional instructions. If for some reason you are unable to commission on the scheduled date, contact your counselor and your instructor as soon as possible. Changing commission dates could affect the completion of a contract.
- **Preparing for a Commission:** Your course instructor is your most important resource; any questions and concerns about content and/or what gets submitted and when should be directed towards your instructor. Also, check out the credential resources link on The Registry website. When you’ve created a portfolio/project that you’re proud of, have faith that you’ll be able to present it!
- **Commission payment process:** The Request for Commission form will ask you to provide a payment code. Call your T.E.A.C.H. Counselor to receive your code. When The Registry receives your request, they will bill us, we will pay the fee in full and then bill you for 25% of this fee.
- Membership in The Registry is required of those awarded a credential. For information on how to join, visit their website: www.the-registry.org or call their office at 608-222-1123.

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

Get college credit for what you already know!

Credit for Prior Learning (also called CPL) is a process in which a student demonstrates what they've learned through experience and previous non-credit learning opportunities and is awarded credit that can then be applied towards a degree in our field. This may be just the jump start you need to realize that a degree is within your reach; you're already on your way!

What is accepted as credit for prior learning and how it is assessed varies from one college to another, so you are advised to check in with the college of your choice. What is required in terms of documentation varies as well. Documentation may take the form of "testing out" of a class, submitting a portfolio, or demonstrating competence in another way. One way that students are earning credit for prior learning is to take a CPL course offered throughout the Wisconsin Technical College System. The course provides support for creating the documentation you need. By enrolling in this 3-credit course, you may end up earning 3-12 credits in addition to the 3 credits provided by the course.

Where to start

Discuss your interest with your Scholarship Counselor who will be able to tell you where the CPL course is being offered in any given semester. Your counselor will also provide advice on how to approach a college directly about what they might provide in terms of credit for prior learning in addition to or instead of the CPL course. Getting this credit depends on your initiative, but you can do it! Check out the brief 3-minute video on the T.E.A.C.H. website and hear the voices of three child care professionals who have made credit for prior learning work for them.

CPL and T.E.A.C.H

Combining a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship with credit for prior learning can help you pay for both the CPL course, and for any costs assessed for credits accepted by a college or university as a result of participating in the course.

RELEASE TIME

Release time is paid time away from your job (up to a maximum of 15 hours per semester) that assists you in balancing the demands of work, home, and school. Release time may be spent directly on course-related activity (i.e. attending your class or doing homework) or indirectly (i.e. time to do attend to other issues of life balance). Hours of release time must be taken in the same semester as the class occurs. The maximum allowed does not vary with number of credits and there is no “carryover” of release time hours into the next semester.

How release time is paid

If you are an employee, you will be paid release time at your usual hourly rate of pay. The program is then reimbursed for the total hours that it paid to the recipient at the rate of \$12.50/hour. If \$12.50 is more than the scholarship recipient’s rate of pay, the employer keeps the difference. If \$12.50 is less than the scholarship recipient’s rate of pay, the employer makes up the difference. Turning over a release time reimbursement check to a scholarship recipient does not fulfill the release time component of the scholarship.

After release time has been provided, either the T.E.A.C.H. Scholar or Sponsor initiates the reimbursement process by completing Form C, Release Time Reimbursement Claim Form. Both of you must sign the form before you submit it. Make sure that the dates and hours of release time are clearly noted, that all information requested is accurate, and that the semester for which reimbursement is claimed is indicated. There are three semesters in a full calendar year, which run as follows:

- Spring Semester: January 1 through May 15
- Summer Semester: May 16 through August 15
- Fall Semester: August 16 through December 31

Form C’s for requesting reimbursement for release time are sent along with your contract. These are individualized to the recipient and the center, so if you need additional copies, request them from your counselor. A sample can be found in the resource section of this handbook, but should not be copied; instructions are included. Release time is always paid to the program, not to individuals.

Program owners and family child care providers on scholarship are also eligible for this benefit. You simply fill out a Form C and accurately claim the time taken; no co-signer is required. The reimbursement rate is the same and payment will be made to the program if you are a center owner, or to the family child care provider.

Pay attention to deadlines for submitting requests for reimbursements: September 1 for summer semester, February 1 for fall semester, and June 1 for spring semester.

Release time is a challenging component of T.E.A.C.H.

For the T.E.A.C.H. Sponsor

- You need to plan ahead and plan carefully, especially if you are sponsoring more than one T.E.A.C.H. scholar.
- It's hard to find substitute teachers. Substitutes may not match your level of expectations, and if they can't be found, others on staff may have to adjust schedules.
- When teachers take their release time to manage their home lives better, it is often seen as "undeserved" time off, rather than as important to their school success.

For the T.E.A.C.H. Scholar

- It's never enough. Every 3-credit class involves 48-54 hours of class time, and that doesn't include homework time, plus you have to keep up with other obligations.
- It can be hard to leave your group of children. Often they depend on you, and it's just not the same with a substitute teacher.
- You may empathize with the burden on your program. If you are engaged in the planning and remain flexible, it helps a great deal.

Some ways for making release time work

It all begins with good communication and a plan that takes everyone's needs into consideration. Keep in mind that even the best of plans sometimes need to be revised. Here are a variety of ways release time can happen:

- Student attends class for 2 hours during the day, e.g. 3-5 pm, and is paid release time for attending class and works a 6 hour work day, totaling 8 hours.
- Student attends and is paid for a 2-hour evening class, e.g. 7-9 pm, and is scheduled for a shorter 6-hour work day, totaling 8 hours.
- Student attends an evening or weekend class and is paid for attending and is scheduled for fewer work hours during anticipated periods of lower enrollment in the same week, to keep weekly hours within 40. For example, paid class is Tuesday evening and corresponding unpaid time off is scheduled for every Friday afternoon because of lower enrollment that day. In this example, the recipient can plan for Friday afternoons off.
- Student attends an evening or weekend class and is paid for the class and receives paid time off as unanticipated lower periods of enrollment occur. For example, paid class time is Tuesday nights and unpaid time off occurs as possible within the 40-hour work week, such as when several children are out with an illness. In this example, the student does not have advance notice of the time off, and if a lower enrollment period doesn't occur, the program could incur overtime expenses.
- Student works and is paid for an 8-hour day and attends a 2-hour evening class. Two hours of overtime pay is due as a result of working in excess of 40 hours.
- Student attends an evening or weekend class and is not paid for attending, but is scheduled and paid for an additional day off during periods of anticipated lower enrollment. For example, the day after Thanksgiving is anticipated as a low enrollment day, so the day is scheduled like an additional day of paid leave time.

Your T.E.A.C.H. counselor can be a valuable sounding board in determining a release time plan that works for you. You may also need professional counsel related to the Wisconsin Wage and Hours Law.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is federal money to help you pay for college. If you are interested in applying for financial aid, this is what you need to know:

- Application for financial aid is NOT a requirement of T.E.A.C.H.
- The application process is free and can be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Please note that you should never pay a fee to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Application takes place between October and April each year.
- The application can be completed online or you can fill it out and mail a paper copy. The information provided on the application determines if you are eligible to receive financial aid, what kinds, and what amounts. Eligibility is based on income and is calculated on your financial need, cost of attendance, and enrollment status (full or part time student).
- Your FAFSA application is forwarded to the school you want to attend. Your school will determine your eligibility, and based on eligibility may or may not prepare a financial aid package, and contact you. This notification might be by letter or may be posted in your student online college account. It takes approximately 4-6 weeks to process your FAFSA and for your college to determine aid eligibility. The college or university then distributes the grants or loans.

Types of Financial Aid

The Types of Financial Aid are **grants, loans** and **work study**; all are intended to help you pay for school expenses. To be eligible to receive financial aid, colleges require the student to be enrolled in an eligible program of study – in our case, you must be accepted in the Early Childhood Education program of the college of your choice.

Grants, such as the Wisconsin Higher Education grant or Pell grant, are automatically accepted by your college and applied to your tuition; they do not have to be repaid. They are more likely to be offered to full time students.

Student Loans require that you re-pay them, so you choose to accept or decline them. If you accept, there are income-based repayment plans, deferment options and forgiveness programs for which you might be eligible. Typically, student loans come with low fixed interest rates. If accepted, these funds are also applied to your tuition.

Work Study is rarely an option for T.E.A.C.H. scholars because you are already working in your child care program while going to school, so it's unlikely that you could take on a student job.

How Financial Aid works with T.E.A.C.H.

Colleges offering you a financial aid package will determine how the funds are distributed. If you are awarded grants that cover or partially cover the cost of tuition and/or books, T.E.A.C.H. will not pay those costs. However, you are still eligible for the T.E.A.C.H. travel stipend each semester, release time, the T.E.A.C.H. bonus, and the sponsoring program's bonus or raise upon successful completion of your contract. If you are not awarded grants or your grants do not pay for all of your tuition/books, T.E.A.C.H. will pay its corresponding percentages.

Applying for financial aid should not be a barrier to T.E.A.C.H. participation. Applicants should be aware that currently over one's lifetime, there are limits on how often one can receive federal financial aid.

For more information on Federal Financial Aid, go to www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov or call 800-433-3243. You can also contact your school's financial aid office with questions or for assistance with forms. Your T.E.A.C.H. Counselor can also provide guidance through the application process.

FIELD PLACEMENT

For those pursuing a degree, “field placement” in the form of practicums or student teaching is often part of one’s coursework. Field placements are an opportunity to integrate your learning into your practice.

Colleges will set their own requirements for field placements. T.E.A.C.H. recommends that you speak to your college advisor if you have questions related to the student teaching semester and when or where your placement can take place. Your advisor should also know if it’s possible for you to complete your student teaching at the program you are employed by or if an alternative placement will be made.

We encourage you to be actively involved in planning your field placement. It works best when you, your college advisor, your prospective placement supervisor and your T.E.A.C.H. counselor discuss the overall expectations of the field placement semester and together identify the best approach for all involved.

The challenge of field placements

It is hard to meet the T.E.A.C.H. work requirement of 25 hours per week while engaging in field placements. To address this challenge, T.E.A.C.H. has developed a **Field Placement Agreement** when placements require 20 or more hours per week. The agreement provides a balance between service to the sponsoring program and field placement expectations, and reduces the T.E.A.C.H. work requirement. The agreement is signed by you and your T.E.A.C.H. sponsor. A sample of a Field Placement Agreement is found with other forms and resources as part of this handbook.

Field placement work options to meet T.E.A.C.H. requirements

1. Meet the 25 hour/week work requirement by working 25 hours/week or by averaging 25 hours/week over an entire contract of three semesters. For example, a person working 40 hours a week for two of the three semesters can typically fulfill their work requirement for the contract year, allowing a semester for student teaching.
2. When averaging work hours leaves you with less than 25/hours/week, you may reduce your work hours to 5-24 hours/week and forfeit release time for the semester of field placement. Commitment periods from previous contract(s) will be extended.
3. If you work less than 5 hours/week, you can be considered to be on an educational leave of absence. Release time is forfeited for the semester of field placement and commitment periods from previous contract(s) will be extended.

Examples of some modifications in field placements experienced by T.E.A.C.H. scholars:

- Placement in a different classroom within one’s own sponsoring program.
- Stretching your student teaching over a longer period of time, for example, over two semesters rather than one.
- Working more during school breaks or semesters at your workplace so that your total average hours worked per year meets the T.E.A.C.H. requirement.
- Temporarily work flexible hours at your workplace to accommodate the field placement.
- For family child care providers, temporarily changing hours of operation, for example, changing hours to provide second shift or weekend care to accommodate the field placement.

As a first step, talk to your instructors and your T.E.A.C.H. counselor to consider your options.

Other important notes

Impact on benefits. When reducing your work hours for field placements of 20 hours or more, it is important to consider the impact of reduced wages and potential consequence of reduced or lost benefits. Eligibility requirements for health insurance and other benefits vary by employer. Working fewer hours may make you ineligible for critical benefits. Talk with your employer to discuss options and learn about your program's benefit eligibilities as you make your plans.

Before you begin, be sure and have your Field Placement Agreement signed and submitted.

Required: All field placement options require you to return to your sponsoring program upon completion of the field placement to complete commitment periods. All T.E.A.C.H. sponsors are required to continue to provide you with employment.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CONTRACT

When you and your program sign a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contract, you are agreeing to stay at your sponsoring center or family child care program for the time you are on scholarship and taking classes, and for an additional period of time, specific to your particular scholarship model, after completing coursework. This is called your **commitment period**.

The commitment period is important for two reasons: 1) It honors the investment that your program made in you; your employers supported your education so you could in turn strengthen the program. 2) It helps to stabilize the workforce and reduce turnover, which are essential goals of the scholarship program.

Leaving your job or sponsoring program at any time during your contract or during the commitment period is considered breaking your contract and is termed a withdrawal. In all cases, whatever the reason for the withdrawn contract, scholarship activity is discontinued and bonuses from T.E.A.C.H. and the sponsoring program are forfeited. You are responsible for any outstanding balances due, including your share of tuition for courses in which you are currently enrolled.

There may be a variety of reasons for withdrawal from a contract, either while engaged in coursework or during a commitment period, and you should discuss these with your scholarship counselor.

If the withdrawal is voluntary – either a resignation or a voluntary program closure (center owner or family child care provider) – the scholarship recipient may not re-apply for scholarship for a period of time equal to the commitment period of their scholarship contract, unless released by the Sponsoring Program. Withdrawals may also be involuntary, for example scholarship recipient was fired or laid off from their position.

Depending on the reason for withdrawal, you may be eligible to re-apply if/when all outstanding debt has been paid. Talk with your counselor. However, if this is your second contract withdrawal, you are no longer eligible for a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship.

Payment options

If your withdrawal requires payment to T.E.A.C.H., you can pay in full by check, money order or credit card. Alternately, you can work with us to set up a payment plan. As a very last measure, failure to pay or make payment arrangements could result in a referral to a collection agency.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should I apply for the scholarship?

You may apply for the scholarship at any time. If you have a start date in mind, you will want to apply as early as possible. For consideration for fall semester, applications must be received no later than **July 1**; for spring semester no later than **November 1**; and for summer semester no later than **April 1**. If we are unable to award a scholarship for your desired semester, you will have the option of remaining in the queue (based on the date of receipt of the application) for a future award or re-applying at a later date.

If you plan to renew a contract, let your counselor know and she will give you renewal information. Contract renewals for those pursuing a degree or completing a credential are given priority over new applications to minimize disruption in an educational path.

If I am eligible and submit a completed application, am I guaranteed to get a scholarship when I plan to start coursework?

There is no guarantee. Funding for T.E.A.C.H. primarily comes from the federal government, and is authorized through the State budget every two years. At any time when demand for scholarships is greater than available funds, individuals may need to wait in a queue based on when your completed application was received. Contract renewals, however, for AA and BA recipients are prioritized so an educational path is not disrupted. We urge you to join us as advocates to secure adequate funding for our scholarship program to eliminate all waiting.

Is there a fee to apply for a T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship?

Yes. There is a non-refundable application fee of \$20. Your application fee is assessed at the time your application is processed for an award; new applications are awarded in the order they are received in our office. You will be notified when your fee is due. Please do not send it with your application. When due, payments can be made online at: <https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/t-e-a-c-h/t-e-a-c-h-cost-calculator/>

If I'm found not eligible or change my mind, will I get my money back?

No. The application fee is not refundable.

Do I need to have a Registry certificate to apply for a scholarship?

No, but it is highly recommended. A Registry certificate recognizes your educational achievements and allows you to participate in programs like the REWARD Stipend Program. If you already have a Registry certificate, include a copy with your T.E.A.C.H. application. If you do not have a certificate but would like one, you may begin the Registry certificate application process at any time. For more information, contact The Registry at 608-222-1123 or the-registry@the-registry.com. If you are pursuing a credential, you will be required to join before completing your final Commission, since all credentials are awarded by The Registry.

Can I register and begin taking courses before knowing if I am eligible for a scholarship?

This is not advised as it is financially risky. If you begin courses and then are found ineligible for a scholarship or your scholarship cannot be awarded for that particular semester due to funding constraints, you will need to fully cover the expenses.

How do I choose a scholarship type?

We suggest you discuss this with a T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Counselor. Answers to these questions may influence your decision:

- What are your educational and professional goals?
- Is this your first experience taking college courses?
- Would you prefer taking a few courses to check your comfort level, or are you prepared to make a longer commitment?
- Do you prefer courses that provide instruction in how to work with the age group of children you support now or would you like to explore new areas of knowledge?
- Do you have a goal of achieving either an Associate degree or a Bachelor's degree?
- Do you need to attend a school that is located in your area, or would you consider "distance-learning" from a school located further away?
- What type of class formats do you prefer? How do you learn best?

Can I be on more than one scholarship at a time?

No, but if you are almost done with your current scholarship and want to continue with another, talk to your Counselor. Associate and Bachelor's degree scholarships may be renewed yearly as funding and sponsoring center support allows.

What do I need to know about my scholarship contract?

A key thing to know is that we must receive the signed contract, Personal Responsibilities Agreement, and application fee before any funds can be issued. A signed contract indicates that you agree with the terms and responsibilities as outlined. Please read your contract carefully and make sure you understand it. If you have questions, ask your counselor. If you work in a child care center, your program director or administrator signs the contract as well. A "*Personal Responsibilities Agreement*" accompanies your contract. This, too, must be signed and returned.

Be sure to keep a copy of the contract for your records. If terms of a contract are broken, scholarship support can be withdrawn and payment of all outstanding invoices would be required.

What is the process for paying tuition?

Typically, T.E.A.C.H. will pay the full tuition through a Direct Billing Authorization (DBA) to the college of your choice. This requires you to follow this timetable:

Contact your Scholarship Counselor to report your course selections, preferably before classes begin but no later than the following deadlines: **October 1** for fall semester activity; **March 1** for spring activity; and **June 1** for summer activity. This must be done for each semester in order for us to receive the bill from your college within the semester in which you take courses. Sponsoring centers and scholarship recipients will be billed for their portion of tuition after classes begin.

If you miss the deadline for letting your Counselor know what courses you are taking, you have an additional month to pay the tuition yourself directly to the college and submit a Reimbursement Claim Form B.

How do I pay my portion of educational costs of the scholarship?

When participating in the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship program, the recipient and sponsoring center are responsible for a portion of the educational costs. The T.E.A.C.H. program produces an invoice statement three (3) times per year for both the recipient and the center, reflecting the total amount due upon receipt.

Payment is considered late if not paid within 30 days of the invoice date. If you have questions regarding your invoice, please contact JoAnne Nelson at 608-729-1041, jnelson@wisconsinearlychildhood.org; she is happy to help you!

How is my compensation affected when I complete my contract?

T.E.A.C.H. is designed to both support advancing your education and enhancing your compensation. A change in compensation is triggered when T.E.A.C.H. has received all documentation that you've completed your contract. For example, completion of a credential scholarship is documented by a copy of final grades and the credential certificate from The Registry. Successful completion of all other scholarship models is documented by final grades. Upon receipt of documentation, you will receive compensation in the form of a bonus from T.E.A.C.H. At the same time, T.E.A.C.H. will send a letter to the sponsoring center reminding them of their contractual obligation to also provide a bonus or raise by the end of your commitment period. The amounts are specified in your contract.

When your commitment period ends, we will request a completed Information Update Form to which you attach proof that you have received the bonus or raise, e.g. a copy of a check or paystub. If you do not receive the bonus or raise, please contact your Counselor for assistance.

As an added benefit, after you have completed your first contract, you receive a complimentary one-year membership to WECA.

What is the commitment period?

Most T.E.A.C.H. contracts require scholarship recipients to continue working in their current setting for a specific length of time after completing the scholarship. In some cases, the commitment period may involve working in another regulated child care program for a specified length of time. The amount of time varies by scholarship model. Be sure you are aware of and understand this commitment period before signing the contract.

What is “credit for prior learning” and how do I earn it?

Many scholarship recipients wonder if their past non-credit training experiences and extensive work in the field can count towards a degree in early education. The answer is, “Yes, but you must be able to document your learning.” What is accepted as “credit for prior learning” (or CPL as it is commonly referred) and how it is assessed varies from one college to another, so you are advised to check in with the college of your choice. For more information on CPL, see “Credit for Prior Learning” in the Need to Know section of this handbook.

What do I need to know about book purchases?

You are responsible for purchasing your own textbooks, but 75% of the cost will be reimbursed. Using Reimbursement Form B, indicate who paid for the books: you or your center. List the course for which each book is required, full titles of the books purchased, and the price for each book without tax and shipping costs (which are not reimbursed). Attach your book receipts to Form B and send or fax to your scholarship counselor to process your reimbursement.

It is important to note that T.E.A.C.H. will not reimburse books without a receipt and only required textbooks will be reimbursed. Please do not submit a reimbursement request if you are renting a book and the rental fee is included in your tuition cost. It is recommended that you keep a copy of receipts and reimbursement forms for your personal records before sending them to T.E.A.C.H.

We will not pay for home computers, computer software, or school supplies. If, however, a non-credit basic computer course would support your success as a student, the cost of the course can be claimed on Reimbursement Claim Form B and reimbursed at 75% of the cost.

What is the travel stipend and how do I receive it?

The travel stipend is a set amount of money – currently \$75 per semester. The stipend is the same for all scholarship models regardless of your actual expenses. It is not based on the distance you travel or whether or not you even travel; those taking online courses receive a travel stipend also. One can simply view the travel stipend as an additional support to offset some of the other expenses associated with going to school, i.e., gas, parking fees, internet access, etc.

You need to submit Form D to receive this stipend, and it is paid when we pay your tuition. Depending on the cost of your tuition, you may never see an actual stipend. This is because it is processed by subtracting it from the percentage of tuition that you owe. If the stipend exceeds the amount you owe, you may receive a check for the remainder. If it does not, you will receive an invoice with the amount of the travel stipend deducted from what you owe. Please note: reimbursement checks under the amount of \$5.00 will be issued with future reimbursements.

What is release time and how is it paid?

Release time is paid time for a child care teacher or provider to be away from or “released” from the child care workplace to pursue education or to balance work, family, and school responsibilities. Form C for release time reimbursement must be signed by both the sponsoring center director and scholarship recipient. The Center is reimbursed for the release time they offer employees as outlined in the T.E.A.C.H. contract. Because release time can be challenging, please review “Release Time” in the Need to Know section of this handbook.

What is the process for reimbursements for books, release time and travel?

You may submit reimbursement requests – Form B for books, Form C for release time, and Form D for travel – at any time during the semester. Your Counselor will provide you with the correct forms. The last day to submit for the previous semester’s expenses are: **February 1** for the previous fall semester; **June 1** for the previous spring semester; and **September 1** for the previous summer semester.

Allow 4-8 weeks to receive reimbursements. Scholarship Counselors process reimbursement forms in the order that they are received. Call your counselor if more than two months have passed since you turned in your reimbursement forms and receipts. The reimbursement process will be delayed if receipts are not attached and/or forms are not filled out completely.

What if I need to add, drop or withdraw from a course?

You must notify your Scholarship Counselor if you plan to add, drop or withdraw from a course at any time during the semester. It is also vitally important that you follow all steps with your school so that any action is officially noted by the school. Otherwise, you may be responsible for the tuition and/or end up with a failing grade. Tuition that has already been paid is fully refunded only if a course is dropped before the start date. It is highly recommended that you request the drop/withdrawal in writing and then keep this request and approved documentation for your records.

If you withdraw from a course that has already begun and T.E.A.C.H. has paid any money towards that course (tuition, travel, books or release time), take note that T.E.A.C.H. cannot pay for the same course a second time. You will be financially responsible for the course the next time you take it. feature for asking questions online.

Are there consequences if I do not meet my responsibilities as agreed upon in the contract I signed?

Yes. Failure to meet contract requirements results in withdrawal from your contract and scholarship activity will cease. You immediately become responsible for any outstanding unpaid invoices, including your percentage of tuition for any courses in which you are currently enrolled. T.E.A.C.H. will not reimburse you for expenditures you incurred in that semester and no bonuses will be paid. Additionally, you are not eligible to re-apply for scholarship for the length of time of the commitment period for your contract. If you withdraw from your contract while in your commitment period, you will not be eligible to re-apply until that commitment time period is completed. After a second withdrawal from a T.E.A.C.H. contract, you are no longer eligible to re-apply for scholarship.

Do I have an opportunity to provide feedback on my experience?

Yes. We welcome your input and value your feedback at any point in your T.E.A.C.H. experience. When you complete your contract, you'll receive a simple online evaluation form which asks about your experience with T.E.A.C.H. and with your college or university. If you prefer to receive a print copy of the evaluation, please let your Scholarship Counselor know. We value your feedback and use it to improve our services.

Where do I go with questions that remain unanswered?

It depends on the type of question. Because T.E.A.C.H., Colleges and Universities, and The Registry work together, answers might be obtained from more than one source. In general, we suggest the following starting points:

- With questions regarding any aspect of your scholarship, contact your Scholarship Counselor. Also, the “Need to Know” section of this handbook covers topics that may answer your questions. You are also welcome to contact T.E.A.C.H. at 800-783-9322, option 3, or visit our website: wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach where you will find information and resources, including reimbursement forms to download and a convenient online T.E.A.C.H. chat feature for asking questions online.
- Questions regarding course information including dates and times, course enrollment processes, billing issues, how to withdraw from a course, and what to do if you are failing a course, contact both T.E.A.C.H. and your **College or University** since there are implications for both.
- Questions regarding the award of a credential, including the commission process and dates, portfolio development, course curriculum approval for the credentials, approval of coursework previously taken, curriculum updates, and information on joining The Registry’s professional recognition system, contact **The Registry** at 608-222-1123.
- Questions regarding courses that contribute towards a degree, additional sources of financial aid, holds on records, incompletes, or acquiring grade reports or transcripts, contact your **College or University**.

QUESTIONS FROM T.E.A.C.H. SPONSORS

What exactly have I committed to?

Once your employee is awarded a scholarship, he/she will be sent a contract. Contracts are a 3-way partnership, and as such, need to be signed by you, your employee on scholarship, and T.E.A.C.H. The contracts specifically outline the responsibilities of each party. While scholarship contracts vary, the following are generally part of a T.E.A.C.H. contract:

Employer Provides	Student Provides	T.E.A.C.H. Provides
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portion of tuition cost • Release time to the student (see “Need to Know” tab for detail on how this works) • Bonus or raise to be awarded no later than the end of the commitment period.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application fee • Portion of tuition cost • Portion of book cost • Portion of credential fee • Commitment to employer for an amount of time specified in the contract • Successful completion of coursework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of tuition cost • Most of book cost • Most of Credential Assessment Fee • Per-semester travel stipend paid to recipient • Reimbursement to the employer for release time • Bonus upon completion of a contract • Ongoing counseling and administrative support

**The “Limited Option” 3-8 credit model is an exception; refer to the contract for specifics on this option.*

Who do I call when I have questions or circumstances in my program change?

Call the Scholarship Counselor assigned to you and your employee, or contact our general information number and your call will be forwarded to the most appropriate person. As the representative of the program, it’s very important to keep T.E.A.C.H. informed about such things as an employee’s change of hours, if an employee has quit or been terminated, or any other changes that may affect the scholarship contract.

How can I use T.E.A.C.H. to market my program?

There are many ways to benefit from your investment in T.E.A.C.H. Here are a few positive strategies:

- Inform parents about your T.E.A.C.H. participation. A sample message is included in the “Forms & Resources” section of this handbook.
- Whenever you place ads regarding enrollment openings, enhance your ad to say that you invest in the education of your staff. You might include: “We support staff on T.E.A.C.H. scholarships,” in the list of benefits you provide. A sample job ad is included in the “Forms & Resources” section of this handbook.
- Send press releases when your staff have completed educational milestones. A sample press release is included in the “Forms & Resources” section of this handbook.

How do I support my employee on scholarship?

Communication is the best way to support your employee. Meet with him/her before the semester starts to plan for balancing work and school demands. Use this time also to set a plan for release time. Check in with your staff every so often to see how they're progressing. Take an interest in their education. Notice when new ideas are tried out in the classroom. Encouragement and a pat on the back for the extra effort are almost always welcomed.

FORMS & RESOURCES

Forms. Sample copies of these forms, with instructions, can be found in this section.

- **Form B** (for book, tuition, and non-credit computer class reimbursements)
- **Form C** (for release time reimbursement)
- **Form D** (for travel stipend)
- **Field Placement Agreement Form**

Forms are individualized for each scholarship recipient and center and sent with your contract. If you need replacement or additional forms, contact your Counselor.

Resources. T.E.A.C.H. publishes a monthly on-line newsletter, *T.E.A.C.H. Talk*. In addition, a print newsletter called *Semester Preview* is sent to you prior to each semester. Both provide reminders, important notices and other useful information regarding the scholarship program.

In addition, **workshops** have been created to support your professional development efforts. Workshops include: Achieving Your Professional Development Goals; Staying Balanced: Work, School, and Family; Circle of Support (especially for sponsoring center directors), and Caring for Yourself and Managing Stress. Training opportunities are announced through our newsletters and on the WECA website. Several **handouts** from these workshops follow in this resource section:

- Study Habits for Success
- Organization & Time Management
- Support Systems for College Success

Membership in WECA is also a valuable resource and an additional way of advancing your professionalism. Upon completion of a first contract, scholarship recipients are given a one-year complimentary membership or membership renewal. We encourage you to sustain your membership over your career. For information about member benefits and how to join, visit our website or call us.

Sample marketing materials are included to inspire you to design your own:

- Sample letter for parents/families
- Sample job ad
- Sample press release when your employee graduates

Handy folder pockets for storing:

- Your copy of the contract
- Copies of the Forms B, C, and D that you send to us
- Receipts and copies of receipts you send us
- Invoices
- Newsletters

Reimbursement Claim Form

Please use a separate form for each semester, and return with receipts to:
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
2908 Marketplace Dr., Suite 101
Fitchburg, WI 53719

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ T.E.A.C.H. COUNSELOR: _____

CHILD CARE FACILITY: _____ RECIPIENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

SEMESTER (Check ONE): FALL SPRING SUMMER 20 ____

Tuition/Fees/Credential Assessment Fees- Do NOT complete tuition/fees amount if paid by T.E.A.C.H. through direct billing authorization.

Tuition/Fees amount: \$ _____

Tuition/Fees paid by (Check one): Recipient Child Care Facility Financial Aid/Grants Student Loan

Course Title(s)/Name of Credential:	# of Credits:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Books- We cannot issue a reimbursement without receipts. Please keep a copy of your receipt.

Total book amount (WITHOUT tax or shipping/handling fees): \$ _____

Books paid by (Check one): Recipient Child Care Facility

Course for which book is required:	Complete Book Title:	Price (without tax):
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If receipts are not included, reimbursement will not be issued

FORM B INSTRUCTIONS - Books/Tuition/Fees Reimbursement Claims

***Attach all receipts to Reimbursement Form B.
T.E.A.C.H. will not process reimbursements without receipts.
Form Bs must include the scholarship recipient's signature.
Keep a copy for your records.***

Tuition/Fees/Credential Assessment Fees

- Check the term and list the year you are attending school.
- List Tuition and Fees amount (if applicable). Fees include activity, facilitator's, library, computer, administrative, segregated, and student insurance (if the college mandates it). T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN will not cover parking or graduation fees or finance charges for late tuition payments.
- Do not complete tuition/fees amount if paid by T.E.A.C.H. through direct billing authorization.
- Indicate who paid the college for your classes/who paid the credential assessment fees: you, your center, or financial aid.
- List the titles of your courses and the number of credit hours for each.
- Contact your T.E.A.C.H. scholarship counselor before you register to be sure the courses you'd like to register for are authorized. T.E.A.C.H. will not pay the college/university for your tuition unless you call first and request a Direct Billing Authorization. If you register and pay for courses NOT authorized under your scholarship, you will not be reimbursed for tuition or books for these courses.
- Attach your receipts to Form B. We must have your tuition/assessment fee receipts in order to reimburse you. Please keep a copy of receipts for your records.

Charging tuition to T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN

- Before a Direct Billing Authorization will be issued by T.E.A.C.H., you must already be approved for a scholarship and have a signed contract on file.
- You must call your scholarship counselor each semester when you are ready to register for courses.
- Give your counselor the course title(s) and number(s), and the number of credits for each course you wish to take.
- After approving the course(s), we will notify the college/university and give permission for your tuition to be charged to T.E.A.C.H.

Books

- Only required course textbooks will be reimbursed.
- List the course for which the book is required, full titles of the books you bought, and the price for each WITHOUT tax and shipping costs.
- T.E.A.C.H. will not pay for home computers, computer software or school supplies.
- Do not submit a reimbursement if your book rental fee is included in your tuition cost.
- Indicate who paid for the books: you or your center. Attach your book receipt to Form B. T.E.A.C. H. will not reimburse for books without a book receipt. Keep a copy for your records.
- T.E.A.C.H. does not allow books to be charged to our account.

Form C Instructions-Release Time Claim Reimbursement Form

Release Time may be taken by you to attend class, study, or to attend to personal needs. How you and your supervisor (if applicable) schedule Release Time is up to the two of you, however Release Time is expected to be taken each semester you are enrolled in courses. Either you or your supervisor (if applicable) may be responsible for completing the Release Time Claim forms, but **the form MUST be signed by both you and your supervisor (if applicable).**

****Scholarship Recipient is an Employee of a Group Child Care Center:**

You are eligible for 15 hours of Release Time each semester you are enrolled in courses. **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN will reimburse your program** - at the rate of \$12.50 per hour - up to a maximum of 15 hours per semester.

****Scholarship Recipient is an Employee of a Family Child Care Program:**

You are eligible for 15 hours of Release Time each semester you are enrolled in courses. **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN will reimburse your program** - at the rate of \$12.50 per hour - up to a maximum of 15 hours per semester.

****Scholarship Recipient is an Group Child Care Center Owner:**

You are eligible for 15 hours of Release Time each semester you are enrolled in courses. **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN will reimburse your program** - at the rate of \$12.50 per hour - up to a maximum of 15 hours per semester.

****Scholarship Recipient is a Family Child Care Provider:**

You are eligible for 15 hours of Release Time each semester you are enrolled in courses. **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN will reimburse you** - at the rate of \$12.50 per hour – up to a maximum of 15 hours per semester.

Form C must be returned to T.E.A.C.H. This can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to your scholarship counselor.

Travel Stipend Claim Form

Please use a separate form for each semester and return to:

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
2908 Martketplace Drive, Suite 101
Fitchburg, WI 53719

Recipient Name
1000 Main S treet
Anytown, WI 55555
WI-029927

Center:

Counselor:

Recipient E mail: _____

Recipient S igned: _____

Date: _____

Semester (check one): ___ Fall ___ Spring ___ Summer Year: 20

Travel Stipend - \$75.00

Your T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN scholarship includes a \$75.00 travel stipend payable each semester you are enrolled in courses. In order for T.E.A.C.H. to process the stipend, you are required to submit Form D every semester. Your travel stipend will be held until your final tuition bill of the semester is processed for payment. Your travel stipend will then be applied to your share of tuition. If your share of tuition is less than \$75.00, you will be sent a check for your travel stipend less your share of tuition. If your share of tuition is more than \$75.00, you will be sent in invoice at the end of the semester for your share of tuition less your travel stipend. (Book claims and other reimbursements are also applied to your tuition balance.)

If you have any questions, please call your counselor at 1-800-783-9322.

For office use only: Contract # _____ Funder _____



T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN Field Placement Agreement

The following agreement is made pertaining to Associate or Bachelor Degree T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship recipients completing a field placement (student teaching or practicum) requiring twenty (20) or more field hours/week. Recipients and sponsors, as applicable, are encouraged to engage in dialogue to identify the best approach to field placements for the recipient and sponsoring program and complete with signatures this agreement.

During the _____ semester, _____
(semester and year) (print name of recipient)

will be enrolled in a field placement of twenty (20) or more hours/week. The recipient and sponsor make the following selection as to fulfilling the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship work hours requirement. (Please select one.) **In all selections, after completion of field placements, individuals are required to return to their employment positions per established T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contract and, as applicable, sponsors will provide employment opportunity for fulfillment of commitment period.**

_____ **One - Adherence to Standard Work Requirements By Averaging Hours**

The recipient will continue to meet the established 25 hours/week T.E.A.C.H. work requirement during the semester of the field placement. This work requirement may be met by averaging work hours over the entire contract period, (3 semesters). Therefore, the recipient may be working less than 25 hours/week during the semester of field placement, but over the 3 semesters of the contract does average 25 hour/week (1,300 hours per year). All current scholarship agreements and components will be honored by all parties.

_____ **Two – Temporary Reduction in Work Requirements**

The recipient will **not** meet the established 25 hours/week T.E.A.C.H. work requirement during the semester of field placement, even when hours are averaged over the course of the contract period, (3 semesters). The recipient will reduce work hours to 5 – 24 hours/week. The provision of release time will be forfeited. All other scholarship agreements and components will be honored by all parties.

_____ **Three – Educational Leave**

The recipient will take a leave of absence from employment and is working less than 5 hours/week during the semester of the field placement. The provision of release time will be forfeited by all parties. All other scholarship agreements and components will be honored by all parties. If the recipient is currently fulfilling a commitment period from a previous scholarship contract, the commitment period will be extended for a time period equal to the length of the leave.

Representing, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN	Date	Representing, Sponsoring Program	Date	Representing, Recipient	Date
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Study Habits for Success

1 Study Spaces

Determine a place free from distraction (no cell phone or text messaging!) where you can maximize your concentration and be free of distractions, including children if applicable. Stock your study space with all the supplies you might need (computer, paper, pens, calculator, etc.)

Also, consider having a back-up space like the library, coffee shop, and so forth. A change of venue may be refreshing.

2 Determine your Learning Style (and learn to use it!)

Auditory Learners

- Learn best by hearing things spoken.
- Prefer small and large group discussions, lectures, storytelling and audiotapes as instructional aids.
- Appreciate good speakers, and are able to recall specifics about what was said.
- May be easily distracted by environmental noises, that can keep them from concentrating.

Visual Learners

- Learn best when information is written out.
- Prefer diagrams, charts, tables, videos and pictures as learning aids
- Often sit near the front of the room so they can easily see the instructor and the lesson's visuals aids.
- Have trouble remembering verbal instructions.
- Take notes or doodle during class, but may not refer back to the notes later.

Kinesthetic Learners

- Learn best by touching, moving and feeling. They also learn best by manipulating objects, acting out scenarios, and playing games.
- They like to be active and involved in learning new things.
- They prefer to sit in the back of the room so they can stretch out, move around, and get up during the class.
- Variety in action is crucial for kinesthetic learners. They can't sit for long periods of time.

3

Smart School Habits

Be a responsible participant in your education

- Do not rely on counselors, advisors, coaches or anyone else to tell you what you need to fulfill to graduate. Read college resources and be accountable for your own education; it affects no one but you!

Review notes and readings just before class

- This may prompt a question or two about something you don't quite understand, to ask about in class, or after.
- It also demonstrates to your teacher that you are interested and have prepared.

Actively participate in your class

- Display behaviors that reflect and interest in learning (examples: volunteer for activities, answer questions)
- If you don't understand something, ASK. It's been said a zillion times: the only dumb question is the one you don't ask.
- Attend every class and be on time.

If you have school-age children, find opportunities to spend time together working on assignments or visiting the library. Remember that you are setting a great example for your children's life-long learning.

Stay positive

- ✓ Write down your goals and review them daily. Regularly renew your commitment to academic success.
- ✓ Use positive self-talk—believing you can do it is powerful.
- ✓ **Celebrate Successes.** Reward yourself with whatever works for you, along the way. Remember, you chose to do this. Be proud of your accomplishments!

Set Goals

Goal #1: I will succeed in this course!

Sources

Skip Downing, On Course Workshop, <http://barron/uwc.edu/admissions/adult-students/tips>
Study Guides and Strategies, <http://www.studygs.net>
Workshop Essentials by Paula Jorde Bloom

Organization and Time Management

1 Map Out a College Plan

Pace yourself.

There's a reason it takes several years to graduate from traditional university. You're in this to learn, so make sure you're learning and not just racing through the materials. Be realistic about your goals. If you work 40 hours per week, you will be most successful if you limit your classes to three or less a semester.

Do not overextend yourself!

2 Schedule Your Semester

Resources needed:

1. Find a type of calendar most comfortable for you. (appointment book, phone, computer program, etc.)
2. Obtain a copy of your college's school calendar and your class syllabus.

Enter the following into your calendar at the beginning of each semester

College Schedule	Class Work Requirements	Home and Work Schedules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Class start and end dates •School holidays and breaks •Class times, including getting to and from the college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Assignment due dates •Test, project and paper due dates •Reading schedule •Planned study times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work hours •Family schedules •Family routines and obligations •Time for self-care: healthy eating, sleeping, relaxing and exercise •Social plans

Plan your study times wisely

- ✓ Develop and plan for blocks of study time in a typical week. Blocks ideally are around 50 minutes, but consider your concentration curve. Also, schedule studying when you are most productive: are you a morning person or a night owl? Adjust study blocks to best meet your learning style and schedule options.
- ✓ At the beginning of a new course, look through the materials. Break the lessons/assignments into manageable chunks. You might not have time to do a full lesson in one night, so plan for how much you can do, and then stick to it until you're done.
- ✓ Is time in short supply? Use your free time wisely! Think of times when you can study "bits" as when on your lunch break, riding the bus, etc.
- ✓ The bottom line is to put your time to good use and do all of your assignments to the best of your ability.

3 Time to study!

Prioritize assignments

- When studying, get in the habit of beginning with the most difficult subject or task and plan extra time on assignments with high grade values. You will have more energy to take them on when you are at your best.
- For more difficult courses of study, build in reaction time when you can get feedback on assignments before they are due.

Maximize your productivity

- Get *something* done! Details of an assignment are not always evident until you begin. Build in review time, draft your idea, and get going one step at a time.
- If you're studying in greater than 50 minute blocks, take breaks to have a snack, refresh or re-energize yourself
- You'll be more productive (accomplishing more, and remembering more) by studying 2 hours each day than 14 hours during the weekend.

Postpone unnecessary activities until the school work is done

- This can be the most difficult challenge of time management.
- Remember that distracting activities will be more enjoyable later without the pressure of the test or assignment hanging over your head.

Rarely does life go exactly as planned! As learners, we always meet unexpected events that can result in poor performance on a paper, or in preparation for a task. You will need to be flexible with your schedule to succeed in school. *Expect the unexpected*, like a sudden family or work priority.

Maintain your organization throughout the semester

- ✓ Weekly reviews and updates are an important strategy. Each week, like a Sunday night, review your assignments, notes, and calendar. Be mindful that as deadlines and exams approach, your weekly routine must adapt to them! Each morning, review that day's plan and prepare to implement it.
- ✓ Schedule reminders to help stay on track.
- ✓ Post your schedule and mark your progress. Celebrate your achievements!

Creating successful habits is the result of motivation, trial and error and practice.

Sources

Skip Downing, On Course Workshop, <http://barron/uwc.edu/admissions/adult-students/tips>
Study Guides and Strategies, <http://www.studygs.net>

Support Systems for College Success

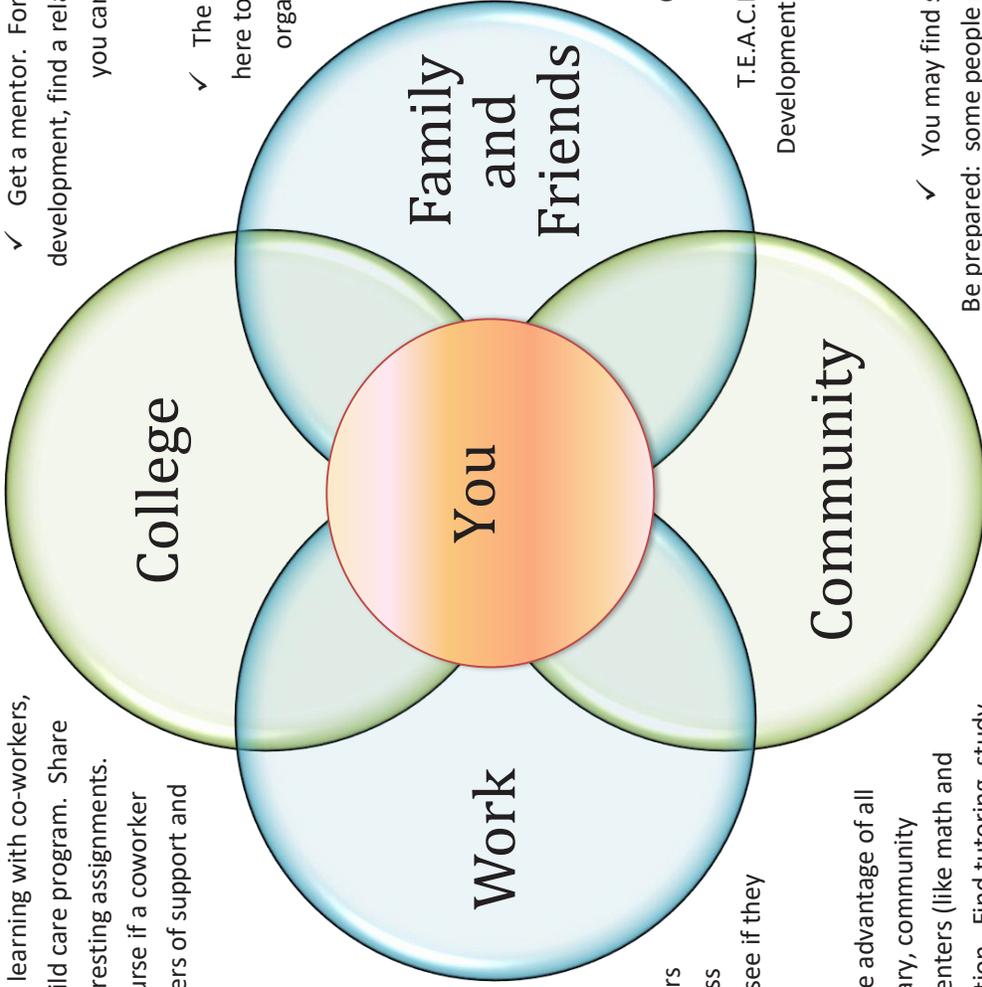
- ✓ Talk about it! Share what you are learning with co-workers, employers and families in your child care program. Share your progress, new ideas and interesting assignments. You're more likely to stick to a course if a coworker knows you're doing it. Accept offers of support and encouragement!
- ✓ Share the events of your day with family and friends so they can understand what you are going through and provide support during tough times of the semester.
- ✓ Meet at least two people in each of your classes who are willing to exchange phone numbers and be a contact for when you miss class, need information or just to see if they want to study together.
- ✓ Discover available resources! Take advantage of all that is offered in your college library, community libraries and academic resource centers (like math and writing). Attend a college orientation. Find tutoring, study groups, career counseling, academic advising, and ask for support from college instructors and administrators. Join student organizations. Outside resources can save you time, energy and help you solve problems.

✓ Get a mentor. For example: if you're taking a class in child development, find a related teacher or graduate student. Ask if you can take them out to coffee once a month.

✓ The early childhood education community is here to support you. Reach out to professional organizations like Wisconsin Early Childhood Association and its affiliates, Wisconsin Child Care Administrator Association and Wisconsin Family Child Care Association. These organizations and others like them are rich with resources and supports!

✓ Contact the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association's educational and professional support programs—the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program and Professional Development counseling. Ask them what they can do for you.

✓ You may find supportive people in unexpected places. Be prepared: some people may not share your enthusiasm for your new endeavor. Strengthen support systems wherever you find them!





For Families: How T.E.A.C.H. benefits you and your children

We know from research that children are born ready to learn and that the first 5 years are very important in their development. In fact, a child's *early* learning experiences can lay the foundation for success in school and later life. Research also shows that the education and training of your child's teacher determines the quality of care they are able to offer.

We thought you'd like to know that our child care program is investing in the education of our staff. Our teacher(s) are active in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN scholarship program. T.E.A.C.H. provides financial support for college tuition, textbooks and study time. This generous program also offers a personal scholarship counselor and a bonus when teachers finish their course(s).

We're excited about other benefits T.E.A.C.H. brings as well, such as staff retention and ever-improving early childhood education skills. When early childhood teachers are better equipped to meet the needs of young children, they are more likely to stay in their chosen career and provide the on-going support working people need to maintain happy, healthy families. T.E.A.C.H. benefits the early childhood workforce, young children, and families throughout Wisconsin.

Sample Job Ad:

Toddler Classroom Teacher

ABC Child Care is seeking applicants for the position of **Toddler Teacher**. Candidates must be a level 9 on The Registry or the equivalent, such as 18 completed credits in the field. Teachers provide learning experiences to facilitate positive academic, social, emotional, and physical development.

Successful applicants will have experience in the early childhood field, be able to work with diverse populations, and have good communication skills. Competitive wage and benefits that include staff education through the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship program.

ABC Child Care Center is a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN Scholarship Program sponsor.



SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

[Use your agency or program’s letterhead]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

mm/dd/yyyy

Contact: [Name, Phone and Email of contact person who’s available to talk to a reporter if needed]

[Headline here]

Sample text: [name of T.E.A.C.H. scholar] raises child care quality for [name of sponsoring program] by completing [name of credential, course or degree program] at [name of educational institution]

[Name of sponsoring program] is proud to announce that [scholar’s name] has completed his/her studies in early childhood education with the support of a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship.

[Quote from program sponsor here – here’s an example]:

“The first five years of a child’s life set the foundation for all future learning. Because of this it’s important that our child care staff have strong and current skills. We’re proud of ____ for the contributions she is making to the young children in her care.”

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WISCONSIN makes access to higher education affordable for those already working in child care programs throughout our state. T.E.A.C.H. has awarded thousands of scholarships to child care providers. When early childhood teachers are better equipped to meet the ever-changing needs of young children, they are more likely to stay in their chosen career and provide the on-going support working parents need to maintain happy, healthy families. T.E.A.C.H. benefits the early childhood workforce, young children, and families throughout Wisconsin.

[At the end of your press release, insert a brief description of your program and its goals in just a few sentences (often shown in italics to distinguish it from the rest of the text). Here’s an example that WECA uses in its press releases:]

WECA is a statewide nonprofit organization for early childhood professionals. With offices in Madison and Milwaukee, WECA offers training, professional development, educational scholarships, a child nutrition program, and more. WECA calls for greater public investment in early education and promotes excellence in the child care profession. For more information visit wisconsinearlychildhood.org.

###



Are you eligible for a REWARD?

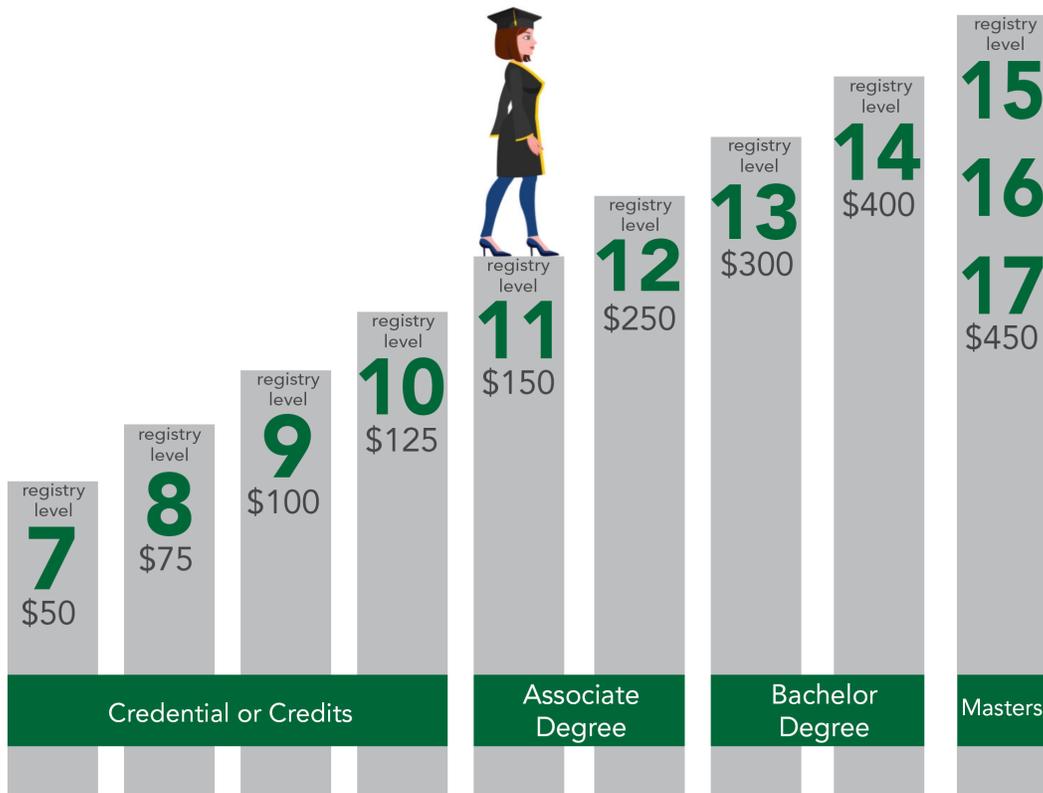
You work hard to provide children with high-quality care and education. REWARD Wisconsin is here to recognize your commitment. Wisconsin’s young children depend on high-quality and consistent child care. Yet, the early childhood profession offers low wages and few benefits, impelling many professionals to leave the field. When this happens, children’s social and emotional development is negatively impacted. The REWARD Wisconsin Stipend Program is working to change this.

Rewarding your accomplishments. Rewarding your dedication.

As a child care professional, REWARD Wisconsin provides you salary supplements based on your educational attainments and longevity in the field.

REWARD is an opportunity to:

- Increase compensation of early childhood professionals
- Reward and retain professionals who have attained education specific to the field
- Encourage continued education
- Reduce turnover
- Improve the quality of care received by Wisconsin children





Earning a REWARD Stipend

To be eligible for a REWARD Wisconsin Stipend, an individual must meet the following employment, experience, and education requirements:

Employment Requirements

- Employed by a group child care program that is licensed and/or participating in YoungStar OR employed by a certified or licensed family child care program
- Work at least 20 hours per week
- Work at least 5% of their time in an early childhood classroom, either directly with children or in supervision and support of staff
- Live and/or work in the state of Wisconsin
- Earn \$16.50 an hour or less

Experience Requirements

- Have worked at your present employer for 3 current and continuous years

OR

- Have 6 years of experience in regulated child care programs as documented by the Registry.

Education Requirements

- Registry Level 7 or above
- Participants at Registry Level 7, 8, 9, and 10 must complete early childhood credits to continue participating in REWARD. Participants can receive a maximum of 4 stipends at each of these Registry Levels while working to reach a higher Registry Level. Participants at Registry Level 11 and above do not need to meet this requirement.

The REWARD Stipend Program provides salary supplements to eligible child care professionals. Individuals must meet all eligibilities to participate. If a person is found to be eligible, a stipend will be awarded along with a 6-month agreement. The stipend amount corresponds to the individual's Registry Level. The stipend agreement is a 6-month contract to continue to meet program eligibilities. Once that agreement ends, the individual can reapply if eligibilities continue to be met. Stipends are awarded as funding allows.

Any questions? Contact REWARD Wisconsin

reward@wisconsinearlychildhood.org

Try our new **LIVE CHAT** on our website at wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/reward

In the Madison Area 608-729-1049

Statewide 800-783-9322, extension 7249