

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

Wisconsin _____

A Program of
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO T.E.A.C.H.! TAKE US WITH YOU ON YOUR EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

Congratulations on receiving a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship – your journey is about to begin! We look forward to supporting you as you advance your education in the early childhood field.

Whether you're a student or program director who's sponsoring a student, you'll find this handbook will help you get acclimated. It is designed to be a resource throughout your T.E.A.C.H. experience.

In it, you'll find:

- A checklist to keep you organized
- Tips for success
- Information you need to know about the scholarship program
- Forms and other resources

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, but you and your program are investing as well. However, it takes more than this 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, work and personal life, providing opportunities to implement new ideas with the children in your care, serving as a listening ear, and awarding bonuses and/or a raise each time you complete a scholarship contract.

Your T.E.A.C.H. counselor is critical – essentially your own personal coach for success! As your coursework begins, you may have questions. As you progress, you may need help balancing work, school, and family commitments. For these needs and more, reach out to your counselor via email, phone, or “chat” on the T.E.A.C.H. section of WECA's website.

In the meantime, start working on your checklist, a critical first step that's available in this handbook, along with other valuable information and resources.

If you are the director of a center sponsoring T.E.A.C.H. recipients, you are positively affecting your child care program in many ways. As your staff become 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 may become eligible for REWARD stipends. Perhaps most importantly, as a sponsor, you're supporting the educational aspirations of your staff. Staff morale and loyalty often grow.

We also know accommodating a T.E.A.C.H. scholar while addressing the demands of the day-to-day operation of your program can be challenging. The T.E.A.C.H. counselor assigned to your employee is available to you as well by phone, email and online chat. Contact them anytime you have questions, need advice, or want to provide feedback.

There also is a sponsor's checklist in this handbook to support you in addition to many valuable resources and information. Please read it through as you support your staff.

We wish you and your staff every success!

Sincerely,



Mary Erickson Gerbig
Director, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin

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

- Read your contract and personal responsibilities agreement (PRA) thoroughly before you sign it, and review it with your director or supervisor. Once you and your director have signed the contract, you will receive a copy of the signed contract and PRA via email. Download or print a copy of each document for your own records. If you have any questions about any part of the contract and PRA, please contact your counselor. They are here to help you! **No payments will be approved until your contract and personal responsibilities agreement are both signed.**

Create a folder, either electronic or paper, to keep your T.E.A.C.H. contract and PRA, your reimbursement forms, grades, and copies of forms and receipts sent to T.E.A.C.H. Your reimbursement forms are emailed to you at the time of scholarship award – you can download and save to your computer, or download and print as a hard copy. Save those forms, you can use them each semester. If you do need additional copies, contact your counselor.

Use the **Deadline Reminder** document and mark all deadlines on your calendar, to make sure your forms are turned in on time, and you notify your counselor of your classes each semester. Save that document in a prominent place so it is always available.

- Once course schedules are available choose your classes carefully. Make sure you can balance your course schedule with your work, home and personal life, 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. T.E.A.C.H. will pay the tuition for the classes you've chosen, and invoice you and your center for your shares at the end of each semester. Because schools must bill us for courses within the semester they are taken, pay attention to the deadlines for requesting a DBA ([see page 25](#)). **Without a DBA you may be paying your own tuition and requesting reimbursement. DBA is easier!**
- Register for your 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.**
- Contact your counselor every time you register for a course, drop a course or add a course. It is important that T.E.A.C.H. knows of changes to your schedule in order to ensure accurate billing from the college. Your college will not inform T.E.A.C.H. if you change your schedule!
- Notify your counselor as soon as possible if you have a name change, address or phone number change, email change, or a change in your employment or school status.
- If you are pursuing a Credential scholarship, go to the **Wisconsin Registry** website (wiregistry.org) and download the Portfolio 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 \$15.00 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.

- Technology Stipend Purchase or Reimbursement form (must be claimed within the first semester of contract).

Reimbursement 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.***
- If you have completed a credential on scholarship, fax or email a copy of the certificate you received in the mail from The Wisconsin Registry, congratulating you on being awarded the credential. ***This is not the certificate that reflects your Registry level and available online. The credential certificate is mailed to you and cannot be downloaded from your Registry account.***
- 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 Wisconsin 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 **Wisconsin Registry** is the agency that awards credentials based on credits earned through coursework which culminates in a Registry Commission review process. The Wisconsin 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.

Stay in touch

Check out T.E.A.C.H. Talk (our regular online newsletter) and Semester Preview (a special edition distributed three times a 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.

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 together with your scholarship recipient.
- Sign the contract electronically through the email you receive from Sign Now. Once you have signed, you will receive a copy for the center records. We recommend you download the contract and keep in either a hard copy or electronic file for each recipient you sponsor on scholarship. The contract is not valid and no payments will be approved until the contract and the Personal Responsibilities Agreement are signed by all parties.
- Use the Deadlines Document you received from your employee's counselor; mark the deadline dates in your calendar. Save the document in a prominent place so it is always available.
- Negotiate a plan for providing release time that meets your needs and that of the T.E.A.C.H. scholar. As required by 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. Additional information about release time is found in this handbook.
- Establish a routine for checking in regularly with the scholarship recipient(s) that you sponsor. Meet with him/her before the semester starts to plan for balancing work and school demands. 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. Our experience has taught us that your support can make all the difference in a student's success!
- Stay in contact with T.E.A.C.H. If you have questions, or need information, 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.
- 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 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. (www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/t-e-a-c-h/cost-calculator-tools/)
- 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 whom 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 number 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.

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, with a bonus or raise given after each contract. Each contract renewal provides an opportunity for you to reassess 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 option may be a good starting point for sponsorship; you can choose to sponsor as few as 3 credits, 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.
 - 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.

YOUR SCHOLARSHIP CONTRACT AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AGREEMENT

You should have received both your contract and **Personal Responsibilities Agreement (PRA)** via email from an electronic signature platform called Sign Now. Those two documents spell out everything that you, your center and T.E.A.C.H. are committing to as part of your scholarship, as well as the dates that your scholarship will be active. If you work in a child care center, your program director or administrator signs the contract as well. Please read both documents carefully and review the contract with your director to verify your agreement and commitment to this program. A signed contract indicates that you agree with the terms and responsibilities as outlined. If you have any questions about either document, contact your counselor for further clarification.

Your scholarship contract is between you, your sponsoring center and T.E.A.C.H. It cannot be transferred to another employer.

We recommend you download copies of both the contract and PRA and save either as a printed hard copy or on your computer in a file specifically for your T.E.A.C.H. forms.

SCHOLARSHIP COUNSELOR

You will be working with your scholarship counselor throughout your time on scholarship. They are here to support you through every step of the scholarship and are available by phone or email. Your counselor is your resource when you have questions about your scholarship, need help finding classes, need additional reimbursement forms, need support around school or work issues, etc.

You will need to contact your counselor every time you are going to register for courses, so billing arrangements with the college can be made. You will also submit your reimbursement forms and grades to your counselor every semester.

Do not hesitate to reach out to your counselor to check in and share how things are going, or if you have questions. They are here for you!

HOW PAYMENT WORKS

Application Fee

A \$20 non-refundable application fee is required to support application processing costs and to ensure commitment to the scholarship process prior to enrolling in courses. This fee is due upon submission of your application to T.E.A.C.H. Online payments are also accepted:

www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/t-e-a-c-h/cost-calculator-tools/

Tuition

There are two ways in which tuition can be paid. 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). Once you know what courses you will be taking each semester, you need to contact your counselor with that information. 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. T.E.A.C.H. pays the school directly, then will invoice the recipient and sponsoring center at the end of the semester for any balances due.

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 deadlines 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

If direct billing has not been arranged with the counselor before the deadline date shared above, the student should immediately contact the counselor to discuss the possibility of paying the tuition and requesting reimbursement from T.E.A.C.H., or waiting until the class is offered again. T.E.A.C.H. does not pay the college or reimburse students for late fees or payment plan fees.

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.

Books

You are responsible for purchasing your own textbooks, but 90% 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). Email or fax your Form B and book receipts 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 if you are renting a book and the rental fee is included in your tuition cost. It is recommended that you make a copy of receipts and reimbursement forms for your personal records before sending them to T.E.A.C.H.

T.E.A.C.H. does not pay for 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 90% of the cost.

Release Time

You are eligible for 15 hours of release time each semester you are enrolled in courses. Release time is intended to help you balance the demands of work, school and home. The scholarship recipient is paid at their regular rate of pay as typical working hours. T.E.A.C.H. then reimburses the program for those hours. Release time hours are tracked on Form C. Once 15 hours have been taken, the form is submitted to your scholarship counselor for reimbursement.

If you are a family child care provider, you are also eligible for 15 hours of release time per semester. Reimbursement for those hours is paid directly to you.

More detailed information on Release Time, including tips on how to schedule release time hours can be found beginning on page 17.

Travel Stipend

The travel stipend is a set amount of money – currently \$100 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 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.

The travel stipend is paid when T.E.A.C.H. processes the tuition invoice from the college or reimburses you for tuition you paid out of pocket, and is applied to your share of tuition. If the travel stipend exceeds the amount of tuition 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.

You must submit a Form D each semester to claim your travel stipend. That form is emailed to you at the time of scholarship award. If you need additional copies of that form, please contact your counselor.

Technology Stipend

Each scholarship recipient is eligible for a one-time technology stipend of up to \$1000.00. This technology stipend can be used toward the purchase of a computer, printer, iPad and/or Apple Pencil. Students can access this stipend either by purchasing out of pocket, and going through the reimbursement process, or requesting T.E.A.C.H. purchase for them from a preselected list of items. This is a one-time stipend, so we recommend you contact your college before you purchase to determine what technology is recommended to best support you in course work. While T.E.A.C.H. does not reimburse software, you are often able to download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge from your college – check with your school to see if that is an option. The technology stipend must be claimed within the first semester of your contract.

Commission Fee

If you are on scholarship to complete a Wisconsin Registry credential, T.E.A.C.H. pays 100% of the \$300 commission fee. Call your T.E.A.C.H. counselor when you are ready to commission. Your counselor will give you a unique code to provide to the Wisconsin Registry, which allows them to bill T.E.A.C.H. for your fee. The Wisconsin Registry will bill us after your commission; we pay the fee in full. Alternatively, you or your center can pay the fee directly to the Wisconsin Registry, and request reimbursement.

Compensation

T.E.A.C.H. is designed to support advancing your education and enhancing your compensation. T.E.A.C.H. awards a bonus upon successful completion of each scholarship contract, and if you are employed at a group child care program, in most scholarship models your center also agrees to provide you a raise or a bonus. The amounts are specified in your contract. As an added benefit, after you have completed your first contract, you receive a complimentary one-year membership or membership renewal to WECA.

When all scholarship-related processes are completed – grades and credential certificates (if applicable) are submitted, all reimbursements or invoices are paid or in process - you are eligible for your bonus. Your scholarship counselor will contact you to discuss the bonus and commitment period, as well as the bonus or raise that your center has agreed to award you.

At the same time, T.E.A.C.H. will send a letter to the sponsoring center notifying them that the recipient has completed the contract and is eligible for the contracted center bonus or raise. This raise or bonus must be paid no later than the completion date of one's commitment period. All appropriate taxes must be taken out of any bonus check paid by the center. Once the compensation from the center is received, verification is submitted to your counselor via the Information Update Form sent with your bonus, and a paycheck stub reflecting the raise or bonus.

Bonuses from T.E.A.C.H. are taxable income and should be reported as such. If you received more than \$600 in bonuses and/or stipends in a calendar year, you will receive a Form 1099 from WECA.

For those programs who've chosen the raise option, note that a raise cannot replace, but must be in addition to, any regularly scheduled 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.

Deadlines for submitting requests for reimbursements for each semester:

- September 1 - for the previous summer semester
- February 1 - for the previous fall semester
- June 1 - for the previous spring semester

T.E.A.C.H. recommends submitting your reimbursement claims as soon as they are ready; you do not need to wait until the deadline to send them in.

It may be up to 6 weeks between submission of forms and receipt of reimbursements. It is important to note that any 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 reimbursement form. If you do not understand your reimbursement or invoice, please call your counselor and s/he will connect you to our Financial Department to talk you through it.

Please note: reimbursements under the amount of \$5.00 will be issued with future reimbursement checks.

Invoices due to T.E.A.C.H.

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 sends invoices statement three (3) times per year for both the recipient and the center, reflecting the total amount due upon receipt. Invoices can be paid in full by check, money order or credit card. Payments can be made online at www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/t-e-a-c-h/cost-calculator-tools/. Alternatively, you can work with us to set up a payment plan. 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!

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. Your employer 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.

You must notify your Scholarship Counselor if you plan to drop or withdraw from a course at any time during the semester. Your college will not notify T.E.A.C.H. if you change your schedule! 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 keep all documentation confirming your withdrawal from a course 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), 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.

Please note that you may not have more than one semester within your contract with no courses taken.

Sending in your grades

Grade reports should be emailed, faxed or mailed to your counselor as soon as they are available at the end of the semester. Your grade report must have your name, your school, your coursework and grades clearly identified. An unofficial transcript can be downloaded from your online account at your school, and emailed or faxed to your counselor. T.E.A.C.H. cannot accept grade reports cut and pasted into a Word document or the body of an email. 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 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.)

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

Give your counselor a call immediately; they 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. You and your

center will still be responsible for your share of tuition for the course. If you do need to take the course a second time, you will be responsible for the tuition, as T.E.A.C.H. can only pay for a course once.

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, 90% 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. You are often able to download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge from your college – check with your school to see if that is an option.
- 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.**

SCHOLARSHIP MODELS

3-8 Credit Model Scholarship

The **3-8 Credit Model scholarship** is a one year, three semester scholarship. Recipients awarded this scholarship complete 3-8 credits of Early Childhood Education core coursework. Courses are typically taken at the Associate Degree level; however, if a person has already completed an Associate or Bachelor's Degree, or has obtained equivalent credits, they may take courses at the Bachelor's Degree level. The 3-8 Credit Model scholarship may be used twice; after the second use, the student will be required to move into a credential or degree scholarship. Common uses of the 3-8 Credit Model scholarship include taking courses to meet YoungStar educational requirements, taking courses to increase one's Registry level, taking a few courses to "test the waters" of higher education before committing to a degree pathway, or finishing the last few courses of a degree or credential. Once course work is completed, the recipient has a 12 month commitment period. The first six months of that commitment require the recipient to continue working at their sponsoring center. The second six months require the recipient to continue working either at the sponsoring center, or at another licensed or certified family child care program, or licensed or YoungStar participating group child care program in Wisconsin.

The 3-8 Credit Model Scholarship also has a **Limited Option model**. In this option, the sponsoring center does not pay a raise or bonus to the recipient. In turn, the commitment period is 12 months to a licensed or certified family child care program, or licensed or YoungStar participating group child care program in Wisconsin and not to the sponsoring center.

Associate Degree (AA) Scholarship

The **Associate Degree scholarship** is a one year, three semester scholarship. Within that year, recipients complete a range of either 9-18 credits or 19-30 credits toward completion of an Early Childhood Education Associate Degree. The scholarship supports both the early childhood and general education courses required to obtain the Associate Degree. Recipients can apply for the Associate Degree scholarship at any point in their degree path. A person on an AA contract is not committing to completing the entire Associate Degree on scholarship, but rather to fulfilling the 9-18 or 19-30 credits required by the scholarship contract. AA contracts can be renewed after 3 semesters, dependent on continued funding and sponsoring center support. The sponsoring center agrees to award a raise or bonus upon successful completion of each contract, regardless of whether or not degree was completed. The commitment period for the AA contract is 12 months to the sponsoring program upon completion of contracted course work.

Bachelor's Degree (BA) Scholarship

The **Bachelor's Degree Scholarship** is also a one year, three semester scholarship. Within that year, recipients complete a range of either 9-18 or 19-30 credits toward completion of a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Similar to the AA Scholarship, the BA scholarship supports the required early childhood and general education courses of the Early Childhood Education degree. Also similar to the AA scholarship, recipients can apply for the Bachelor's Degree at any point in their degree path. A person on a BA contract is not committing to completing the entire Bachelor's Degree on scholarship, but rather to fulfilling the 9-18 or 19-30 credits required by the scholarship contract. BA contracts can be renewed after 3 semesters dependent on continued funding and sponsoring center support. The sponsoring center agrees to award a raise or bonus upon successful completion of each contract, regardless of whether or not degree was completed. The commitment period for the BA contract is 12 months to the sponsoring program upon completion of contracted course work and a second 12 months to a licensed or certified family childcare program, or licensed or YoungStar participating group child care program.

In order to be eligible for the Bachelor's Degree scholarship, an applicant must have previously completed an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, or equivalent credits. If the school you are interested in does not offer an Early Childhood Education degree, please contact T.E.A.C.H. to discuss what options may be available.

Credential Scholarship

An early childhood credential is a specialization awarded by the Wisconsin Registry and comprised of 12 to 18 credits. 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. Depending on the number of credits, this scholarship is awarded on a 3 or 4 semester 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, focused on working with a specific age group, or on administering a child care program:

- Infant Toddler
- Preschool
- Administrator
- Afterschool & Youth Development
- Family Child Care

If you have completed one of the credentials listed above, or have completed a minimum of 12 early childhood education credits at the Associate or Bachelor's Degree level, you may apply for one of the following credentials, focused on subject specific coursework:

- Program Development
- Inclusion
- Leadership
- Supporting Dual Language Learners
- Diversity
- Nature Based Learning

For more information on credentials, please visit the Wisconsin Registry's website at www.wiregistry.org/credentials-overview/

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 Wisconsin Registry can provide you with a credential guide.
- After completing the coursework, a final project or portfolio must be presented to the Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin 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. You then submit a Registry "Request for Commission Form" provided by your instructor. Upon receipt, the Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin Registry website: www.wiregistry.org/credentials-overview/resource-center/. When you've created a portfolio/project that you're proud of, have faith that you'll be able to present it!
- Membership in the Wisconsin Registry is required of those awarded a credential. For information on how to join, visit their website: www.wiregistry.org or call their office at 608-222-1123.

Apprenticeship Scholarship

The **Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship program** is a 2-year training program offered through the Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Technical College system. Students who complete the program receive 4000 hours of on-the-job training, 324 hours of related instruction, and earn 27 credits toward the Early Childhood Education Associate Degree. Apprentices who meet T.E.A.C.H. eligibility requirements may apply for the Apprenticeship Scholarship. This scholarship is a one year contract, and may be renewed as funding and center sponsorship allows, in order for the apprentice to complete the required 27 credit curriculum. Scholarship applicants must be accepted into the Apprenticeship program and submit their letter of admission into the Apprenticeship program along with the scholarship application. Scholarship recipients, sponsoring centers and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin will enter into a contractual agreement for the fulfillment of the scholarship. The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contract will be in addition to contractual requirements with the Apprenticeship program.

More information on the Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship program may be found here www.wtcsystem.edu/programs/find-your-program/early-childhood-educator-apprentice/

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING (CPL)

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 then 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 within 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 if 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 attend to other issues of life balance). Hours of release time must be taken in the same semester as the class occurs. The maximum hours allowed does not vary with number of credits and there is no “carryover” of release time hours into the next semester. T.E.A.C.H. recommends that the scholarship recipient and the center director have a conversation each semester about release time and how to schedule the release time hours.

How release time is paid

If you are an employee, your center will pay you for release time at your usual hourly rate of pay. Your center is then reimbursed for the total hours given to the recipient at the rate of \$15.00/hour. If \$15.00 is more than the scholarship recipient’s rate of pay, the employer keeps the difference. If \$15.00 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.

Form C’s for requesting reimbursement for release time are emailed to you at the time your scholarship is awarded. These are individualized to the recipient and the center, so if you need additional copies, request them from your counselor. Release time reimbursement from T.E.A.C.H. is always paid to the program.

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 directly to the family child care provider.

After release time has been provided, either the T.E.A.C.H. Scholar or Sponsor completes Form C, Release Time Reimbursement Claim Form. Both of you must sign the form. Form C is then sent to your counselor via email, fax or postal mail. 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 15 through May 15
- Summer Semester: May 16 through August 15
- Fall Semester: August 16 through December 31

If your course does not fall within the above dates, please contact your counselor to determine the semester.

Make sure Form C is submitted no later than the following deadlines: September 1 for summer semester, February 1 for fall semester, and June 1 for spring semester.

Some ways for making release time work

We understand planning for release time can be a challenge. 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, 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, 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, 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, your family's expected contribution toward your tuition, 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. Think carefully before you accept any student loans; repayment will start 6 months after your schooling is completed.

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, technology stipend, the T.E.A.C.H. bonus, and the sponsoring program's bonus or raise upon successful completion of your contract. If student loans were used to pay for your tuition, you may request reimbursement for those costs by submitting a Form B and a statement of account from your school showing how your tuition was paid. T.E.A.C.H. will then reimburse at the typical 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.

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.

COMMITMENT PERIOD

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. In some cases, the **commitment period** may involve working in another regulated child care program for a specified length of time. Be sure you are aware of and understand this commitment period before signing your scholarship contract.

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.

CONTRACT RENEWALS

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship contracts can be renewed as funding allows and with continued sponsoring center support. Renewals allow you to move from your current contract into another without a break in coursework. As you begin the last semester of your contract, you can discuss options with your counselor for continuing on to your next scholarship. You will be sent a contract renewal form for you and your director to complete and return. Deadlines to return contract renewal forms are as follows:

- March 1 for summer renewal
- June 1 for fall renewal
- November 1 for spring renewal

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

If you need to be away from your program for an extended period of time (maternity leave, leave due to serious illness of self or family member), please talk to your counselor. You may still be able to take courses but depending on the timing and circumstances of your leave, may need to pay tuition out of pocket and go through reimbursement once you return to work. You and your sponsoring center will still be responsible for your shares of tuition. Alternatively, you may choose to take that time off of classes and resume once you return to work. Release time is waived during a leave of absence, as the employee is not working in the program during that time.

If your leave occurs during your commitment period, the commitment period stops, and will resume when you return to work. The commitment period will be extended by the length of time you were on leave.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CONTRACT

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 remain 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 - 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. Your balance due to T.E.A.C.H. must be zero in order to reapply.

Scholarships will also be withdrawn for failure to submit required grades and/or credential certificates, or failure to pay for your share of tuition. You may be eligible to reapply once all documentation is received and your balance due to T.E.A.C.H. is zero.

Withdrawals may also be involuntary, for example the scholarship recipient was fired from their position, or the sponsoring center closed (and recipient was an employee of the program). Depending on the reason for withdrawal, you may be eligible to re-apply if/when all outstanding debt has been paid and you meet all scholarship eligibility requirements. Talk with your counselor.

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 must wait 3 years before you may re-apply for scholarship.

Payment options

If you withdraw from your scholarship and have a balance due to T.E.A.C.H., you can pay in full by check, money order or credit card. Alternatively, 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.

EVALUATIONS

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.

Sponsoring centers receive an online evaluation annually in September.

We value your feedback and use it to improve our services.

APPLICATION FAQs

If you have a hard copy of this Handbook, you or your employees have already been awarded a scholarship. But in case your colleagues or friends or interested, here are some quick FAQs regarding the application process.

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 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 based on when the completed application was received. Contract renewals, however, 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.

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 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 Wisconsin Registry at 608-222-1123 or support@wiregistry.org.** If you are pursuing a credential, you will be required to join before completing your final Commission, since all credentials are awarded by the Wisconsin 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 or Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education?
- 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 in the last semester of your current scholarship and want to continue with another, talk to your Counselor. Scholarships may be renewed yearly as funding and sponsoring center support allows.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

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

- For general scholarship information, 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, and a convenient online T.E.A.C.H. chat feature for asking questions online.
- For questions regarding any aspect of your specific scholarship, contact your **Scholarship Counselor**.
- For 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.

- For questions regarding the awarding 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 Wisconsin Registry's professional recognition system, contact the **Wisconsin Registry** at **608-222-1123**.
- For 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**.

FORMS & RESOURCES

Forms

Sample copies of these forms can be found in this section.

- **Deadlines Reminder Document:** [p. 25](#)
- **Scholarship Model Chart:** [p. 26-27](#)

Reimbursement forms are individualized for each scholarship recipient and center and are emailed to you upon scholarship award. 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.

Workshops have been created to support your professional development efforts. 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:** [p. 28-29](#)
- **Organization & Time Management:** [p. 30-31](#)

Membership in WECA: [p. 32](#)

Membership to WECA is 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.

WECA Food Program: [p. 33](#)

REWARD Wisconsin Stipend Program: [p. 34](#)

Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESN): [p. 35](#)

SAMPLE FORM: DEADLINES REMINDER DOCUMENT



IMPORTANT DEADLINES!!

PLEASE KEEP THIS DOCUMENT AND MARK THE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR!

To Get a DBA Report all current semester coursework to your counselor to get a Direct Billing Authorization, allowing T.E.A.C.H. to pay tuition directly to your college:

March 1- for spring semester activity
June 1- for summer semester activity
October 1 - for fall semester activity

Reimbursement Requests Last day to submit for the previous semester's expenses (books, release time, travel):

February 1 - receipts for fall semester
June 1 - receipts for spring semester
September 1- receipts for summer semester

Contract Renewals Renewal forms need to be in by:

March 1 – for summer renewal
June 1 – for fall renewal
November 1 – for spring renewal

T.E.A.C.H. Definition of Semesters:

- * Spring Semester: 1/1 – 5/15
- * Summer Semester: 5/16 – 8/15
- * Fall Semester: 8/16 – 12/31

(Phone) 800-783-9322 • (Office) 608-240-9880 • (Fax) 877-248-7622 <http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org>
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SAMPLE FORM: SCHOLARSHIP MODEL CHART

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarship Program

	Center Employee	Center Owner	Family Provider/ Family Provider Employee
T.E.A.C.H. Provides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% Tuition • 90% Books • \$100 Travel Stipend per semester • Release Time Reimbursement for 15 hours per semester @ \$15.00/hour • Registry Credential fee (if applicable) • Technology Stipend • Bonus* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% Tuition • 90% Books • \$100 Travel Stipend per semester • Release Time Reimbursement for 15 hours per semester @ \$15.00/hour • Registry Credential fee (if applicable) • Technology Stipend • Bonus* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% Tuition • 90% Books • \$100 Travel Stipend per semester • Release Time Reimbursement for 15 hours per semester @ \$15.00/hour • Registry Credential fee (if applicable) • Technology Stipend • Bonus*
Recipient Provides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% Tuition • 10% Books • Commitment Period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% Tuition • 10% Books • Commitment Period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% Tuition • 10% Books • Commitment Period
Center Provides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% tuition • 15 hours of Release Time per semester (reimbursed by T.E.A.C.H.) • Raise or Bonus* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% tuition • 15 hours of Release Time per semester (reimbursed by T.E.A.C.H.) 	

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*See page 2 for raise and bonus amounts, credits, semesters per contract and commitment period.

SAMPLE FORM: SCHOLARSHIP MODEL CHART

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarship Program

Model	Credits	Contact Length	Commitment Period	Center Raise or Bonus	T.E.A.C.H. Bonus
3-8 Credit Model	3-8	3 semesters	6 months + a 2 nd 6 months at sponsor or another regulated WI child care	1% Raise or \$150 Bonus	\$350.00
3-8 Credit Model Limited Option (Center Employee)	3-8	3 semesters	12 months in a regulated WI child care program	No raise or bonus	\$350.00
Credential	9-18	3 semesters (12 credits) - or- 4 semesters (18 credits)	12 months to sponsoring center	2% Raise or \$300 Bonus	\$500.00
Associate Degree	9-18	3 semesters	12 months to sponsoring center	2% Raise or \$250 Bonus	\$500.00
Associate Degree	19-30	3 semesters	12 months to sponsoring center	2.5% Raise or \$300 Bonus	\$600.00
Bachelor's Degree	9-18	3 semesters	12 months to sponsoring center + a 2 nd 12 months at sponsor or another regulated WI child care program	2% Raise or \$250 Bonus	\$500.00
Bachelor's Degree	19-30	3 semesters	12 months to sponsoring center + a 2 nd 12 months at sponsor or another regulated WI child care program	2.5% Raise or \$300 Bonus	\$600.00

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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.

RESOURCES: STUDY HABITS FOR SUCCESS

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.studyqs.net>
Workshop Essentials by Paula Jorde Bloom

weca Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

RESOURCES: ORGANIZATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT

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.

RESOURCES: ORGANIZATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT

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>

weca Wisconsin Early
Childhood Association

MEMBERSHIP IN WECA

WECA, the state affiliate of **National Association for the Education of Young Children** (NAEYC), provides significant professional development and networking opportunities to Wisconsin's early childhood professionals. This is offered through membership, training events, and a dynamic annual conference, which has been a mainstay event hosted by WECA since 1971.

Membership to WECA/NAEYC provides professional development opportunities, resources, advocacy power, and networking. In addition to four membership level options, WECA also works to provide local affiliate-specific benefits to enhance the power and value of ongoing membership. To learn more, visit WECA's website.

WECA provides extensive professional development and training opportunities for early childhood educators, including the Annual Conference, which the organization has hosted since 1971. Professional development opportunities and trainings cover a variety of relevant topics and many offer Wisconsin Registry credit.

The conference offers extensive professional development credit for Wisconsin's early childhood professionals through a dynamic, centralized way to engage in networking, learning, and development in one event. It provides content through keynote presentations, workshops, and other breakout sessions on timely and relevant topics. It has been offered in virtual, in-person, and hybrid formats to meet registrants' time and geographic needs.

CONTACT

Contact WECA about professional development and training via email at training@wisconsinearlychildhood.org or phone at **800-783-9322** or **608-240-9880**, (option 6 for Training/Conference, option 8 for Membership).

LEARN MORE

Scan the code with your smartphone camera to learn more on WECA's website! Visit the Professional Development and Engagement sections.



“What a wonderful conference you put on! I have to say, I think the best I have ever attended by WECA. The keynotes were outstanding, as were the other presenters. But, the keynotes are worth the registration fee alone – each of them.”

– WECA Conference
Attendee

WECA FOOD PROGRAM



The **WECA Food Program** assists regulated family child care providers in serving nutritionally balanced meals and snacks to children. It is the only food program in Wisconsin eligible to serve providers, children, and families in all 72 counties and all Tribal nations. WECA is one of Wisconsin's sponsors of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which is federally funded by the United States Department

of Agriculture (USDA).

Joining the Food Program highlights a commitment to high-quality care, professionalism, and the healthy nutrition of young children while providing an important economic benefit to providers.

ENROLLMENT

Visit the **Join the WECA Food Program** page on WECA's website to enroll. Simply fill out the online form and a Food Program staff member will reach out.

PROGRAM LOGISTICS

- Become a licensed or certified family child care provider, if you aren't already.
- Sign an agreement with the WECA Food Program and enroll the children in your care.
- Feed children according to Food Program guidelines and keep a record of menus and attendance.
- Keep online, up-to-date records of menus and attendance.
- Allow a Food Program Area Coordinator to visit three times a year.
- Complete an annual in-home training.
- Receive monthly reimbursement.

The WECA website has claims and payment information and a variety of forms and resources for providers enrolled in the program.

CONTACT

Contact the Food Program via email at foodprogram@wisconsinearlychildhood.org or phone at **800-783-9322** or **608-240-9880, option 2**.

LEARN MORE

Scan the code with your smartphone camera to visit the Food Program on WECA's website.



“Our children are creating their own foundations and structures, and we owe it to them to give them good ‘supplies’ so they can have a solid start in life. WECA secures funding to supplement our Food Program, as well as advocating for healthy changes that can help us all live stronger and more vibrant lives.”
– WECA Food Program Participant

REWARD WISCONSIN STIPEND PROGRAM



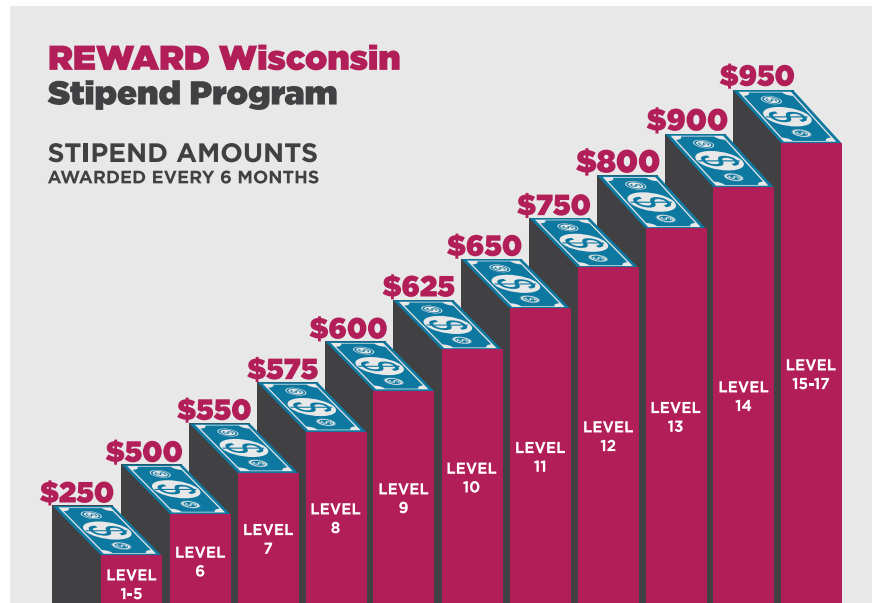
The **REWARD Wisconsin Stipend Program** provides supplemental financial stipends to early childhood educators to increase compensation and retention in the early childhood field and, in turn, improve the quality of care provided to Wisconsin’s young children. Each year, the program facilitates the distribution of thousands of stipends to early childhood educators throughout Wisconsin.

ELIGIBILITY

The program uses a combination of Wisconsin Registry level, employment longevity, and a series of other employment-related criteria to determine early educator eligibility for stipends and the stipend amount awarded. Please visit the REWARD page on WECA’s website for current eligibilities.

APPLICATION PROCESS

REWARD applications are available in English and Spanish on WECA’s website. The application details all materials and information needed to complete the process, including financial institution account information so stipends can be safely and securely awarded via direct deposit if you wish to receive your stipend electronically.



QUESTIONS?

Review a series of frequently asked questions that cover key program information on the website.

CONTACT

Contact REWARD via email at reward@wisconsinearlychildhood.org or phone at 800-783-9322 or 608-240-9880, option 5. Online chat also is available during regular business hours by visiting WECA’s website and selecting the widget in the lower right of the REWARD page.

LEARN MORE

Scan the code with your smartphone camera to visit REWARD on WECA’s website.



WISCONSIN EARLY EDUCATION SHARED SERVICES NETWORK



Being stronger together is what shared services is all about. You don't have to go it alone. Find out what's possible for the future of early care and education when we all work together.

WEESSN offers **FREE** – yes, truly free! – services to support all regulated child care programs in Wisconsin.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

WEESSN believes early childhood educators do vitally important work. The workforce deserves access to high-quality, easy-to-use tools and services, many of which would be unaffordable for individual child care programs. WECA offers many programs to address these challenges and support the early childhood workforce – WEESSN is one of them.

That's the power of shared services and resources: Think of WEESSN as an extra team member dedicated to helping you save time and money.

Our No. 1 goal is to make your professional life less stressful, so you can spend more time on your most important work: nurturing children, supporting families, and enriching your community.

WHAT WE DO

WEESSN offers business, administrative, and financial resources for family child care and group centers. These include **FREE** access to:

- Job postings, discounted purchasing, and customizable forms and policies
- Waitlist, enrollment, and child care management software
- Confidential professional services and wellness programs
- Professional development for you and your staff
- Tax guides and financial videos
- Business coaching to help you achieve your goals

HOW WE SERVE YOU

WEESSN has compiled a network of services backed by coaches and advisors who have been in your shoes. It is fully funded by private and public contributions, which is why it is available at no cost to you.

We look forward to partnering with you! Learn more about WEESSN on our website at wisconsinearlychildhood.org/weessn or scan this QR code with your smartphone camera.

CONTACT

Contact WEESSN via email at tieredservices@wisconsinearlychildhood.org or phone at 800-783-9322, *option 4* or 608-721-6936.

LEARN MORE & SIGN UP

Scan the code with your smartphone camera to sign up for Tier 1 today!





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