Minnesota Department of Education

Early Learning Scholarships Program

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is pleased to announce that the Early Learning Scholarship Program is now available for Minnesota families. Minnesota's low-income families with children between the ages three and five will have access to high-quality early childhood programs in counties located in the 13 Governor's Economic Development Regions. Priority for scholarships will be given based on family income, geographic location, and whether a child's family is on a waiting list for a publicly funded program providing early education or child care services.

Eligible children can access Early Learning Scholarships in one of two ways:

1. Pathway I: Early Learning Scholarships awarded directly to eligible children through regional Early Learning Scholarships Administrator Offices. These scholarships are paid to the early childhood program the family chooses. The early childhood program must be participating in Parent Aware, Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System, and may include school district prekindergarten and preschool programs, Head Start, child care centers, and licensed family child care providers.

In order to be eligible to receive a Pathway I Scholarship, a child must live in one of the following counties:

Region 1- Norman, Marshall, Polk and Red Lake
Scholarship Administrator: Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.
1-800-543-7382

Region 2 - Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard and Mahnomen
Scholarship Administrator: Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership, Inc.
1-218-632-3600

Region 3 – Aitkin, Carlton, Itasca and Saint Louis
Scholarship Administrator: Think Small™
651-641-6604

Region 4 - Becker, Douglas, Otter Tail and Wilkin
Scholarship Administrator: Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership
218-299-7065

Region 5 - Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena
Scholarship Administrator: Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership, Inc.
218-632-3600

Region 6E – Kandiyohi, Meeker and Renville
Scholarship Administrator: Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc.
1-800-292-5437

Region 6W - Chippewa, Lac Qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine
Scholarship Administrator: Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc.
1-800-292-5437

Region 7E - Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine
Scholarship Administrator: Pine Technical College
1-800-890-5399

Region 7W - Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright
Scholarship Administrator: Child Care Choices, Inc.
320-251-5081

Region 8 – Cottonwood, Lincoln, Lyon and Nobles
Scholarship Administrator: Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc.
1-800-658-2444

Region 9 - Blue Earth, Brown, Martin, Nicollet and Watonwan
Scholarship Administrator: Child Care Resource & Referral, Inc.
1-855-588-2056

Region 10 – Freeborn, Mower, Olmsted, Rice and Winona
Scholarship Administrator: Child Care Resource & Referral, Inc.
1-888-450-2773

Region 11 - Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Scott, Ramsey and Washington
Scholarship Administrator: Think Small™
651-641-6604

Applications for the Pathway I Scholarships *are available to families through the Early Learning Scholarships Administrator regional offices. Please contact your regional scholarship administrator office for more information.*

2. Pathway II: Early Learning Scholarships awarded to families through a Four Star Parent Aware rated early childhood program who has been designated as a Pathway II site in communities with the highest need. The Four Star Parent Aware rated early childhood program families may choose from include school district prekindergarten and preschool programs, Head Start, child care centers, and licensed family child care providers.

Applications for the Pathway II Scholarships *are available to families through your local Four Star Parent Aware, rated early learning program in selected school district attendance areas. Please contact your local school district; Four Star rated child care program or local Head Start agency to apply for a Pathway II Early Learning Scholarship in your area.*

To find the Four Star rated program in your area, please visit the Parent Aware website