

TEACH EARLY CHILDHOOD[®] NORTH CAROLINA

Participant Handbook



— NORTH CAROLINA —

An Early Years Initiative

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1. Overview of the TEACH Early Childhood® Scholarship

a. History

The TEACH (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® Program was created by Early Years, Inc. formerly known as Child Care Services Association in North Carolina in 1990 with the purpose of increasing the level of education of teachers working with children age birth to five, while making college education affordable, decreasing turnover, and increasing wages. Since its beginning, the program has received national attention due to linking teacher education, compensation and retention together. The program has also expanded and currently 22 states nationwide operate their own TEACH scholarship programs.

The TEACH Early Childhood® North Carolina Scholarship Program remains a robust statewide program serving all 100 North Carolina counties and provides sequenced educational scholarship opportunities for child care center teachers, directors, and family child care home providers who work in regulated settings, as well as early care and education community specialists working on behalf of young children, families or the early care and education workforce. North Carolina has a variety of models to help early care and education professionals work towards early childhood certificates, degrees, teacher licensure or to complete early childhood coursework to meet employment qualifications.

b. Administering Agency

The TEACH Early Childhood® North Carolina Scholarship Program is administered by Early Years, Inc, formerly known as Child Care Services Association, a private, non-profit, tax-exempt organization committed to ensuring that all children have equitable access to affordable, high quality early care and education to lay the foundation for successful life outcomes. This vision for equitable access to quality education is the driving force behind Early Year's mission to lead efforts to strengthen accessible and affordable quality early care and education by providing support for families, communities and the workforce, as well as conducting comprehensive research to share with policy makers.

c. Role of the Scholarship Specialist

The purpose of a Scholarship Specialist is to provide scholarship guidance to TEACH participants and sponsoring programs. Specialists process scholarship paperwork and regularly communicate with participating colleges and universities. Scholarship Specialists are available to assist recipients if they have questions regarding their scholarship or the scholarship program, need help contacting the college, or if they just need guidance on balancing work, school, and personal responsibilities. Keeping in regular contact with a scholarship Specialist will help ensure recipients are always on the right path with their education plans.

d. Role of the Employer-Sponsor

Participation in the TEACH Early Childhood® Scholarship Program involves creating and maintaining a partnership with the scholarship recipient, but also with the sponsoring program/employer. The sponsoring employer plays a key role in supporting the recipient as they journey through their education program. Having the financial and/or moral support of the program is critical to the success for TEACH recipients. For comprehensive scholarship models, the employer will be more involved and contribute while the recipient is in school in the following ways:

- Pay for percentage of tuition and/or books for recipient, which will vary by scholarship model;
- In some cases, provide paid release time which varies by number of credits being taken and scholarship model;
- Provide additional compensation in the form of a raise or bonus after the recipient successfully completes a contract and commitment, which will vary by scholarship model.

Other scholarship models do not require employer sponsorship, such as the Working Scholars models. While the requirements of employers for these scholarship programs are minimal, the scholarship specialist may interact with the employer to verify employment for scholarship eligibility purposes or other communication needs.

e. Confidentiality

TEACH shall respect and maintain the confidentiality of all personal information from (i.e. ID numbers, banking information, HIPAA-protected information, etc.). All information is maintained electronically on an encrypted drive with secure passwords. We will not sell recipients' personal information. Information concerning employment status, scholarship and enrollment status may be shared with your employer and college officials, as well as program funders.

f. Funding

The financial support of our partners is imperative for the continuation of our program to improve the education of our early childhood workforce. Currently, primary funding comes through the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Childhood Education (NCDCDEE).

g. Definitions

"Recipient" refers to the individual who is receiving a TEACH Early Childhood® scholarship.

"Sponsor" and "Employer" refer to the child care center program, family child care home, or early childhood focused community organization where the TEACH scholarship recipients are employed.

2. Eligibility for the TEACH Early Childhood® North Carolina Scholarship Program

a. Applicants

To be eligible for most TEACH Early Childhood® Scholarships, an applicant must:

- Work a minimum number of hours per week in a licensed early care and learning program or in an early care focused agency or organization as a teacher, assistant teacher, or director with children ages birth to 5 years.
- Be enrolled/planning to enroll at any North Carolina community college or partnering North Carolina college or university to complete early childhood coursework, degree, certificate, or licensure.
- Have the support and sponsorship of the child care employer (for comprehensive scholarship models only.)

Note: some scholarship models may have additional or varying requirements

b. Sponsors/Employers

For an employer to sponsor a TEACH Early Childhood® scholarship, they must:

- Be a licensed North Carolina early childhood education program or a community-based early care focused agency or organization.
- Agree to provide release time to approved recipients and compensation for completed contracts and commitment periods (for select comprehensive scholarship models only)
- Be able to financially assist in providing release time and paying co-pays for tuition, fees, books and raise/bonus compensation (for comprehensive scholarship models.)

Note: For the Working Scholars capped scholarship program, the employer does not contribute toward tuition/books and is not required to provide release time or compensation. In turn, the scholarship recipient's commitment is to the early care and education field and not the employer. The employer will be required to sign the initial scholarship application and verify employment status as needed.

c. Professionalism

TEACH staff shall maintain high standards of professionalism in all their interactions and communication. Likewise, recipients and sponsors are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner with TEACH staff, college advisors and instructors. TEACH will not tolerate harassment, threats, or profanity from anyone and reserves the right to discontinue working with a recipient or sponsor at any time.

3. Applying for a TEACH Early Childhood® Scholarship

TEACH Early Childhood® offers a variety of scholarship models to help finance coursework that leads to college credit in an early childhood related area. Those interested can find all application materials and support tools at our website: <https://www.earlyyearsnc.org/programs/teach-north-carolina/apply/>

Applications may be submitted by mail to:

TEACH Early Childhood North Carolina,
P.O. Box 231
Chapel Hill, NC 27514,

By email: teachnc@earlyyearsnc.org

or by fax: (919) 967-7040

a. Applications

A complete application consists of:

- All pages of the application completed by applicant and sponsor.
- Income verification (a recent pay stub issued within the last 30 days)
- Signed Personal Responsibilities Agreement
- Completed W-9 form for the applicant
- Completed W-9 form for the employer (if applicable)

- Copy of social security card

Note: Some scholarship models may have additional or varying application requirements. Refer to the application for a checklist of items required.

Approved applicants will receive an email from a TEACH scholarship specialist that consists of a welcome letter, contract agreement, instructions, and forms that are required to be completed for the scholarship to be considered active.

TEACH processes applications on a rolling basis. Applications are approved if the applicant meets all qualifications and funding is available. There are priority deadlines for each semester. Applications received after these deadlines will be processed only if funding and time allows.

Fall: June-July
Spring: September-October
Summer: February-March

There are also priority deadlines for course pre-authorization to be sent to colleges and universities. Requests for course pre-authorization received after these deadlines will be processed only if funding and time allows.

Fall: August 1st
Spring: December 1st
Summer: April 1st

b. Deferrals/Contract Adjustments

Circumstances occasionally arise that prevent approved recipients from starting classes in the semester they originally planned. In such cases, the recipient must inform the scholarship specialist as soon as possible. TEACH can allow recipients to defer their start date by one semester. The contract will have to be amended to reflect a new start date, and the new adjusted contract must be signed by the recipient and employer(if applicable.) If more than a one semester deferral is needed, the recipient must contact the scholarship specialist as soon as possible for next steps.

4. Contract Requirements

a. Overview

Approved applicants will receive a TEACH contract (Form A) which must be signed by the applicant, the employer (if applicable) and an authorized TEACH representative. By signing, all parties indicate they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms of the contract. A signed contract must be on file before any scholarship activity can take place. The following are key components of the contract agreement:

- As part of the application, applicants signed the Personal Responsibilities Agreement (PRA) which details all the requirements expected of each recipient while on scholarship. The contract is the binding agreement that defines the terms of the scholarship including credit hour requirements, contract period and other expectations.
- Recipients and employers (if applicable) are responsible for paying invoices.

- Most comprehensive scholarship model contracts run for 12 months and are renewed annually until the recipient completes their education goal. Capped scholarships have different contract periods and renewal processes. Please refer to your individual contract for more information on your specific contract period and requirements.
- Recipients must maintain employment with their current employer during the contract period and for the defined commitment period (if applicable.) Repayment of scholarship reimbursements and bonuses may be required for failure to fulfill commitment. Any changes to employment should be communicated to a scholarship specialist immediately.

****New recipients and those without previous college experience will be limited to up to two approved courses for the first semester on scholarship. If the recipient has taken coursework prior to the scholarship, they may submit transcripts to establish a grade history that will be considered for approval for more than 2 courses.***

b. Contract Renewal

After the contract period has expired, some scholarship models can be renewed. All grades for completed semesters must be on file before a renewal contract can be issued. Overdue unpaid balances of recipients and/or employers will also prevent contract renewals. If more than a year has elapsed since the last activity on a contract, the contract cannot be renewed, and the recipient will have to reapply. Scholarship specialists may also ask for updated income verification for renewals, especially if there has been a lapse in participation.

c. Contract Extensions

At the discretion of the program, a contract may be extended if special circumstances prevent the recipient from completing course requirements within the contract period. Such circumstances must be approved on a case-by-case basis, and only a one-semester extension may be granted. In addition, the recipient will need to enroll in enough credits during the extended semester to meet the minimum course requirements to be eligible for a contract extension. Some models cannot be extended.

d. Changes in Information

Recipients and employers must report all changes to our office within ten (10) business days. This includes contact information, employment status, school admission and enrollment and any other factor related to the scholarship. If changes are not reported in a timely manner, repayment may be required for any financial loss sustained by the TEACH program as a result.

5. Applying to a College or University

a. Choosing a college

Applicants may visit our website (<https://www.earlyyearsnc.org/programs/teach-north-carolina/college-directory/>) to see a directory of participating colleges. Approved programs are also listed on the application and FAQs. Applicants must follow the admission and enrollment process for the selected school. A scholarship specialist is available to help any scholarship recipient who is unsure about which program might be best. They can also connect potential

scholarship recipients with contacts at a participating college to answer questions. Most colleges have websites to apply online. When applying and enrolling, applicants must make sure they select an approved early care and education degree program. Elementary education and general education degrees are not eligible.

Taking placement tests is part of the admissions process at many North Carolina colleges. Applicants should allow plenty of time for admissions decisions. Apply early to get your preferred entry date. If an applicant has previous college coursework, the college will require official transcripts from all colleges attended. Advisors and coordinators can also review transcripts to see which credits from previous colleges might transfer. Always get transfer decisions in writing from a school official. TEACH Early Childhood® NC is unable to pay college application fees, transcript fees or past due balances at previous colleges.

Recipients must meet the college's requirements for admission as part of the scholarship eligibility process. TEACH will terminate a contract if the recipient changes their degree program that is not an approved degree program for the scholarship.

b. Selecting a Degree Pathway

TEACH Early Childhood® scholarships are available to eligible applicants enrolled in many different early care and education related educational pathways in North Carolina at partnering colleges/universities. The applicant's educational goals and previous education will help determine which scholarship is appropriate.

Individuals starting with a high school diploma or with just a few college credits may begin their college experience with the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Almost all NC community colleges offer this degree pathway, and in many colleges, there are different specialized tracks within the degree program a student may follow. This degree provides 65-70 credit hours of concentrated early childhood development knowledge and general education classes, as well as quality field experience opportunities to students. For those who are unsure of completing a degree or prefer not to complete the AAS ECE degree for any reason, they can take a few classes or stop at the diploma or certificate level while participating in TEACH. Individuals who are interested in only taking EDU 119 to earn the NC Early Childhood Credential may access associate degree scholarships because that course is part of the curriculum.

Recipients who have an associate degree or at least 55 transfer credit hours are eligible to apply for a bachelor's scholarship. There are 20 different 4-year colleges/universities that partner with TEACH in NC. Recipients who are eligible for in-state admission to an early childhood focused bachelor's degree program at one of these schools may qualify for a scholarship to pursue this pathway.

Individuals who already have bachelor's degrees may be interested in post-baccalaureate pathways in NC. This includes early childhood focused licenses, graduate certificates and master's degrees. For example, Birth-Kindergarten (BK) Licensure is a popular pathway for early educators who already have bachelor degrees and need to earn a BK teaching license. Other specialized pathways such as the Leadership in Infant Toddler Learning (LITL)

post-baccalaureate graduate certificate and the Early Childhood Leadership Master's Degree in Education are also available at select colleges. TEACH has several different scholarship programs and options for individuals interested in those programs of study.

c. Other Financial Aid

Recipients are allowed and encouraged to apply for additional financial aid in the form of grants and other scholarships. TEACH Early Childhood® NC does not require the FAFSA. There may be times it is suggested, especially when recipients are exceeding contract hours. This ensures the recipient can access financial aid in the event TEACH is unable to cover additional courses or to wrap around TEACH support. If the recipient plans to apply for additional aid, a FAFSA must be submitted to the college's financial aid office before the deadline. Students can go to www.fafsa.ed.gov to apply.

1. **PELL Grants:** Students who use PELL grants to pay for tuition and books cannot be reimbursed by TEACH. However, if a recipient uses the charge authorization method of paying for tuition and/or books, the college will disburse any PELL grant funds to the student after TEACH's payment is received. Be aware PELL has a lifetime maximum which can be awarded per student. Students are encouraged to use this additional financial aid only if necessary.
2. **Student Loans:** The goal of TEACH Early Childhood® is to help recipients attain a debt-free education. Terms of student loan repayment often include exorbitant interest rates and monthly payments that extend for decades. Even minimum loan payments can make it difficult, if not impossible, for early childhood professionals to achieve financial security. For this reason, we strongly discourage recipients from accepting student loans unless absolutely necessary. TEACH pays the school in full for tuition and fees and then bills recipients and sponsors for co-pays if applicable. Loans should be unnecessary for most recipients; however, it is the student's choice. TEACH Early Childhood® NC cannot reimburse the recipient for tuition and/or books that were paid by a student loan. Be careful and seek guidance before agreeing to any financial aid package offered by your college.
3. **Other scholarship programs or grants:** Recipients may sometimes be offered scholarships and/or special grants. TEACH cannot reimburse for tuition/books that were paid by other scholarships or grants. However, the recipient may still be entitled to other components of their scholarship program in the event another scholarship or grant has covered educational expenses.

d. General Education Requirements

TEACH Early Childhood® NC will assist with the general education classes that are required for degree completion. If the recipient is on a bachelor's degree or higher-level scholarship and wants to take courses at the community college that will transfer into the undergraduate or graduate degree program, the scholarship program can assist if the course(s) will transfer and documentation from the college is submitted verifying the transfer.

e. Out of State Tuition Rates

TEACH Early Childhood® NC can only pay tuition at the in-state rate. If the recipient is charged out-of-state tuition, the recipient will be responsible for any tuition/fee amount that is more than the in-state tuition/fee rate. TEACH will prorate the tuition claim to the in-state rate.

6. Overview of TEACH Early Childhood® Process

a. After being approved for a scholarship:

1. Read your award letter, review the contract, forms and instructions. Return all required forms and documentation including the signed scholarship contract to activate your scholarship.
2. Recipients should follow the enrollment and registration process at the college/university they are attending. Some schools will assign an academic advisor, and some colleges have advising centers to help students plan and register for courses. Recipients should be enrolled in an early childhood focused program. Contact your TEACH Early Childhood® scholarship specialist if you need any guidance or contact information for your college.
3. Recipients who are new to college are encouraged to enroll in early childhood coursework FIRST to gain confidence in academic skills before registering for more difficult general education courses (for example, math and psychology). Recipients may also consider taking a combination of one education course and one other course if the option to enroll only in early childhood education courses is not available at the time of registration.

b. Steps to Complete Each Semester:

Plan courses.

1. Communicate with your college academic advisor or advising center every semester to plan and register for the next semester's courses. Recipients should also communicate with the employer regarding coursework if it will affect their work hours and to plan for release time, if applicable.
2. For recipients new to the scholarship or those without an established college record, TEACH Early Childhood® limits approved courses to two classes during the first semester on scholarship. The only exception to enrolling in more than two classes the first semester on scholarship is if the recipient can provide a transcript that shows they have successfully completed a similar course load. The transcript will be reviewed by the scholarship specialist to determine if the recipient is eligible to take more than two classes in the first semester on scholarship.
3. Once recipients have established a grade history, they may be approved to take more hours in a semester. **Approval is needed from TEACH Early Childhood® every semester.** Recipients who request approval for 10 credits or more will go through an additional Credit Hour Approval process which will require their course schedule and work schedule to make sure courses will not interfere with their ability to work 30 hours per week. Recipients will also be advised of applying for financial aid in the event TEACH is unable to approve extra credit hours or to wrap around their scholarship.
4. Recipients should be aware of their contract periods and credit hour maximum. There may be times that credit hours that exceed the maximum allowed can be approved. The Credit Hour Approval process will be followed in these instances with the addition of requesting the approval of the sponsoring employer. Sponsors may not always be able to approve additional contract hours, so recipients should always discuss their plans with their employer. A Credit Hour Approval Form will be sent by the specialist when needed.
5. Recipients may have the number of courses authorized limited or have the charge authorization privilege temporarily suspended. This would only happen in extreme cases

and with the intention of ensuring success. Scholarship specialists can help recipients through this process. In cases where charge authorizations are prohibited, recipients may be eligible for reimbursement if they pay out of pocket and successfully complete the courses in these cases.

6. Recipients should also consider work and other personal commitments before deciding which classes and how many credit hours to enroll in.

Gather the required items for TEACH

1. Complete the Pre-Authorization Request Form (PAF). Based on the scholarship you are on, a class schedule may need to accompany the PAF (Working Scholars, Community Specialists, Associate Scholars). The forms can be emailed to teachnc@earlyyearsnc.org, faxed to 919-967-7040, and/or mailed to PO Box 231, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.
2. If TEACH is the intended method of payment, a charge authorization will be sent to the school for approved classes to be billed to TEACH. If the recipient or employer is paying for tuition, a PAF should be submitted to ensure courses can be approved and reimbursed.
3. Recipients should follow the college's payment deadlines and plan accordingly. **It is the recipient's responsibility to know payment deadlines.** Please note priority deadlines for sending the PAF to TEACH:
 - Fall -August 1st
 - Spring-December 1st
 - Summer-April 1st
4. Recipients must have a current contract on file and all grades from previous semesters received to be eligible for charge authorizations. Past due balances from recipients or sponsoring employers may also prevent classes from being authorized.
5. The scholarship specialist will review course selections. Approval is not guaranteed and contingent on grades, funding availability, and other factors.
6. Credit hour approvals will be completed if needed.
7. After the paperwork is received and if the courses are approved by TEACH the scholarship specialist will send an email authorizing the school to bill TEACH Early Childhood® for tuition, mandatory fees, and books (if applicable.) Fees that cannot be billed to TEACH include graduation fees, ID fees, transcript fees, health insurance fees and/or dropped class fees. The recipient is also included in the charge authorization sent to the school. Recipients will be notified if courses cannot be approved and to discuss alternative options.
8. TEACH is not responsible for cancellation of registration if paperwork is not received in our office by the priority deadline. Please allow 2 business days for PAF to be processed. Missing paperwork may delay authorizations, so always plan ahead.
9. Scholarship recipients must let their specialist know immediately if they change classes after registration. If classes are changed, TEACH needs to be immediately notified and an updated PAF to reflect the class change should be sent so a new authorization can be sent to school.
10. Scholarship recipients will be responsible for tuition, fees, and books associated with any unauthorized courses.

Submit your Form B (Tuition and Book Documentation Form)

1. Recipients must submit a Form B and receipts every semester enrolled, even if they are billing it to TEACH. Registration receipts or other statements that include the college name, semester, courses and itemized charges should be attached to the Form B and

submitted. Access stipends, books and capped scholarship balances cannot be paid until the Form B and receipts are received.

2. If books are purchased out of pocket, receipts should be attached to the Form B, and send it in with copies of paid book receipts that show the book title, individual book price, taxes, shipping and handling, fees, and the payment method (cash, card, etc.).
3. If books are charged to TEACH by a school that participates with deferred billing for books, the recipient will be asked to send in a book receipt with the same information listed above for books purchased out of pocket.
4. Sales tax and shipping and handling cannot be charged or reimbursed by TEACH
5. Scholarship recipients can buy or rent books. Books may be new or used if they meet course requirements.
6. TEACH will reimburse for eBooks but not the reader software.
7. Recipients should ask their scholarship specialist if they have any questions about reimbursable books. A syllabus may be required to approve book reimbursements if there are any questions.
8. Forms and receipts should be sent within 30 days of the close of the semester to ensure reimbursement. If Form B's are not received within 30 days of the close of the semester tuition and/or book reimbursement is forfeited.
9. Original receipts should be kept by recipients for their records.

Release time claims Form C. (for eligible scholarship models)

1. Employers receive Form C's when the award letters are sent to the recipient and employer for those participating on models with a release time component. Form Cs may be requested at any time for recipients participating on these models.
2. Scholarship recipients and/or employers will schedule and log release time throughout the semester on the Form C.
3. The Form C must be completed with semester, dates and times of paid release time. The employer and recipient will sign before sending as verification that paid release time was provided by the employer.
4. Form C's may be submitted weekly, monthly, or within thirty days of the close of the semester. If Form C's are not received within 30 days of the close of semester, the reimbursement is forfeited.
5. The release time reimbursement is paid directly to the employer as reimbursement for release time already paid to the recipient.

Send grade reports.

1. At the end of the semester, recipients must send a copy of their grade report or a transcript showing their final letter grade(s).
2. Current semester grades that have already posted will be needed before approval of next semester's classes or contract renewals.
3. Charge approvals for future semesters and reimbursement claims will be placed on hold if there are missing grade reports and/or any required information.
4. Unofficial copies of transcripts are acceptable, but they must be legible and include the student's name, the college name, the semester, course titles, and grade to be accepted.
5. Grade reports or a screenshot of the student account grade portal are also acceptable if they include the information above.

c. Steps to Complete at the End of a Contract (Renewal)

1. When a contract period is ended, the scholarship specialist will review the recipient's file for compensation eligibility. If the recipient is eligible for compensation, a compensation packet will be sent through email to the recipient and the employer (if applicable.) If the compensation is a bonus, the specialist will request the bonus upon sending the compensation packet. The scholarship specialist may contact the recipient about renewing their contract if this has not already been done.
2. The recipient is responsible for completely filling out the Information Update Form (including the recipient's and employer's signatures. A current pay stub must also be submitted with the Information Update Form. Based on the scholarship, recipients may be required to send in additional information with the Information Update Form.
3. Recipients should be sure to indicate their intention and education goal going forward by answering the question regarding your continued intent to participate on scholarship.
4. For those continuing with the scholarship, a new contract will be sent to the recipient and employer (if applicable) for signature.
5. Recipients applying for additional financial aid, should submit a new FAFSA each year to their college.
6. Upon graduation, recipients should send us a copy of their diploma/degree or transcript listing the degree and date awarded. Once TEACH receives a copy of your degree confirmation, you might be eligible for a Degree Attainment Recognition Bonus depending on your scholarship program.

d. Other Fees

These fees, associated with college enrollment, are not eligible for reimbursement by TEACH:

- Exemption testing fees for required courses
- Testing center fees associated with proctoring distance learning students
- Graduation fees
- PRAXIS testing fees
- CDA test fee
- Application fees
- Transcript Request fees
- Dropped class fees
- Past due balances associated with enrollment prior to TEACH participation

e. Priority Deadlines

1) Applications

- Fall (June-July)
- Spring (September-October)
- Summer (February-March)

2) Pre-authorization Request Forms

- Fall (August 1)
- Spring (December 1)
- Summer (April 1)

TO SUBMIT ALL FORMS AND PAPERWORK, you can email teachnc@earlyyearsnc.org, fax 919-967-7040 and/or mail to PO Box 231, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Once your paperwork is received and logged, it will be forwarded to your scholarship specialist for processing.

7. Release Time

(PLEASE NOTE THAT NOT ALL SCHOLARSHIP MODELS INCLUDE RELEASE TIME)

TEACH scholarship recipients are eligible for paid release time when classes are in session during the semester with certain scholarship models. The amount of release time the recipient can receive depends on the model and option. Release time may be used to attend class (online or face-to-face), study, complete homework or projects, meet with instructors/advisors, and even do personal errands or other tasks that cannot be completed outside of working hours and class. Recipients should work with their employers to find the best times to use release time during the semester. Release time should only be given during normal business hours and excludes weekends and after hours. The purpose of release time is to give the recipient time off from work to successfully balance work, school and other personal obligations.

If classes cover a shorter period than a normal 16-week semester (such as five or eight weeks), TEACH does not require that your program provide all release time hours but may give you as many of the eligible hours as they are able. Release time hours can be spread throughout an entire semester. Recipients are paid for release time through their employer. Sponsoring programs are reimbursed directly for a portion of the cost of release time at an hourly rate set by the TEACH in the contract agreement, after submitting the Release Time Claim Reimbursement Form (Form C.)

The claim form may be submitted weekly, monthly, or at the end of the semester. Release time claims can be processed once proof of enrollment is received from the recipient (i.e. registration receipt.) Release time should be listed on the Form C on each line by date and the number of paid release time hours that was given. When recipients and directors sign the Form C, they confirm that the information is accurate. Sponsor co-pays for tuition, fees, and books may be deducted from release time reimbursements depending on the timing of claim processing. If the reimbursement does not cover co-pays, the sponsoring program will be billed for the balance. Additional forms may be submitted for the same semester to provide room to track release time by date.

If recipients or sponsors have any issues with release time, they should talk with a scholarship specialist for a solution. While it is understood that staffing issues may create challenges in providing the time, recipients and employers are encouraged to work together to find a compromise and are given flexibility by TEACH Employers who will not or cannot provide reimbursable release time should contact a scholarship specialist to discuss release time issues and options.

Creative suggestions for taking/providing Release Time include:

- Pay recipients for lunch breaks (not in the classroom.)
- Allow recipients to clock in late or clock out early.
- Add time to their annual or personal leave.

Family-based professionals are eligible to receive 32 hours of release time per active semester which are paid directly to the recipient when tuition, books and access stipend are processed.

Release time is not a component of all scholarships and may vary, for example, director models or capped scholarships do not provide release time. The amount of release time a recipient is entitled, and

the reimbursement rate may also vary depending on the scholarship model and enrollment. Please refer to the scholarship contract or consult a scholarship specialist for specific information related to the number of hours and reimbursement rate or with any questions or issues concerning release time.

8. Academic Issues

a. Grades

Recipients must send a copy of the final grade report to the TEACH Early Childhood® NC Scholarship Program each semester once the report becomes available. The grade report must list the recipient's name, name of college/university, semester/term and final grade. Scholarships may be suspended for any recipient who has not submitted grades within 30 days of the close of the semester. Recipients who fail to send in grade reports may also be invoiced for repayment of tuition and books for those courses. Grades may be shared with Child Care WAGES® or Infant Toddler AWARD\$® programs upon written request.

For the credit hours to be counted towards contract completion, a passing grade must be earned. A withdrawal grade does not count toward fulfillment of credit hours. If a student receives a grade of incomplete, it will not count towards fulfillment of credit hours. However, if the recipient receives credit for the course upon retaking an Incomplete, it may be counted as completed during that term, if it will result in contract completion.

b. Repeated Coursework

If a recipient receives unsatisfactory grades, there are several possible outcomes. Every recipient gets one forgiveness for a withdrawn or failed class. Extenuating circumstances may also be considered for forgiveness if the recipient communicates as soon as possible about any issues that will affect the successful completion of courses. However, if a recipient repeatedly is not successful in passing courses, they may be required to pay back the scholarship or be required to pay for the class when they retake it. They also may be limited in the number of credit hours authorized, and in extreme cases we may suspend the ability to charge tuition and cover tuition as reimbursement only.

In cases of repeated coursework, the recipient will also be asked to discuss an improvement plan for successfully completing courses. This plan may include reducing overall course loads, accessing resources such as tutoring or other strategies for success. If the scholarship specialist is satisfied the recipient is motivated and has a sufficient plan, TEACH Early Childhood® may decide to pay for the course again. Most decisions are determined on a case-by-case basis.

c. Adding, Dropping or Withdrawing from a Class

Recipients must notify their scholarship specialist before adding, dropping, or withdrawing from a class that has been pre-authorized. The recipient must also follow the procedures at their college for dropping and/or adding classes, as TEACH is not responsible for making changes to recipients' schedules. If adding or changing a class, an updated Pre-Authorization Request Form should also be submitted to TEACH requesting the change in authorization.

Depending on when the pre-authorized course is dropped or withdrawn, the college may issue a partial or full refund. Withdrawing from courses beyond the drop/add period at the college will likely result in full payment to college required by TEACH. As mentioned, scholarship recipients are allowed one forgiveness while on a scholarship program, and other extenuating circumstances may be considered for forgiveness. It is important for recipients to discuss any changes with their scholarship specialist. There may be times the recipient will be required to repay TEACH for dropped classes that are not fully refunded.

9. Finances

a. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of recipients and sponsors to pay tuition and book co-pays each semester if required by the scholarship model. Co-pays will be deducted from reimbursements for books, access stipends, and release time. However, if there is a negative balance on the account, it must be cleared by the invoice due date or the account will be frozen and no activity can take place until the account is clear. When agreeing to sponsor a recipient, employers must ensure they have the financial resources for co-pays and compensation, especially if they have multiple recipients. A Child Care Center Sponsorship Plan For Multiple Scholarship Recipients must be on file for sponsors wanting to sponsor more than two recipients at one time. Recipients should talk with a scholarship specialist if they ever have any concerns about the financial aspects of the scholarship.

b. Payment of Tuition and Fees

Once a contract is signed, paperwork is received (See Section 6) and the recipient's schedule is approved, the TEACH office will send the college a charge authorization via email which authorizes the college to bill TEACH for tuition and fees. (If books are charged to the student account, books will also be billed to TEACH unless otherwise noted on the charge authorization.) Following the drop/add period, the college will send TEACH Early Childhood® NC an invoice for the amount owed so the college can be paid. The payment timeframe for college invoices is 4-6 weeks once the bill is received. Recipients should not need to pay the school directly except for any unauthorized coursework or fees not covered by the scholarship (graduation, ID fees, late registration, health insurance and/or drop course fees). TEACH can pay for required parking fees and accident and liability insurance fees.

The charge authorization is not direct payment; it merely authorizes the college to bill TEACH for authorized charges. Recipients may still have a balance showing on their account until the college receives the TEACH payment. However, the charge authorization will protect recipients' registration from being canceled until the school invoices TEACH and receives payment. Authorizations are only given for courses required as part of the contracted coursework. Tuition, fees and books for any other courses are the responsibility of the recipient. If the recipient makes changes to their course schedule without the approval of TEACH, the recipient may be required to pay the college for the courses not pre-authorized, even if college personnel advised the recipient to change courses. Recipients should ALWAYS involve their scholarship specialist in such decisions and send a revised PAF in for review.

The TEACH database will automatically calculate the co-pays that are due each semester from the recipient and employer for tuition, fees, and books. Co-pays will be deducted from reimbursements and payments sent to recipients and employer-sponsors. If the reimbursement is insufficient to cover the amount of the co-pay, recipients and sponsor-employers will be invoiced for any remaining amount. Past due invoices must be paid prior to charge authorizations being sent to the college for the next semester, contract renewals, and in some cases, claims may be suspended until the past due balance is cleared. Additional financial aid sent to the student may be used to cover co-pays.

c. Access Stipend

Recipients on comprehensive scholarship models are eligible for an access stipend each semester they are registered for classes. Once the Form B, class schedule, itemized tuition statement showing the method of payment for the semester or tuition bill is received, TEACH

will process a claim for the access stipend. Co-pays for tuition and books will be deducted from the access stipend and reimbursement payments. Not all scholarship models provide an access stipend, so please refer to the scholarship contract for more information.

d. Contract Completion and Compensation

Upon successful completion of a TEACH contract, recipients are eligible for compensation. A compensation packet is processed. If the recipient is on a bonus model, the TEACH bonus will be requested once all grades for courses taken during the contract period are on file. Once approved the compensation packet will be emailed to the recipient and sponsor (if applicable). Raises should be paid to the recipient in the next pay period after the employer receives the compensation letter. Bonus payments can take 8-12 weeks. The sponsor has some flexibility in paying the bonus to the recipients on bonus models. The sponsor can pay the bonus 100% once they receive the bonus notification letter, or they can split the bonus into two increments and pay half of the bonus when notified and the other half six months later. However, the entire sponsor bonus must be paid no later than six months past the end of the contract year.

Once the employer compensation has been paid, the employer or recipient should send a copy of the pay stub showing the raise or bonus payment. Also, there is an Information Update Form in the compensation packet that will need to be completed, signed by the recipient and sponsor, and sent in as well for both raise and bonus models. A recipient who leaves employment for any reason before the commitment period is completed forfeits any unpaid portion of a bonus. In addition, the recipient will be invoiced for a bonus that has been paid by TEACH if they quit the employment before completing the commitment.

e. Shortened Terms

If a college has shortened terms and/or multiple terms within a semester, only one access stipend will be issued. Separate access stipends for multiple summer terms (i.e. 1st Summer and 2nd Summer) for recipients attending 4-year colleges/universities, however, will be paid.

f. Tax Information

Anyone receiving payment from the TEACH Early Childhood® NC program is responsible for reporting any taxable amount to the IRS. Taxable items usually include bonuses, stipends, and family child care release time. Non-taxable items usually include tuition, book reimbursements, and release time reimbursements to programs. Program release time is not included because the employer has already deducted taxes through the payroll process. A 1099 form is sent each January to all participants receiving more than \$600 for the previous year. This information does not constitute tax advice. Participants should consult their tax advisor for guidance.

10. Commitment

By signing the TEACH Early Childhood® contract, recipients commit to remaining employed with their current child care program or the early childhood field during the contract period and for the specified commitment period once compensation is paid. Each scholarship program has a defined commitment period that determines the length and type of commitment. For example, comprehensive associate degree scholarship models require a commitment of at least one year at the sponsoring center. Other models such as the Working Scholars model require a commitment of 6 months to the early childhood field for every capped scholarship accepted. Recipients should review and understand the commitment period of their scholarship model before signing the contract.

a. Voluntary Quit

The TEACH Early Childhood® contract is a commitment that should not be entered into without thoughtful consideration. The scholarship recipient is receiving support for education and the employer is getting the benefit of a classroom teacher with higher education credentials. Scholarship recipients who are considering quitting their current employer, must discuss this with a scholarship specialist BEFORE giving notice to the employer so the consequences will be fully understood. When a recipient voluntarily quits the sponsoring program before fulfilling the contract and commitment period, the scholarship is terminated, and the sponsoring employer is released from any further obligation to the contract.

TEACH may require repayment depending on when the voluntary resignation occurs. If the resignation occurs before the halfway point of the semester, the recipient will be required to repay TEACH for any charges incurred from pre-authorized courses. If recipients drop or withdraw after classes have been paid for, they also may be liable for repayment depending on the situation. If classes have not been paid for, TEACH will advise the school that the charge approval is being withdrawn, and TEACH will not be responsible for payment of the semester's tuition and fees.

TEACH Early Childhood® scholarships are NOT transferable to another employer. The scholarship ends when the recipient voluntarily quits. Recipients may be eligible to reapply with a new employer if they have not been compensated and are locked into a commitment period. There may be cases when the employer can release a recipient from a commitment by writing a letter of release. If the commitment is to the field, the recipient can reapply and work towards fulfilling the commitment under the new employer.

Only in the rare case where it is documented that an employer did not fulfill contract obligations would TEACH consider allowing a recipient who voluntarily quits to enter a new TEACH contract with a different employer. Such documentation must be clear and convincing, and the sponsoring employer must first be given the opportunity to fulfill contract obligations. There may be narrow exceptions to the commitment policy if leaving employment is not within the control of the recipient, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any additional financial penalties imposed by employers are not part of the TEACH contract.

b. Taking a Break from College

If recipients would like to take a semester off from school, they should talk to their scholarship specialist. Recipients have different credit hours requirements, so taking a break may affect their ability to complete the contract and earn compensation. It is the recipient's responsibility to keep track of their completed hours. If a recipient needs to take a break and will not fulfill their contract hours, the scholarship specialist will discuss that with the recipient on a case-by-case basis. If more than a one-semester break is needed, the recipient may have to reapply for the scholarship.

c. Layoffs and Terminations

Recipients laid off or terminated will not be required to repay TEACH Early Childhood® but will not be able to continue the TEACH Early Childhood® scholarship without a sponsor. Recipients will be allowed to finish the current semester but will need to reapply for another scholarship to continue participating on TEACH the following semester.

d. Employer Changes

Recipients and sponsoring employers should contact TEACH immediately if ownership or management of the employer changes (for example, the program is acquired by another agency). The new employer will need to agree to the terms of the original contract and sign

on. If the employer does not agree to a contract, the recipient will be dropped from TEACH at the end of the current semester, but no repayment will be required. Other scholarships may be available to recipients that do not require employer sponsorship, which can be discussed with a scholarship specialist.

e. Switching Scholarship Models

Recipients may change scholarship models for a variety of reasons. In cases when there is a position change or age group change, the recipient may be switched to a new scholarship model (for example, teacher to director). Typically, that will be done when the contract is up for renewal. If the recipient is interested in moving from a lower level to higher level scholarship either upon graduation or personal choice, they will need to reapply and meet the eligibility criteria of that scholarship program.

11. Paperwork Reminders

a. Recipients

Form requests can be submitted on the TEACH website at

<https://www.earlyyearsnc.org/programs/teach-north-carolina/recipient-updates-and-forms/> or recipients should ask a scholarship specialist.

1. Submit a Pre-Authorization Request Form with an official course schedule by email (teachnc@earlyyearsnc.org), mail (TEACH Early Childhood® NC P.O. Box 231 Chapel Hill NC 27514), or fax (919-967-7040) by priority deadline.
2. Send the Form B with copies of your itemized tuition statement and itemized book receipts by the end of the semester. Send the forms and receipts as soon as you have purchased/rented/charged all books for the semester.
3. If you work in a sponsoring program and are eligible for release time, send a completed Form C monthly or within 30 days following the end of the semester. We will not pay for release time that arrives late. Refer to the schedule below for due dates for paperwork each semester.

Spring: June 30 Summer: August 31 Fall: January 31

4. When you finish classes, check the college's website for your grades and send a grade report or transcript from your college. The grade report or transcript must have your name and the college name on the document to be accepted. Screenshots of partial transcripts without the student's name and college name cannot be accepted as well as handwritten name and/or college name on the document cannot be accepted.

b. Employer-Sponsors

Participants on comprehensive scholarship models are eligible for release time, except for directors. The recipient and the sponsoring program representative must sign and return the completed Form C within 30 days following the end of the semester. Claims received later than 30 days of the close of the semester may be forfeited. The sponsoring program will receive a direct deposit payment based on the amount of release time submitted. The

program's portion of tuition and book costs for all sponsored TEACH participants may be deducted from release time reimbursements.

c. Annual Reminders

1. If recipients need additional financial aid, they should reapply annually for FAFSA. Follow your college's financial aid deadlines.
2. Upon completion of a contract, complete an Information Update Form and return with updated paystub.

Telling Your Story

We want to know your stories that would make an impact on others interested in knowing why TEACH is important to you and what we are accomplishing. Please take any opportunity to share how TEACH Early Childhood® North Carolina has helped you and the children in your care. You may send us stories, photos, videos, and we will share them with our early childhood community.

We need to hear from you if you:

- have any changes to your contact information.
- have had a change in any personal circumstances.
- are having trouble in or failing a class.
- are considering dropping or withdrawing from a class.
- have a personal emergency that prevents you from attending school or work for an extended period.
- number of hours worked or the age group you work with changes.
- are considering changing jobs or are no longer employed in your program.
- are considering changing colleges.
- have graduated or earned a credential, degree, or endorsement
- have received an academic award or honor.

Contact Info

TEACH Early Childhood® North Carolina

email: teachnc@earlyyearsnc.org,

Fax: 919-967-7040

Mailing Address: PO Box 231, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

<https://www.earlyyearsnc.org/programs/teach-north-carolina/>

Appendix of Sample Forms

Pre-Authorization Request Form (Comprehensive Model)

Pre-Authorization Request Form (Working Scholars)

Tuition and Book Documentation Form (Form B)

Release Time Claim Form (Form C)

Information Update Form

Credit Hour Approval Form

Personal Responsibility Agreement