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| **Title:** | Preschool Scholarship – Eligibility and Funding Process*Early Childhood Iowa Area (ECIA)**Buena Vista, Crawford, Sac, Early Childhood Iowa (BVCS ECI)* |
| **Policy:** Policy to document the scholarship rates/ranges and eligibility for a scholarship to be made payable to the child care or preschool program on the family’s behalf. Tuition difference between CCA and their program’s tuition rate, include the scholarship plan for rates and eligibility in the board approved policy. |
| **Procedures:**1. Early Childhood Iowa Area funding must be approved by the Early Childhood Iowa State Team, submitted by June 1st, turnaround is around 10 days to approve the local ECIA budget before any Memorandum of Understanding with Preschool Programs are signed.
2. All preschools located in the boundaries of Buena Vista, Crawford, or Sac, Counties charging fees to families, not covered by any other source, are invited to participate in the Low-Income Preschool Support program. (L.I.P.S.)
	* 1. The preschool program must have a Memorandum of Understanding on file with the Early Childhood Iowa Area.
3. ECIA Board must approve and allocate funds to the Low-Income Preschool Support program.
4. Children must be at least 3 or 4 years old by September 15 of the program year. A child who is aged 5 years prior to September 15, of the upcoming year or extenuating circumstances that prevent the child from entering kindergarten.
5. An application can be distributed by the preschool, mailed and/or emailed directly to families.
6. Families return the application with proof of income (from the page of most recent years federal tax form listing adjusted gross income or one month’s worth of recent consecutive pay stubs.)
	1. The application can be returned to the preschool and forwarded to the Scholarship Coordinator or
	2. mailed directly to the Scholarship Coordinator.
7. After the application and supporting documentation is received. The Scholarship Coordinator will determine if the family qualifies.
8. Scholarship funding is available on a year-to-year basis, and the family must apply each year. Income guidelines change slightly each year, and the scholarships are based on the updated federal poverty level.
9. ECIA is the funding source of the last resort. The scholarship program requires proof of income or documentation of Child Care Assistance (CCA) has been declined to confirm eligibility. Families who are 160% FPL or below must apply for CCA <https://www.iowa.gov> if the provider /preschool program is an eligible program to accept CCA.

CCA is available to the children of income-eligible parents who are gone for a portion of the day due to employment or participation in academic or vocational training or PROMISE JOBS activities. Assistance may also be available for a limited period-of-time to the children of a parent looking for employment.* 1. **Clarification of Provider eligibility to accept CCA**:

Child Care Assistance Providers include: <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/child-care/CCA>* + 1. Licensed child care center, including licensed before and after programs.
		2. A Registered Child Development Home
		3. A Non-registered Child Care Home
		4. Someone who cares for your children in your own home
			1. The provider must be approved by HHS in order to receive payment from the CCA program.
	1. ECIA may provide funding for scholarships to programs who are eligible to accept CCA and do accept CCA, requesting families have a verified income outside of current CCA eligibility (i.e. 161% up to 200% FPL).
		+ 1. A Department of Health and Human Services Licensed Preschool must have a *CCA Provider Agreement and* accept CCA.
	2. Department of Education (DE) programs are not on the list of providers on the HHS website that can accept CCA.  Early Childhood Iowa language does allow for participation with DE programs (see number 10).
		+ 1. A Department of Education program may or may not be eligible to accept CCA.
			2. The Department of Education does not require Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs to be licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services.
1. Early Childhood Iowa (ECI): A program must be officially participating with the Iowa Department of Education or the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.
	1. ECI may give scholarships to help pay for programs that do not need a child care license. ECI cannot pay for hours already covered by SWVPP (ex. half day program) or Head Start. If a child needs more time and the family’s income is low (200% FPL or less), then a scholarship may help. This is only if no other funding is available. These rules follow guidance from the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.
	2. L.I.P.S. is designed to fund Preschool Programing tuition/fees.
	3. Data elements will be used to verify the family is not eligible for other financial support for this care and reason why no other financial support was met.
2. Families who qualify for head start must attend head start unless outstanding circumstance prevents the child attending.
	1. The family provides documentation related to the circumstance.
3. A sliding fee scale will be set up and determined annually, based on the number of applicants, and available funding.
4. Scholarship amounts are available for up to $200.00 per month for an eligible child.
5. Licensed Programs who are approved for Child Care Assistance, and the amount does not cover the cost of the tuition, are eligible to participate, to make up the difference, following the same application process and funding availability.
6. To ensure continued eligibility and program alignment, scholarship recipients are required to complete a follow-up review annually.
7. Data elements to verify the family are not eligible for other financial support for this care and reason why no other financial support eligibility was met (multiple elements are a possibility).

Verification checklist: [ ]  The family needs assistance in completing the Child Care Assistance (CCA) application. [ ]  Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_the parent/guardian applied for CCA. [ ]  The family is waiting to hear from HHS. If denied by CCA the scholarship will backfill the amount. [ ]  Family is not eligible for CCA. [ ]  The cost for CCA does not cover the cost of the tuition. The Scholarship can cover the amount CCA does not cover. [ ]  Ineligible for CCA - check all that apply: [ ]  Department of Education program does not accept CCA, [ ]  Family does not meet CCA requirements [ ]  work, [ ]  school, [ ]  income), [ ]  CCA application denied provide reason/proof. [ ]  I (family/preschool) verify I/we are not eligible for any other funding sources for preschool support. If the preschool has a question on a case-by-case basis contact the Preschool Scholarship Coordinator and Early Childhood Iowa Area Program Director (if different) for clarification.  |
| Effective Date: 7/1/2025 | Recommendation from the Early Childhood Iowa to adopt policies related to Preschool Scholarships can be found in Tool O and Tool G. |