Welcome and Introduction

Dear Scholarship Recipients and Sponsors:

Congratulations on participating in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship program. You have embarked on a great journey. As a recipient, you should be proud of commitment to increasing your knowledge and skills, which is a key component to a high-quality early childhood program that will benefit the children and families your program serves. As a sponsor, you are investing in the future quality of your program. The fact that you are making this investment demonstrates your commitment to children and families.

Whether you are a recipient or program sponsor, the purpose of this handbook is orient you to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood program. It is important to have a clear understanding of the scholarship to maximize your benefits and get the most from your experience. Please read it carefully. Your T.E.A.C.H. Counseling Specialist will be meeting with recipients to go over each part of your scholarship and allow you the opportunity to ask questions. The Counselor will also serve as an advisor to both recipients and sponsors as you go through your education program. Feel free to discuss any issues related to the scholarship with the Counselor.

If you have any questions or concerns, our team is available to you. Our job is to serve and support both recipients and sponsors as we all partner in this process for the benefit of Arkansas children.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul Lazenby
AECA Executive Director & T.E.A.C.H. State Manager
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1 – Overview of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship

A. History

The T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® Project was created and started by Child Care Services Association in North Carolina in 1990. It was created to increase the level of education of teachers working with children age birth to five, while making college education affordable, decreasing turnover, and increasing wages.

Over the past several years, the program has received national attention due to linking teacher education and compensation. The Project has expanded to over twenty states. Every state receives one license to offer T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarships. Arkansas has held a T.E.A.C.H. license since 2019. We have a variety of models to help early care and education providers work toward or renew a Child Development Associate credential (CDA), an Early Childhood Education (ECE) associate degree, a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree and an early childhood endorsement.

B. Administering Agency

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood ARKANSAS is administered by the Arkansas Early Childhood Association. AECA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to representing the Arkansas early childhood workforce and serving their needs. AECA has worked for more than 50 years to promote quality care and education for the children of Arkansas including an annual conference offering the highest quality professional development for our Birth to Five teachers.

C. Role of the Counseling Specialist

Our T.E.A.C.H. Counseling Specialists hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or a related field. They also have had a variety of experiences in the early care and education field. The job of a Counseling Specialist is to provide college and scholarship guidance to T.E.A.C.H. participants and sponsoring programs. They process scholarship paperwork and regularly communicate with participating colleges and universities.

Counseling Specialists are available to assist you when you have questions regarding your scholarship, need help with contacting your college advisor or course selections, or even when you need guidance on balancing work, school and personal responsibilities. Keeping in regular contact with your counselor will help ensure you are always on the right path with your education plan.
D. Role of the Employer-Sponsor

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship is not just a partnership with the recipient. The sponsoring employer plays a key role in supporting their employee as they journey through their education program. Having the financial and moral support of the program is a critical key to success for our recipients. While the recipient is in school, the employer-sponsor will:

- Pay for percentage of tuition and books for participant which will vary by contract
- Provide release time which varies by number of credits being taken
- Provide additional compensation in the form of a bonus after recipient successfully completed an education contract.

E. Confidentiality

AECA shall respect and maintain the confidentiality of all personal information from (i.e., wage information, ID numbers, HIPAA-protected information, etc.). All information is maintained electronically on an encrypted drive with secure passwords. We will not sell your personal information.

F. Funding

The financial support of our partners is imperative for the continuation of our program to improve the professional development of early care and education that benefits young children in Arkansas. We are appreciative of their support and confidence in our program. The following are our current funders:

- Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (federal Child Care and Development Fund and American Rescue Plan Act)
- Arkansas Community Foundation
- Child care programs statewide that sponsor T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood participants.
2 – Eligibility for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood

A. Applicants

To be eligible for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship, an applicant must:
- work in a licensed child care center or family child care program a minimum number of hours each week as a teacher, assistant teacher or director
- work with children birth to age 5 (if a teacher or assistant teacher)
- be admitted and/or enrolled in an early childhood degree, certificate or endorsement program at an approved Arkansas college or university
- have the support and sponsorship of the child care employer
- earn no more than the maximum hourly wage allowed (if applicable)
- be able to financially assist in payment of tuition, fees and books

B. Employer-Sponsors

For a child care employer to sponsor a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship, a program must:
- Have a regular license in good standing with the Arkansas DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education as a child care center or family child care home
- Be willing to provide release time to scholarship recipients and pay annual bonuses
- Be able to financially assist in payment of tuition, fees and books

Arkansas Better Beginnings certification is not a requirement of participation in T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood. However, certification is highly encouraged and may be used as a factor in waiting list priority determination.
3 – Applying for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship

We currently have scholarship models to help with college coursework in early childhood for the CDA credential (Certificate of Proficiency), Technical Certificate, Associate Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, Master’s Degree and Teacher Licensure Endorsement.

You can find all application materials and application support tools at our website, www.arkansasearlychildhood.org/teach. You may choose to submit an electronic or paper application. You may also send an email to teach@arkansasearlychildhood.org or call 501-680-1930 to request an application.

Applicants must complete the application and include:

- All pages of the application completed by applicant and employer-sponsor
- Income verification (current paycheck stub, Schedule C, etc.)
- Signed Personal Responsibilities Agreement
- Completed W-9 forms for the applicant and employer-sponsor
- While the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship does not require the FAFSA, we encourage applicants to use the FAFSA form to apply for additional financial aid in the form of other scholarships and grants. You may apply at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA is always free to submit.
- Student Loans: We discourage you from accepting any student loans. With the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship, our goal is to help you attain a debt-free education. We are unable to assist in paying back student loans when they become due.
- Transcripts: We are unable to pay for past due balances at previous colleges which may prevent applicants from obtaining transcripts.
- A Counseling Specialist will email you to inform you of approval for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship. If approved, you will receive a welcome letter, instructions, and forms. A welcome call must be scheduled with a Counseling Specialist. After formally accepting the scholarship on the call, a contract will be sent for your signature and the signature of your employer-sponsor.
4 – Overview of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Process

A. After you have been accepted:
   - Digitally sign your contract. After you and your employer sign, a signed copy will automatically be emailed to you for your records.
   - Read all the materials your Counseling Specialist sends you, especially the Participant Handbook.
   - Complete the admissions and enrollment process at the college you have selected. Make sure you indicate the correct degree/certificate program.
   - You may be scheduled to take placement tests prior to admission so allow yourself plenty of time for this process. Apply early.
   - After admission, you will be assigned an advisor who will help you plan and register for classes.

B. Steps to Complete Each Semester:
   - Send the Course Authorization Form (Form D), official schedule and a copy of your estimated tuition and fees for the upcoming semester.
     - These items are due immediately after you register for classes and before the payment deadline for the semester.
     - You should be able to print out your official schedule and estimated tuition statement from your online student account.
     - The schedule should include your name and your enrolled degree program.
     - After these items are received, the T.E.A.C.H. office will send an approval to your college letting them know which classes are approved and giving them authorization to bill T.E.A.C.H. for your tuition and mandatory fees.
     - T.E.A.C.H. is not responsible for the cancellation of your registration if the required items are not received in a timely manner.
   - Send the Form B Reimbursement Form and copies of your book receipts.
     - You should send them as soon as possible but no later than the end of each semester.
     - T.E.A.C.H. cannot reimburse tax, but we will reimburse shipping.
     - Receipts must contain the title of the book and the price.
     - The tuition section of the Form B can be left blank.
   - Send the Form C for Release Time (employer may send).
     - Send as soon as required release time hours are completed—monthly or by the end of the semester. All release time is due no later than 30 days after the end of the term.
   - Send Grades.
     - Send each semester’s grade report as soon as you have it. However, grades are due no later than one term after the term the grade was given (or
example, spring grades are due prior to the fall semester starting). Charge approvals will be placed on hold if grades are missing.
   - Grade reports need to be official from your student portal and must be reported as a final letter grade.

C. Steps to Complete at the End of a Contract

- Complete and return the Information Update Form (Form E will be sent to you at the end of your contract)
- Include updated wage information (including current paystub) and evaluation.
- Be sure to indicate your intention and goal going forward.
- Sign your renewal or new contract if you plan to continue with a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship.
- Once T.E.A.C.H. receives your Information Update Form, receives and verifies all grades and credit hours, we will check to see if any bonus should be paid and notify you and your employer-sponsor. (All contract terms including commitment must be met for full compensation to be paid.)
- If you are applying for additional financial aid, be sure to submit a new FAFSA each year. You may apply starting on October 1.
5 – Contract Requirements

A. Overview

The T.E.A.C.H. Contract (Form A) must be signed by you, the employer-sponsor and the state’s T.E.A.C.H. Manager. Signatures indicate that parties have read, understood, and agree to the terms of the Handbook and T.E.A.C.H. contract. The contract outlines your and (if applicable) your employer-sponsor’s responsibilities.

- As part of your application, you will also sign the Personal Responsibilities Agreement (PRA), which gives an overview of the scholarship responsibilities.
- Each semester you are responsible for a percentage of the tuition and books.
- Most education contracts run for a 12-month period, based on the semester you started with T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood.
- You must agree to complete a minimum of nine (9) credit hours within the contract year, but you may take up to 20 hours with approval from T.E.A.C.H., your college advisor and employer-sponsor.
- For most recipients, we strongly recommend that you do not take more than seven (7) credit hours in a semester.
- Depending on academic performance, we may limit credit hours.

If you are unable to complete the minimum of nine (9) credits in the contract year, we will discuss options with you on a case-by-case basis. If you elect to go over the maximum number of credits without approval, you will need to arrange payment for those credits yourself or use additional financial aid. If you fail to pass a required course, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood will pay for a course a second time. However, after two fails in a required course, the applicant will have to arrange payment for completion of that course. Multiple failing grades may be cause for an improvement plan in consultation with the college advisor or in extreme cases, being dropped from T.E.A.C.H.

Recipients must meet the college’s requirements for admission and graduation. T.E.A.C.H. reserves the right to terminate an existing contract and/or discontinue additional contracts for failure to meet these requirements. If you fail to meet the graduation requirements of one college, you may not transfer colleges to remain eligible in the T.E.A.C.H. program. Additionally, you must communicate in a professional and courteous manner with T.E.A.C.H., college and university staff and faculty. T.E.A.C.H. reserves the right to discontinue work with participants for any reason.

B. Renewing Your Contract

When you successfully complete a contract, you may be eligible to renew your contract (pending available funds). You will not need to complete a new application with each contract, only an
Information Update Form (Form E) and supply updated compensation data. You will also receive an online survey each year from T.E.A.C.H. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey. We appreciate your feedback.

If you want to continue and renew your contact, indicate that on your Information Update Form and visit with your Counseling Specialist to let them know before the end of your current contract. We will send you a new contract that will need to be signed and returned along with documentation of compensation and grades.
6 – Applying to a College or University

A. Choosing a College

If you have not already, you need to choose an approved college or university in Arkansas for your education program. You can visit our website at www.arkansasearlychildhood.org/teach to see a directory of colleges and programs available to you. The programs are also listed on the application.

If you are unsure of the best fit for your situation, T.E.A.C.H Counseling Specialists can help you think through the options and considerations for this decision and can put you in touch with contacts at a particular school to answer your questions. Most of the colleges have websites where you will apply to the school online. Make sure you select the correct early childhood program. Some schools offer a free application process, but T.E.A.C.H. cannot reimburse this fee if there is one for your school. Taking placement tests is part of the admissions process if you do not have an ACT score. You should allow plenty of time for admissions decisions. Apply as early as possible so you can get the entry date you want.

B. Selecting a Degree Pathway

T.E.A.C.H. can only pay for degrees and certificates that concentrate in Birth to Five development and education. For those recipients who want a degree but have not yet earned one or will be starting with a high school diploma, we recommend beginning with the Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education. Many in-state colleges in local areas offer this degree in various formats. This degree will give you 30+ hours of concentrated birth to age 5 knowledge as well as quality field experience opportunities. Counseling Specialists can visit with you about which programs are closest to you.

If you need intermediate steps on the path to your associate degree, consider the Certificate of Proficiency that can lead to the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or the Technical Certificate in Early Childhood. Once you obtain your associate degree, you can visit with us about additional options if you wish to continue your education. When you begin an associate degree program, you will need to complete that degree before moving on to a bachelor’s program.

C. Previous College Experience

If you have previous college experience, most colleges will require you to send official transcripts from previous schools before admission is granted. You can also send the transcript to the college early childhood coordinator to see what credits from previous colleges might transfer. Always get transfer decisions in writing from a school official.
D. General Education Requirements

If you must have general education requirements that are easier and less expensive to take at a nearby community college, we require that you complete those courses at the lower-cost institutions.

E. Negotiated Tuition Rates

If negotiated tuition rates apply, T.E.A.C.H. will only pay those rates. Recipient will be responsible for any tuition that is higher than the negotiated rate.
7 – Starting with T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood (Forms and Procedures)

A. Registering for Classes

Prior to meeting with your advisor, visit with your Counseling Specialist about the plan for next semester’s coursework. If you plan to take more than seven (7) credit hours, you must first get the approval of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood as well as your employer-sponsor.

After meeting with your advisor to register, complete and submit the following items to the T.E.A.C.H. office:

1. Course Authorization Form (Form D. See Appendix or obtain forms from our website.) that has the official number and name of the classes, and the number of credits for each class
2. Copy of your course schedule printed from your student account
3. Copy of your estimated tuition statement printed from your student account

You may send this information via email to teach@arkansasearlychildhood.org, via text message to your Counseling Specialist using readable photos or through the online portal (if applicable). The Counseling Specialist will review and approve the courses. Approval is not guaranteed and is contingent on grades, funding availability and other factors. Let us know immediately if you have any class changes after registration. We will need an updated copy of all the above documents. You will be notified of any coursework that is not approved. Recipients will be 100% responsible for tuition, fees and books associated with any unauthorized course.

B. Repeated Coursework

If a recipient fails to pass a required course, you must meet with your Counseling Specialist to discuss a plan for completing the requirement. This may involve several steps including reducing course loads and T.E.A.C.H. paying for only the one required course in a semester. We encourage recipients to meet with their college advisor to discuss the class in question and make a plan to successfully complete the course.

Note: Only if the Counseling Specialist and advisor are satisfied the recipient has a sufficient plan and motivation to pass the course will T.E.A.C.H. pay for the course a second time. No course will be covered by T.E.A.C.H. more than two times.

C. Tuition Payment

If there is a signed contract in place and T.E.A.C.H. receives your Course Authorization form, schedule and tuition statement, we will process and send a Charge Approval to your college or university approving your coursework and authorizing the college to bill T.E.A.C.H. for your
tuition and mandatory fees. At some point that semester, the college or university will send us an invoice, and we will send them a check. You will not need to pay the school directly except for any unauthorized coursework.

Note: The charge approval does not “pay” your bill. It merely authorizes the college to bill us. You may still have a balance showing on your account until T.E.A.C.H. pays, but the charge approval will protect your registration from being cancelled until the school invoices us.

The T.E.A.C.H. database will automatically calculate the co-pays that are due each semester from the recipient and employer-sponsor 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. Invoices must be paid prior to charge approvals being sent to the college for the next semester. Additional financial aid sent to the student may be used to cover co-pays.

D. Adding, Dropping or Withdrawing from a Class

Recipients must notify their Counseling Specialist if they plan to add, drop, or withdraw from a class at any time during the semester. You must drop a class before the college drop date to avoid tuition charges. The 100% refund period usually ends after the first week of classes. Financial drop date differs from academic drop date. Some colleges incur charges of any classes attended. Recipients are responsible for knowing the critical dates on their college’s academic calendar.

If you fail to drop or withdraw from a class before tuition is charged, or you fail a class, you have two options:

1. Retake the class at your own expense as soon as the class is offered again.
2. Work out a payment plan with the T.E.A.C.H. office to reimburse for the costs of the class so T.E.A.C.H. can pay for the class when retaken.

You must successfully complete a minimum of nine (9) credit hours to successfully complete your contract. Failed classes do not count toward your fulfillment of the nine (9) minimum credit hours. If a failed class is retaken later, the new grade may replace the failed grade and the credits can be used toward contract completion.

E. Books

You are responsible for purchasing or renting your own books. You can purchase books at through the college bookstores or from an online bookseller like Amazon or Barnes & Noble. To be reimbursed, books must be purchased from a book dealer. We cannot reimburse you for
books purchased from a friend or classmate. The submitted receipts must be from a bookstore or from an official website and include the title and price of each book.

To claim reimbursement for books:
1. Complete a Tuition/Book Reimbursement Claim Form (Form B) and email to teach@arkansasearlychildhood.org along with your copies of itemized book receipts/cash register receipts as soon as you can during the first half of the semester or term.
2. Put your name on your copies of the book receipts and staple them to your Form B. Save the original receipts for your records.
3. We cannot reimburse tax on books, but we can reimburse standard shipping.
4. T.E.A.C.H. can reimburse for rented books. We recommend book rentals only if the book cannot be used as a future reference. If the book will be a good reference in your future Early Childhood Education work or future class work, we encourage you to consider purchasing it since T.E.A.C.H. will cover most of the purchase.
5. T.E.A.C.H. will also reimburse for eBook purchases but not the reader software.
6. Purchasing your books up front and submitting receipts is the easiest way to utilize your scholarship for textbooks. However, if you cannot financially do this and your college allows books to be charged to your student account, you may choose this option, but you need to inform your Counseling Specialist first. If books are charged to your student account, you are still responsible for your 5% co-pay and you will be invoiced for that amount each semester if the co-pay is not deducted from other reimbursements.
7. If you plan to use Pell Grants to cover book purchases, let us know.
8. Balances owed to T.E.A.C.H. must be cleared each semester for us to approve future payments for tuition and fees.

F. Travel/Access Stipend

Recipients are eligible for the travel/access stipend each semester that they are registered for classes. Once we receive your official schedule and/or estimated tuition bill, we will process the claim for your stipend. If you withdraw prior to attending class, you will be responsible for the repayment of any stipends received. Co-pays for tuition and books will be deducted from stipend and reimbursement payments.

G. Release Time

For each semester credit in which you enroll, you are eligible for 16 hours of paid release time during that semester up to a maximum of 96 hours per semester. This time is for you to attend class, to study, complete projects, meet with instructors or advisors or to attend to other tasks. Ideally, you will take a portion of this time weekly, but you will need to work with your director or supervisor to find the best time for your release hours based on the staffing situation at your program.
If your classes cover a shorter period than a normal 16-week semester (such as five or eight weeks), T.E.A.C.H. does not require that your program give you all the release time hours, but they could give you as many of the eligible hours as they are able. Release time hours can be spread throughout an entire semester, even if a class is only 8 weeks.

Recipients are paid for release time through their normal payroll process. Sponsoring programs are reimbursed directly for a portion of the cost for release time at a published hourly rate after they submit the Release Time Claim Reimbursement Form (Form C) (see Appendix). The claim form may be submitted monthly or at the end of the semester. Sponsoring program co-pays will be deducted from release time reimbursement. If reimbursement does not cover co-pays, the sponsoring program will be billed for the balance which must be paid prior to the beginning of the next semester.

When you and your supervisor sign the Form C, you are confirming that the information is accurate. Do not sign and send it if it is not accurate. Let your Counseling Specialist know if you are having any problems receiving your required release time. Release time is a required component of your contract. If staffing issues are causing sponsors to have difficulty providing release time, we will encourage sponsors and recipients to work together to find a compromise until the situation is resolved. Programs who cannot or will not provide any release time should not enter into a T.E.A.C.H. contract.

Creative suggestions for taking/providing Release Time include:
- Using it for unpaid sick time or holidays
- Taking it any time during the semester
- Taking it in small increments, when ratios are lower, leave early or come in later.
- It can also be banked and used in half day or full day increments
- Or you can use it to pay for lunch breaks that are unpaid.

Directors or non-classroom personnel are not required to be provided release time for their scholarship. Family child care providers are encouraged to use release time for their scholarship if they have staffing available to cover their programs. It is not required that your release time be used to attend daytime classes. Some facilities can accommodate day classes, but they are not required to do so.

**H. Shortened Terms**

If a college has shortened terms and/or multiple summer terms, we will combine stipends and release time balances for those terms. For example, we will consider the entire summer one semester for stipends and release time purposes. We will not pay additional stipends and release time for January or May intersessions.
I. Claim Form Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Final Date to Submit Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>June 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>September 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>January 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

J. Grades

Once you have finished your semester class(es), you must send T.E.A.C.H. a copy of your grade report within 30 days. You can send it by email or mail, but it needs to be authentic from the college or university and have your name on it. Final letter grades must be submitted. (We cannot accept a screenshot from an online platform like Blackboard that only has a course percentage grade.) You may attach the grade report to an email or take a screenshot/photo and email it as long as it is readable. Scholarships will be suspended for any recipient who has not submitted grades by the end of the semester following the semester of the missing grades. Recipients who refuse to furnish grade reports will be dropped from T.E.A.C.H. We will hold all grade information as confidential.

K. Field Experience/Practicum Courses

Most early childhood education programs require some type of classroom or field experience. You will need to speak directly to your college degree advisor or coordinator to find out what the college’s rules are about field experience coursework. Many colleges allow students to teach in the sponsoring program where they are employed. And expectations can differ based on what the student has already done. If recipients are required to complete practicum or field experience coursework outside of the program where they are employed, they can still retain their T.E.A.C.H. contract (even though they may temporarily drop below the minimum required working hours at the sponsoring program). In these cases, we will need an email or written statement signed by your employer that states you will remain employed at the sponsoring program and will be able to return following your field experience/practicum teaching so you can fulfill your contract year, plus the following commitment year.

L. CDA Credential Procedures

To earn the credential through T.E.A.C.H., an CDA candidate must:

2. Have 480 hours of fieldwork.
3. Complete the Professional Portfolio.
4. Complete the family questionnaire.
5. Take the CDA Exam.
6. Be observed by a Professional Development Specialist- PDS.
Upon paying for the CDA Assessment fee, the recipient or the program may submit their payment receipt to T.E.A.C.H. We will reimburse whoever paid for the assessment at 90% (minus any co-pays owing). T.E.A.C.H. will only reimburse an assessment fee one time.

For candidates who are denied the credential, this is treated similarly to a failed course. In this situation, the participant has two options:

- Reapply for the CDA, at your own expense, within 12 months.
- Pay T.E.A.C.H. for the cost of the initial assessment fee. Once this is paid, T.E.A.C.H. could support the cost to reapply at a future date.

M. Praxis Exams

For certain scholarship models which include licensing or endorsement at the early childhood (Birth-5) level, we will reimburse Early Childhood Praxis fees for recipients at 90%. Once registered for the exam, recipients may submit their receipts to T.E.A.C.H., and we will send them a reimbursement check (minus any co-pays due).
8 – Finances

A. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of recipients and sponsors to pay their respective co-pays each semester. Most of the time, co-pays will be deducted from reimbursements; however, if there is a balance owing on the account, the balance must be cleared prior to the beginning of the following semester. Invoices will be sent if a balance over $25 is due. Sponsoring employers must ensure they have the financial resources for co-pays and bonus payments prior to agreeing to sponsor a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship, especially if they have multiple recipients from the same center. Please visit with your Counseling Specialist if you ever have any concerns about the financial aspects of the scholarship.

B. Bonus Payments

Upon successful completion of a T.E.A.C.H. contract, recipients are eligible for a bonus. Bonuses will be paid on the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>BONUS AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upon verification of sufficient credit hours and grades for the contract period</td>
<td>50% of the T.E.A.C.H. portion of the bonus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon 90 days into completion of the commitment period</td>
<td>50% of the employer portion of the bonus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon completion of the commitment period (12 months after contract ends)</td>
<td>50% of the T.E.A.C.H. portion of the bonus + 50% of the employer portion of the bonus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Once the bonus has been paid, the employer-sponsor should send a copy of the paystub showing the bonus payment to teach@arkansasearlychildhood.org. If recipient does not fulfill the entire commitment period, they will forfeit any unpaid portion of a bonus.

C. Tax Information

All recipients and sponsoring programs must fill out an IRS Form W9 and should report the taxable funds they receive from T.E.A.C.H. Participants receiving more than $600 in taxable money in a calendar year will receive a 1099 from T.E.A.C.H. to file with returns.

- Taxable items include bonuses, stipends and release time for family child care home providers (because it is income directly to them).
- Non-Taxable items 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.)
There are expenses that can be deducted on your taxes as educational expenses. You may claim any your personal contribution to your tuition and books in this way.

This information does not constitute tax advice. We are not experts, and we encourage recipients and programs to consult their tax advisor for guidance.

D. Checks to Recipients and Programs

Checks will be issued for all reimbursements and stipends that create a balance over $25.00. Our method of payment will be to send paper checks via U.S. mail. If you do not cash your reimbursement check within 6 months, we will void the check and will not issue another. Uncashed checks are assumed to be donations to the project.

E. Sending Payments

If a recipient or program needs to send us a payment, they may do so in the following ways:
1. Mail a check or money order made payable to AECA to:
   AECA
   P.O. Box 4291
   Fayetteville, AR 72702
2. Venmo your electronic payment to @AECA-TEACH. Be sure to notify us that you have sent an electronic payment so we can verify receipt.
3. Call 501-680-1930 and request a secure link to pay by credit/debit card.
4. Use the online portal (if applicable).
9 – Commitment

After a contract is completed, you agree to continue employment in your current program for an additional 12 months. You must work at least the same number of weekly hours during the commitment year as the contract year. Notify T.E.A.C.H. if there are changes in your schedule.

A. Voluntary Quit

The T.E.A.C.H. contract is a serious commitment and should not be entered into lightly. The recipient is getting an education paid at 90%, and the employer is getting a highly qualified degreed teacher. Read this handbook and your contract before signing. If a recipient is considering leaving their current employment, we strongly urge you to consult with your Counseling Specialist BEFORE giving notice so you will understand all implications.

When an employee voluntarily quits their sponsoring program before fulfilling their contract and commitment period, the contract is withdrawn, and the sponsoring employer is released from any further obligation to the contract other than the current semester’s co-pays. The employee will be responsible for all co-pays, and T.E.A.C.H. may require repayment of certain stipends depending on how far the recipient was into their program.

The T.E.A.C.H. contract is NOT transferrable. Only in the rare case where a recipient can document that a sponsor did not fulfill their obligations even after a reminder from the T.E.A.C.H. office would we consider allowing a recipient who quits to enter a T.E.A.C.H. contract with a new employer. Such documentation must be clear and convincing, and the sponsoring employer must first be given the opportunity to fulfill their obligation and pay any arrears. Otherwise, a recipient who voluntarily quits their current employment will not be extended a contract with another employer.

There may be exceptions to the commitment policy if leaving is not within the control of the recipient. Those situations will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Some sponsoring employers may require recipients who do not fulfill their commitment to repay the employer for the financial assistance contributed to the scholarship. But this is not part of the T.E.A.C.H. contract.

B. Taking a Break from College

Recipients must complete a minimum of nine (9) credit hours for the contract period. If they can complete those hours and still take a semester off, then nothing is affected with their scholarship. If a recipient needs to take a break but will not fulfill their contract hours, we will discuss this situation on a case-by-case basis. Repayment of earlier monies may be required.
Once a contract has been completed, a recipient can take a semester break without penalty. If more than a one-semester break is needed, the recipient should discuss this with the T.E.A.C.H. Counseling Specialist.

C. Layoffs and Terminations

If you are laid off through no fault of your own, we will not require repayment, but we cannot continue to support you on a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship with no sponsoring program. You will be allowed to finish the current semester but will need to be employed in another child care program that is willing to sign a T.E.A.C.H. contract to continue with our support the following semester.

If a recipient is terminated involuntarily prior to fulfilling the contract and commitment period, we will address those situations on a case-by-case basis to determine next steps and what options, if any, there are.

D. Employer Changes

If your employer changes through no choice of your own (for example, your program is bought by a different agency), let us know right away. The new employer will need to agree to the terms of the original contract or sign a new contract. If the employer does not agree to a contract, you would need to drop from T.E.A.C.H. but no repayment will be required.

E. Graduation

Upon graduation, recipients should send us a copy of their diploma or transcript listing the degree and date awarded. We will send each graduate a special gift.

F. Switching Scholarship Models from Associate to Bachelor Contract

If you are currently on an associate contract, you must first complete your associate degree before you switch to a bachelor’s degree contract. In the majority of cases, we will require a minimum of sixty (60) college credits to be eligible for the bachelor’s degree scholarship so recipients can receive the concentrated Birth to Five foundational coursework. Once the associate degree is completed, participants may apply again for a bachelor’s degree scholarship. If prerequisites are required, recipients will take any available classes at the community college that will transfer to the four-year school of their choice, before starting the bachelor’s contract. Upon starting a four-year program, please submit the course outline from your advisor, so we can monitor your classes.
10 – Paperwork Reminders at a Glance

A. Semester Reminders for Recipients

You can find all our forms on our website at www.arkansasearlychildhood.org/teach.

1. Submit the Course Authorization Form (Form D), official course schedule and estimated tuition statement by email, mail or online portal ASAP upon registration.
2. Send the Form B with copies of your itemized book receipts by the end of the semester. If your college or university has more than one term per semester, send the forms and receipts as soon as you have purchased/rented all books for the semester.
3. If you work in a sponsoring program and are eligible for release time, send us your 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 15
   Summer: September 15
   Fall: January 15
4. When you finish classes, check the college's website for your grades and send us a grade report from your college.

B. Semester Reminders for Sponsoring Programs

Participants working the minimum required hours per week are eligible for release time, except for directors. Recipient and your sponsoring program representative must sign and return the completed Form C within 30 days following the end of the semester. We will not be responsible for paying the sponsoring program for release time that arrives late.

The sponsoring program will receive a check based on the amount of release time submitted and the program's portion of tuition and book costs for all program sponsored T.E.A.C.H. participants.

C. Yearly Reminders

1. Recipients should reapply for FAFSA each school year in October if applicable.
2. When you complete each contract, complete an Information Update Form (Form E) and return with renewal paperwork (current paystub).
3. Completed contracts may be renewed after 12 months, pending available funds.
11 – Importance of Advocacy

We invite our recipients and sponsors to share any stories with us that would make an impact with stakeholders and other interested parties who want to know why we exist and what we are accomplishing. Please take any opportunity to share how T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood has helped you and the children in your care. You may send us written stories, photos, videos and we will share them with our early childhood community as well as policymakers.

12 – Contact Information

Arkansas Early Childhood Association
P. O. Box 4291 • Fayetteville, AR 72702
www.arkansasearlychildhood.org
teach@arkansasearlychildhood.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Area of Responsibility</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butler, Misty</td>
<td>Office Manager</td>
<td>501-680-1930</td>
<td><a href="mailto:misty@arkansasearlychildhood.org">misty@arkansasearlychildhood.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazenby, Paul</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>479-287-5798</td>
<td><a href="mailto:paul@arkansasearlychildhood.org">paul@arkansasearlychildhood.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowry, Karen</td>
<td>Admin. Assistant</td>
<td>479-287-2417</td>
<td><a href="mailto:karen@arkansasearlychildhood.org">karen@arkansasearlychildhood.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, Elizabeth</td>
<td>Counseling Specialist</td>
<td>870-883-4071</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elizabeth@arkansasearlychildhood.org">elizabeth@arkansasearlychildhood.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(South Arkansas)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullen, Kawai</td>
<td>Counseling Specialist</td>
<td>479-287-6582</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kawai@arkansasearlychildhood.org">kawai@arkansasearlychildhood.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(North Arkansas)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please contact us if you have any questions about your scholarship or college, any needed resources, etc. We especially want to hear from you when you:

- have received an academic award or honor
- have a personal emergency that prevents you from attending school or work for an extended period
- have gotten married or had a baby
- are having trouble in or failing a class
- are considering dropping or withdrawing from a class
- your program achieved national accreditation or received a level on the QRS
- 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 any changes to your contact information
13 – Appendix (List of Forms)

- Map of Counseling Specialist Assignments
- Form D – Course Authorization Form
- Form B – Tuition/Book Reimbursement Claim Form
- Form C – Release Time Claim Form
- Form E – Information Update Form
- Personal Responsibilities Agreement
## Counseling Specialist Assignments by Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Counseling Specialist</th>
<th>E-mail and Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Kawai Mullen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kawai@arkansasearlychildhood.org">kawai@arkansasearlychildhood.org</a> 479-287-6582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Elizabeth Miller</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elizabeth@arkansasearlychildhood.org">elizabeth@arkansasearlychildhood.org</a> 870-883-4071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Misty Butler/Paul Lazenby</td>
<td><a href="mailto:misty@arkansasearlychildhood.org">misty@arkansasearlychildhood.org</a> 501-680-1930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yellow indicates T.E.A.C.H. staff office.
Course Authorization Form (Form D)

Course Authorization Request
(Form D)

Semester: □ Spring □ Summer 1 □ Summer 2 □ Fall Year _____________

Name ___________________________ Date _______________

Student I.D. (not your SSN) ________________________________________

College Attending ________________________________________________

T.E.A.C.H. Counseling Specialist ___________________________________

Charging tuition to T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARKANSAS:
1. You must already be approved for a scholarship and have an active signed contract on file with T.E.A.C.H. before T.E.A.C.H. will issue charge approvals for your tuition and fees.
2. Recipients must complete a minimum of 9 credit hours per year (not semester).
3. Recipients who wish to take more than 7 credit hours in a semester must visit with their Counseling Specialist and seek approval from their sponsoring employer BEFORE registering.
4. After meeting with your advisor to plan courses, complete this form and submit to your Counseling Specialist by email or mail.
5. The Counseling Specialist will review and inform you if schedule is approved.
6. After approval, we will notify the college, giving permission to bill T.E.A.C.H. for tuition and mandatory fees.
7. Recipients must be current on account balances and sending in grades before charge approvals will be issued to the college.

The courses I plan to take this semester are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix and Number (e.g. MATH 0343)</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Number of Credit Hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This form is to be returned to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARKANSAS office. You can scan/email it to teachsarkansaearychildhood.org or mail to: AECAC Attn: T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood ARKANSAS P.O. Box 4291 Fayetteville, AR 72702

For Counselor Use Only:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewed</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial (log reason in ROC)</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses Entered in TS</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreadsheet Updated</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Counselor: Initial after completion. Scan and add to electronic file.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood ARKANSAS Form D (Rev. 6/22)
# Tuition and Book Reimbursement Claim Form (Form B)

**Recipient Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>College:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS:</td>
<td>Sponsor:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY/ZIP:</td>
<td>Counselor:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Submit all term claims within 30 days after the close of each semester. Failure to do so will result in the loss of money for the claims.

**School Term Attended:**
- [ ] Fall
- [ ] Spring
- [ ] Summer
- [ ] Year: __________

**Tuition and Fees**

Tuition/Fees Amount: $ __________

Tuition paid by:
- [ ] Recipient
- [ ] Child Care Facility
- [ ] T.E.A.C.H.
- [ ] PELL

Course Titles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit Hours:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ONLY COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU HAVE ALREADY PAID YOUR TUITION BILL AND NEED REIMBURSEMENT.

**Books**

Tuition Books Amount: $ __________ (You may include shipping but not tax)

Books paid by:
- [ ] Recipient
- [ ] Child Care Facility
- [ ] PELL
- [ ] N/A - No Book Purchase

Book Title:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To claim reimbursement, complete the books section and attach receipts showing the book title and price. When complete, you can scan and email form and receipts to teach@arkansasearlychildhood.org.

Or mail to:
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood ARKANSAS
Arkansas Early Childhood Association
P.O. Box 4291
Fayetteville, AR 72702

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood ARKANSAS Form B (Rev. 6/22)
Release Time Claim Form (Form C)

Employer-Sponsor Information

Name of Center/Program

License Number: ____________________________

Term Covered by this claim: □ Fall □ Spring □ Summer

Year: ________

Release Time Claimed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Times</th>
<th># of Hours Off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>1/10/20</td>
<td>3 to 5 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Hours Claimed

Director’s Signature ____________________________ Employee’s Signature ____________________________

After form is signed, scan and email form to teach@arkansasearlychildhood.org or mail to the address at the top of this form.
Information Update Form (Form E)

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARKANSAS
INFORMATION UPDATE FORM
(Form E)

This form should be completed annually at the end of each contract completion prior to a renewal contract being issued.

NAME OF RECIPIENT

THIS SECTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE SPONSOR-EMPLOYER.

This form should be completed annually at the end of each contract completion prior to a renewal contract being issued.

Name ____________________________________________

Current Mailing Address, City, Zip ___________________

Email Address ____________________________________

Home Phone ___________________ Cell Phone _______

Family Type: □ Single, no children □ Married, no children

# of children __________ Total # in Family __________

When do you anticipate completing your degree?

Center where Employed ___________________________

Position ___________________ Weekly Hours _________

Hourly Wage ______________ Has this position changed in the past 12 months? □ Yes □ No

If yes, list previous position _______________________

Age Groups You Work With:

□ Infants (0-18 mos.) □ Toddlers (18-36 mos.) □ Preschool (3-4 yrs)

□ School-age □ Administration

If time is divided with different ages, list percentage of time for each _______________________________________

INDICATE YOUR INTENTION GOING FORWARD:

□ I plan to continue my current higher education program with T.E.A.C.H.

□ I will take a break next semester and then continue with my higher education program the following semester with T.E.A.C.H.

□ I no longer wish to participate in this higher education program or the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship program.

□ Other: _______________________________________

THIS SECTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE SPONSOR-EMPLOYER.

Program Name ____________________________________

Director’s Name ___________________ Title ___________________

Director’s Email ___________________ Licensee # _________

Lic Capacity __________ Enrollment __________

Does your program serve subsidy children? □ Yes □ No

If yes, what percentage of total enrollment is subsidy? _________

Indicate your program’s current level in Better Beginnings:

□ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 Do not participate

Check all that apply for your program:

□ For-profit center □ Head Start/IES □ Faith-based

□ Non-profit center □ Public School/Coop □ RDT

□ Licensed Family/Child Care Home

Attach a current paystub (dated within the past 30 days) to this form.

I certify the information above is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and required documentation is attached.

Signature of Scholarship Recipient ________________________

Signature of Director/Administrator _________________________

Return form to: Arkansas Early Childhood Association

Attn: T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood

P. O. Box 4201 • Fayetteville, AR 72702

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARKANSAS Form E (Rev. 6/22)
Personal Responsibility Agreement

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARKANSAS Recipient
Personal Responsibilities Agreement – Child Care Center Model

This is an agreement between T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARKANSAS and the scholarship recipient. Please read carefully and then sign this agreement. Both your official Contract (Form A) AND this Agreement must be signed and on file before any reimbursements or charge approvals will take place.

You should be proud of your decision to go to school and get your degree or credential. And we are happy you have chosen to apply for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship! You are investing in your own future and increasing your education. This scholarship represents an amazing opportunity – a debt free college education. This benefit to you comes with various responsibilities should you be approved. This is a great opportunity that should be taken seriously.

As a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Recipient, I will:

- attend class, study, work hard and be a responsible student
- regularly communicate with my counselor. I understand my counselor is available to guide me through the process of attending college and balancing my school, work & family responsibilities
- submit the following items timely each semester:
  - Preauthorization form listed registered courses
  - Printout of official schedule
  - Printout of estimated tuition and fees
  - Form B and book receipts;
- If my model includes paid release time, I will sign the Form C’s, be sure my director signs the Form C and help get it submitted for reimbursement
- contact my scholarship counselor immediately regarding any changes to my employment, courses being taken, college enrollment status, or if I am having difficulty in meeting my course/college requirements or scholarship contract
- submit my grades within 30 days of the close of the semester. (I understand keeping my scholarship record up to date is critical to ensuring that I can continue my education without unnecessary delays.)
- pay my required portion of tuition, fees and books (5%) unless covered by other financial aid or other reimbursement. I will pay this from T.E.A.C.H. and/or my college in a timely manner. It is my responsibility to ensure that I am meeting all my obligations
- remain employed with my current sponsor/employer at least 20 hours per week and continue employment with my sponsor for at least one year after the completion of the education contract.

Signature of Recipient ___________________________ Date Signed ___________________________

Recipient: Print Name ___________________________

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood ARKANSAS Fatal Resp Agent (Rev 6/22)