



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 31, 2022

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**SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING STILL AVAILABLE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE WORKERS FOR THE 2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR**

**Early Childhood Education and Childcare Workers May Qualify for Scholarships to Pursue Additional Degrees or Credentials in the Field**

CHICAGO – The [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](http://www.isac.org) (ISAC), in collaboration with the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE), is encouraging those who work or have worked in early childhood education or childcare and who are interested in getting an additional degree or credential in the field to apply for the ECACE Scholarship. The scholarship can cover a student's total cost of attendance (including tuition and fees, books, and room and board) and there is still funding available for the 2022-23 school year. Detailed information and a link to the 2022-23 scholarship application is now available on the ISAC website at <https://www.isac.org/ECACEscholarship>.

Created to address the shortage of qualified early childhood educators and to build a strong, well-prepared workforce, the scholarship is designed to support and encourage current members of the early childhood education workforce who want to pursue either new credentials in the field or more advanced education for current associate degree-holders.

To be eligible for the ECACE Scholarship, those who are seeking credentials and/or a degree in early childhood education must currently be working or have worked in the early childhood field. This includes applicants who are currently working or have worked in either a licensed or license-exempt childcare facility that serves children from birth to age 5, including home-based child care (e.g., family, friend, neighbor), center-/community-based child care, Preschool for All programs, school-based preschool settings, and Head Start programs. Applicants must provide documentation confirming their membership in the [Gateways to Opportunity® Registry](#). Other eligibility requirements are available on ECACE Scholarship [webpage](#).

For eligible students attending community colleges and public universities, the scholarship covers the total cost of attendance for an academic year (including summer) after other financial aid received. Students at participating non-profit private institutions may receive an amount no more than the cost of the most expensive program of study in the early childhood education field at an Illinois public college, after other

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financial aid received. Recipients of the scholarship are expected to continue or return to teaching or direct services in the early childhood care and education field in Illinois after they complete their program of study.

**To apply for the scholarship for the 2022-23 academic year, students should complete the 2022-23 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) if they have not already done so, as well as the ECACE scholarship application and required documentation.** Eligible students who are currently enrolled in a participating institution are encouraged to work with their financial aid advisor.

Additional supports to assist eligible potential students include “ECACE Navigators” who provide personalized assistance to students in navigating the postsecondary education application and financial aid process. Once in a postsecondary program, the student will work with a program coach and/or mentor from the institution, who will provide additional support to the student to help them persist and complete their studies.

#### About the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity

The Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity, created through Illinois Public Act 102-0174, is a collaboration of all public universities and community colleges in Illinois and committed private institutions to develop and provide streamlined paths to credentials and degrees for the early childhood incumbent workforce. Work of the consortium is facilitated by the [Illinois Board of Higher Education](#) and the [Illinois Community College Board](#).

#### About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to provide Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information about education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Find us at [isac.org](http://isac.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) @ILStudentAssistance, [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @ISACfinaid, and on [YouTube](#).

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