



## EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA LAKES REGION

*Serving Clay, Dickinson, O'Brien, and Osceola Counties*

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DATE: February 15, 2019

Dear Preschool Director:

We are excited to offer preschool tuition assistance again this year through Early Childhood Iowa Lakes Region (ECI LR) and administered through the ECI Lakes Region Director. These scholarships offer a great opportunity for more children to have an affordable preschool experience! A child's eligibility is based on age and income. A child must be age 3, 4, or 5 **by September 15, 2019**, and the family's gross income must be 200% or less of the federal poverty level. (See chart below.) ECI Boards must not supplant state or federal funds. Therefore, children who can access state-administered, state-funded preschool programs (such as Shared Visions, Statewide Voluntary Preschool programs for 4 yr. olds) or Head Start, should utilize those options first. Some transportation assistance may also be available contingent on need and ECI funding.

The Early Childhood Iowa State Board strongly encourages the support of preschools with evidence-based programming, quality standards and proven outcomes. As in the past, in order for children in your program to be eligible for ECI Lakes Region preschool scholarships, your preschool must qualify in one of the Quality Standard areas listed on the enclosed Preschool Tuition Assistance Agreement **OR** your preschool must agree to meet these qualifications by the end of the school year. Please contact the ECI Lakes Region office if you need assistance. We would love to add your preschool to our scholarship list!

**Additional requirements for your preschool's participation include:**

- 1) Must be licensed by the Department of Human Services or the Department of Education.
- 2) Use research or evidence based preschool curriculum.
- 3) Hours billed must be for preschool only. This scholarship does not pay for child care or wrap-around services.
- 4) Must provide a rate schedule for services to ECI Lakes Region. The ECI LR scholarship will pay a maximum number of dollars per month per child (amount annually decided by ECI LR Board) and cannot be paid at a rate that is higher than what is currently being charged for the other attendees of the preschool.

The ECI Director is mandated to monitor funded programs. Therefore, if you choose to participate, we will monitor your billing and visit a sampling of centers sometime during the year.

**It is important that you complete the enclosed Preschool Tuition Assistance Agreement stating if you are interested or not and return it to Paulette Karolczak, ECI Lakes Region Director, at the address below. Please return it ASAP prior to July 1, 2019. Student applications may be added through March 15, 2020, however, it is first come first serve and dependent on available funds. Funds do often run out!**

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working with you to make the best experience possible for families with children participating in preschool. Applications will be processed after July 1, 2019 pending state funding. ECI LR will notify families and preschools of the outcome of the applications and send further information. **Please copy Family Packets & distribute to your prospective preschool families. Forms may be found on our website also. Thank you!**

## 2019 Health & Human Service Poverty Guidelines

Family Size	Maximum per year (gross income)	Family Size	Maximum per year (gross income)
2	\$33,820	6	\$669,180
3	\$42,660	7	\$78,020
4	\$51,500	8	\$86,860
5	\$60,340	For each additional person add	\$8,840

### **Checklist for Preschool Information Needed and Due Dates**

- Preschool Tuition Assistance Agreement – **Due by July 1**
- Provide a registration letter stating rates for preschool services for 2019-2020 – **Due by July 1**
- Copy of DHS or Department of Education License – **Due by July 1**
- Scan, email or mail monthly vouchers – **Due by 15<sup>th</sup> of following month EVERY month**
- 2019-2020 Year End Report – Due with the last voucher for payment or no later than **June 5, 2020**
- **Preschools can apply and have sign up throughout the year – pending financial availability.**

**However, ECI LR will not reimburse the Preschool until the month the Preschool application is approved (ALL required materials sent in) and will not back pay for bills prior to that month. Also, families cannot be approved until their Preschool has been approved.**

### **ECI Preschool Scholarship Highlights –**

Please see the ECI LR website [www.ecilakesregion.com](http://www.ecilakesregion.com)

#### **Child Requirements**

- Ages 3, 4, 5 by Sept. 15, 2019
- Family's gross income must be 200% or less of poverty level
- Must complete a Preschool Tuition Assistance Application and provide income verification (W2 Form or monthly wage statements.)
- Should apply for Head Start first if 130% or below of poverty and then, if not eligible or the program is full, apply for ECI LR scholarship. ECI LR cannot supplant state & federal funds.

#### **Preschool Requirements**

- Meet Quality Standards (on Preschool Tuition Assistance Agreement)
- If working toward Quality Standards – must show progress and be completed within the year.
- Must use research or evidenced –based curriculum
- Must use an assessment tool from Preschool Tuition Assistance Agreement
- Must submit ALL required data to ECI LR by due dates requested –**Please do not be late!**
- Applications may be added through March 15, 2020, however, it is first come first serve and dependent on available funds. Extenuating circumstances may be considered.
- ECI LR tuition assistance will only pay a set monthly fee per month per child. (This amount was \$125 for 2019-2020 but is decided annually during budget discussions each spring for each new fiscal year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>.) This may not cover the full amount charged by the preschool. The preschool will be responsible for acquiring the remainder of the tuition through other methods.
- Maintain a folder for each scholarship child which will be checked during monitoring visits
- Inform ECI LR Director of any changes in status of tuition assistance children during the year, for example: Quit preschool due to moving. This may open funding for other eligible students.