



Child Care Scholarship Program – Tips and Tools for Providers

The following summarizes various aspects of the scholarship program and may constitute reminders for some and answers to frequently asked questions for others.

Care Plan Types:

Prorated Care Plans:

In general, we award new scholarships based on full-time child care needs, so care plans are typically for full-time child care. On occasion, there may be a reason to reduce the amount of care a child is receiving. In these cases, the Child Care Scholarship program can prorate a care plan for $\frac{3}{4}$ -time, $\frac{1}{2}$ -time, and $\frac{1}{4}$ -time scholarships. The amount of time is based on the number of hours of care used proportional to a child care program's total operating hours. (ex. If families have access to 10 hours of care per day or 50 hours per week at their facility, a $\frac{1}{2}$ -time scholarship is intended to cover 5 of those hours per day or 25 over the course of a week). For prorated care plans, Early Years' full-time reimbursement rate will be prorated accordingly. Always review the family's Notice of Scholarship Award to be sure it accurately reflects the amount of care being used and notify the scholarship specialist listed on the Notice immediately if there are any errors.

Care Plan Length:

Care plans for working parents are typically written for a full year unless additional documentation may be needed to verify income. Students receive scholarships for the length of the term for which they are currently registered, which could be anything from three months for a college or university using the quarter system, to a full academic year, which is often the case for high school students. Most college or university students register for one semester at a time, so their care plans will reflect current semester length. At times, care plans may be written for one month at a time. This is typical when a parent's status is temporary, such as when they are looking for work or are on maternity leave. Monthly care plans are limited in number with the goal of having parents transition to an eligibility status with a longer care plan length. The dates of the currently approved care plan will print on your monthly attendance sheet. If the child starts after the start date printed or leaves before the end date printed, make a note in the Start/End Date (if different) column to let us know.

Care Plan Renewal:

Scholarship Specialists mail letters and/or send e-mails to all families they serve on scholarships around 6 weeks before their current care plans end. Families usually have about one month to turn in all materials needed to be assessed for renewal. If special circumstances apply, Scholarship Specialists will try to work with families to extend their paperwork deadline. However, scholarships are sometimes terminated due to a lack of response on the part of the parent. Less commonly, parents may no longer qualify when assessed, which would also result in termination of a scholarship. If a family is still working toward renewal when their current care plan expires, it is up to the provider whether to allow the child to continue. Providers should bear in mind that parents will be financially responsible for any care used that is not covered by a care plan.

Attendance Reporting:

Due Dates:

Attendance is typically due around the 19th of each month or the preceding business day if that falls on a weekend or holiday. In some months, worksheets are due earlier in order to keep your payment on time amid other program activity but can never be accepted before the 10th business day of the month.

Projections:

We ask for attendance for the entire month, which requires providers to estimate attendance for the last week or so of the month. These projected attendance days should be based on actual expected attendance. (For example, if you know a child will be on vacation, do not include those days.) If you have questions about how to record attendance projections for a child whose attendance has not been consistent OR if a child unexpectedly disenrolls after the due date and you need to correct your attendance, please email scholarship@earlyyearsnc.org for assistance.

Payment and Details:

Correctly completed attendance sheets received by the due date should result in funds deposited directly into your account by the second business day of the following month. Payment details are e-mailed by the 10th of the month. (Ex. April service is paid by the second business day in May, and an account of what was paid by child will be e-mailed by May 10th – earlier if on a weekend or holiday.) If you would prefer to receive your payment information by mail instead of e-mail, please send your request to scholarship@earlyyearsnc.org.

Attendance Sheets:

Your attendance sheet should arrive by e-mail before your attendance is due. They are e-mailed along with payment details, so by the 10th of each month or earlier if that's a weekend or holiday OR if attendance is due especially early. Attendance sheets come pre-populated with children's names for your convenience but should always be reviewed to be sure they accurately reflect the children you're serving on scholarships for that month. A child may sometimes be included or excluded from the sheet erroneously because her or his care plan may be in a state of flux at the time attendance is printed. If you add a child's name or scratch one out, please print clearly and include a comment if needed. If you would prefer to receive your attendance by mail instead of e-mail, please send your request to scholarship@earlyyearsnc.org.

Documenting Days Closed vs. Days Absent:

When documenting a child's attendance, please use the Days Absent column to document any days that the child misses because they are sick, on vacation, or out of care for another personal reason. Please use the Days Closed column to document any days your facility is closed, whether that is for a holiday, a teacher workday, or an inclement weather day. Days marked in this column will not count against you or affect your payment negatively. The total days column should be the sum of the days present, days absent, and days closed columns and should be equal to the number of weekdays in the month, including holidays, unless a child started or ended mid-month.

Reimbursement:

Reimbursement Rate:

Early Years will pay you according to our current reimbursement rates, regardless of your tuition rate. Current Reimbursement Rates are listed in the most recent provider application and are available on our [scholarship provider webpage](#). Reimbursement to the facility is made up of Parent Fees (listed on each child's Notice of Scholarship Award) and Early Years' payment, which is usually directly deposited by the second business day of the month following the service month. Barring an update to the Reimbursement Rate, of which you will be informed, reimbursement remains constant. That means that if a household income change affects a family's parent fee, Early Years' payment adjusts to make up the difference in reimbursement. If you have questions about changes to a child's payment, please contact us at scholarship@earlyyearsnc.org or 919-403-6950 to discuss the reason for the change.

Parent Fees:

Each time a parent is awarded a scholarship, a parent fee is assessed based on 5% of the family's household gross monthly income (2% for a second child, 0% for each additional child). Some special programs, such as NC Pre-K, Durham PreK or Durham Early Head Start, may have alternate or no parent fees. The assigned parent fee appears on the child's Notice of Scholarship Award. If a child starts or ends mid-month, you can determine the parent fee daily rate by dividing the monthly rate by 21.67. In all cases, we will ***assume assigned fees were paid*** unless you check the box on the attendance sheet indicating that parent fees were unpaid.

Overage and Other Facility Fees:

There are instances in which a provider may choose to charge families using scholarships beyond the assigned parent fee. When tuition is higher than reimbursement, the difference is called "overage." Some providers choose to charge the overage but should be aware that this arrangement is entirely between the provider and parent. Those providers who employ this practice must furnish parents with up-to-date tuition rates and discuss this practice *before* the child enrolls in the facility using a scholarship. Please remember that providers are **unable to charge the overage for children who are being reimbursed at rates enhanced above state reimbursement rates (except for families on UNC scholarships)**. Enhanced rates vary based on the child's age and the provider's county. These rates can be found in bold italics on our Reimbursement Rate Schedule (available on our [scholarship provider webpage](#)).

Please also remember that parents using scholarships have the same rights and responsibilities as privately paying families. If a facility charges an application fee to all families, for example, this can include families using scholarships. If the facility allows privately paying families using full-time care to use a certain number of hours of care before charging extra fees, the same number of hours should be available to families using scholarships and the same fees may apply for hours beyond those allowed in full-time care.

Accountability:

Absence Notification:

If a child has problematic or sporadic attendance, please let us know as soon as possible, and well before you report attendance. Please remember, too, that the Provider Agreement you signed specifies that you must contact us on a child's fifth consecutive absence. At times, learning about a child's irregular attendance early can help us help the family avoid problems with retaining their services. In addition, if a child's absence could affect reimbursement, it's best for all parties if the provider and the program can discuss that ahead of time to avoid surprises.

Attendance Documentation:

Because we are in frequent contact with parents and other subsidy partners, on rare occasion, two accounts of the same child's attendance appear to disagree or to indicate dual service. It's important in these instances for us to use the resources available to us to document a child's attendance and resolve the discrepancy. We will typically ask for sign-in/sign-out sheets on a quick turnaround, based on the state mandate to keep such records on hand at all times. These records serve as documentation of the child's presence at or absence from the facility on any date(s) in question and can help a provider prove their attendance claim. Please be aware, though, that if you are unable to comply with the request and/or we are unable to support your attendance claim with the sign-in/sign-out sheets submitted, you MAY be at risk of having funds retracted for service to the child whose attendance is in question.

Facility Information:

Please help us keep all program information on your facility up to date. If facility management or staffing changes, we will need to keep track of who to contact with questions or attendance reminders. As your reimbursement rates change, please make us aware. While your tuition rate no longer affects your reimbursement rate, it's still important to be able to capture the usual cost of the care provided. In some cases where overage charges are disallowed, the difference between reimbursement and tuition rate is reported to funders to demonstrate providers' contribution to maintaining a scholarship program in the community.

Two-Week Notice Period:

The Scholarship program will pay up to a two-week notice (not to exceed the expiration date on a care plan) for care ending prior to a care plan end date. We are aware that some providers require greater notice, which should be communicated to families as part of their responsibility. However, Early Years can pay ONLY for two weeks of notice, the goal of which is to give providers time to refill the open space. Families may or may not choose to attend care during this two week period but are not allowed to start care elsewhere on their scholarship within that period or if parent fees are left unsettled. Scholarship Specialists will ask providers to verify when notice was given and what fees, if any, may be owed by the parent upon departure. Although parent fee collection is entirely up to the provider, Scholarship Specialists will assist with communication about fees owed and plans for payment as needed.