

Common Questions

What is an Early Learning Scholarship?

Early Learning Scholarships help pay for high-quality care and education in order to prepare young children for school. Children must attend a child care/preschool program with a rating through Parent Aware. Monthly payments are made to your eligible program.

How much is the scholarship?

Please see the application instructions for award amounts. The scholarship dollars may not cover the full cost of your child's attendance in an early learning program. Awarded children may attend part-time and/or parents may pay a portion of the tuition to extend the number of days supported by the scholarship.

Where can I use a scholarship?

A scholarship will make payments to eligible child care/preschool programs in Minnesota that are participating in Parent Aware. For help finding an eligible program, contact Parent Aware staff at 1-888-291-9811 or search www.parentaware.org

What is Parent Aware?

Parent Aware is Minnesota's Rating Tool to assist families in identifying high quality early learning programs. Early learning programs participating in Parent Aware focus on activities and skills that help children prepare for school and beyond. Parents may choose eligible Head Start, school district pre-kindergarten and preschool programs, and child care programs. Learn more at www.parentaware.org.

If I apply, will I get a scholarship?

Due to the high number of applications received not every eligible applicant will receive a scholarship.

If I already applied, do I need to apply again?

Children that applied in the past, but were denied, must re-apply.

Children who are currently awarded, or on the waitlist, do not need to apply again.

- Families of currently waitlisted children should call 651-641-6604 to update contact information.
- Additional documents or information updates may be requested by Think Small and must be submitted within the 30-day deadline. For questions about document submission, please call 651-641-6604.

How and when will I know if my child receives a scholarship?

Scholarships are awarded throughout the year. Every July, we start over with new funds.

Think Small mails letters directly to families informing them if their child is awarded a scholarship, placed on our waiting list, or denied. We strive to process applications as quickly as possible and send letters within 6 to 8 weeks of receipt of the application. July–September is the busiest time of year and processing may take up to 8 weeks.

Will my child receive more than one scholarship?

Awarded children are eligible to renew for a new scholarship every 12 months until the September that they are eligible for kindergarten. Think Small will provide a renewal application prior to the 12-month time assigned to your scholarship. Families must follow participation rules to retain and renew a scholarship.