



**FYE 2021 - Eligibility Guidelines for the Quality Preschool Scholarship Program**

The Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa Quality Preschool Scholarship Program can help income eligible families with the cost of preschool. Families may apply for the program by submitting a Preschool Scholarship Application to the MWECI Area Director. Funds are limited and may be de-appropriated at any time within the fiscal year.

**Need for Service and Supplanting Federal & State Preschool Funds**

Each family must have an income need for service to be eligible for the scholarship program. All families' income must fall at or below the 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) 2020 Guidelines. If a family falls at or below the 100% FPL, the family may qualify for Head Start and must apply to Head Start and be either denied or put on the Head Start waiting list, before this application can be considered. All four-year olds will also be referred to the appropriate community school district's public school voluntary four-year-old preschool program (V4yPSP) and be denied or put on a waiting list, before this application can be considered.

**Child Age Requirements**

**FYE2021 MWECI Preschool Scholarship applications will be available for preschool providers and parents to download from our website after August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 ([www.mweci.biz](http://www.mweci.biz)). The following documentation must accompany the FYE2021 applications before processing.**

- Applications for children that are 5 years old by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, must include supportive documentation (developmental or social/emotional delays) as to why they are not attending kindergarten, and meet the income guidelines of 200% FPL or below, and live in Mahaska or Wapello County.
- Applications for children that are 4 years old by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, must include a **Sieda Head Start** denial letter and/or a **Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children** public school denial letter, and meet the income guidelines of 200% FPL or below, and live in Mahaska or Wapello County.
- Applications for children that are 3 years old by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, who have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan), must include a **Sieda Head Start** denial letter and/or a **Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children** public school denial letter, and meet the income guidelines of 200% FPL or below, and live in Mahaska or Wapello County.
- Applications for all other 3-year olds who turn 3 years by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, must meet the income guidelines of 200% FPL or below, and live in Mahaska or Wapello County.

**Information Needed to Process Your Application**

**You must provide income verification with your application to determine if you are eligible for a MWECI Preschool Scholarship.**

- Both earned and unearned income\* is used to determine eligibility. See attached Federal Poverty Guidelines. If you are working, you must provide proof of your income from the past 60 days (2 months), such as pay stubs, a statement from your employer listing your gross wages and the hours you work or a copy of your most recent tax return. If you are self-employed, you must provide your tax return.
- \*If your household receives any other money (unearned income), such as unemployment benefits, SSI, Social Security, child support, veterans benefits or any other money you receive from a source outside of a job, you must document this income on the application as well.

**Co-Pay**

Each family may be responsible for paying for part of their preschool costs, **IF the total monthly cost exceeds the \$175.00 per monthly cap set by the MWECI Board of Directors**. This is called a parent co-pay. The family is responsible to pay the parent co-pay directly to the preschool provider.

**Eligibility Determinations**

The MWECI Area Director will process your application as soon as possible, upon receipt of the application and upon verification that the selected preschool provider meets all the requirements within the provider agreement. You will be notified regarding your eligibility in writing with a Notice of Program Eligibility. This will tell you what children are approved for preschool scholarships, the start date and end date of assistance, and your family's parent co-pay amount, if applicable.

**Notification of Changes**

You must notify the MWECI Area Director about the following changes within 10 days of the change:

- Address change
- A change in who lives in your home

- Income
- Change in preschool provider / change in attendance

### **Provider Requirements**

The preschool provider you choose for enrollment must be licensed by DHS (Department of Human Services) or deemed "exempt" as they are under the umbrella of the DE (Department of Education), before payments can be made. To be "approved," the preschool provider must complete a provider agreement and adhere to the following criteria:

The preschool provider must provide documentation (a copy) of the following requirements identified within the preschool provider agreement:

- **DHS License (or letter of "exempt" status)**
- **A copy of their NAEYC Accreditation Certificate; QRS Level 3, 4, or 5 (QRIS Level 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5); Certificate: OR Iowa QPPS Verification Visit Documentation**
- **A copy of their business policies**
- **A copy of their business liability insurance**

### **Step UP in Quality - Additional Requirements for FYE2021:**

In support of early care, health and education state-wide initiatives that are recognized as signs of "high quality child care and preschool," all preschool programs partnering with Mahaska Wapello Early Childhood Iowa and receiving FYE 2021 Preschool Scholarship Program Funds must also agree to work with our local Region IV - CCR&R staff, the GPAEA-BASEC Program Staff and/or the Mahaska Wapello Child Care Nurse Consultant to assess local levels of preschool quality and develop an action plan to increase/maintain quality preschool programming through (eventual implementation over the course of successive years) a variety of promoted state-wide initiatives. (Preschools must work with at least one of the above-mentioned consultants to plan and execute, full implementation in all preschool classrooms, of at least one state-wide initiative every year. Preschools will have their preference of which quality initiative to begin with). Preschool programs with verified successful implementation may be eligible for additional funds to assist with costs for materials to support/maintain their identified quality initiative.

All preschool providers must sign a Provider Agreement before payment can be made to them on behalf of eligible children. This agreement outlines the terms and conditions for the MWECI Quality Preschool Scholarship Program and certifies the reimbursement rates the MWECI Board of Directors will allow the fiscal agent to pay. If you use a preschool provider before they have been determined to be an eligible provider and they do not get approved as a provider, you will have to pay the provider yourself.

### **Provider Notification**

If your family is eligible for the Quality Preschool Scholarship Program, your preschool provider will receive a copy of your Notice of Program Eligibility. This document will tell the provider what children are approved for assistance, the start date and end date of assistance, and your family's co-pay amount, if applicable. If you use a preschool provider before you are notified that you are eligible for the Quality Preschool Scholarship Program, you will have to pay the provider yourself.

### **For more information contact:**

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