



Caswell County Partnership for Children 2023-2024 Smart Start Professional Development Incentives Frequently Asked Questions

The Caswell County Partnership for Children (CCPFC) will offer Professional Development Incentives (PDI) to early childhood professionals who meet the eligibility criteria based on their education level & years of continuous service at the same facility. The goals of this program are to reduce turnover, increase compensation and support degree completion for Caswell County's early childhood workforce. Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions (FAQ).

1. Which staff are eligible for a PDI?

Unfortunately, only administrative or direct teaching staff who work with children birth to 5 years are eligible. Those who are cooks, van drivers, center aides or other support staff are NOT eligible.

2. How do you determine my education level?

Instead of reviewing pages & pages of transcripts ourselves, we use the Early Educator Certificate (EEC) which has already done this for us! Thus, EEC is REQUIRED! (Expired EEC accepted for establishing education level.)

3. I don't have the Early Educator Certificate (EEC) – what is the Certificate and how do I obtain it?

The EEC is North Carolina's voluntary certification system for the field of Early Childhood. EEC is an acknowledgement of an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. The simple, fee-based EEC Application process includes the submission of an application & official transcripts. EEC does not require a test or specific college course. For more information & the application, contact The NC Institute for Child Development Professionals at info@ncicdp.org or [919-942-7442](tel:919-942-7442) or visit ncicdp.org/certification-licensure/eec-overview/.

The Early Educator Certification is REQUIRED to determine your PDI education level. **No EEC = No PDI!** Good News, we will accept expired EEC; however higher levels will not be estimated. If you are not sure what the EEC is or don't have your EEC, attend an information session to learn more about the EEC and how to apply or renew your Early Education Certification.

Is there a fee to become certified? **The fee for initial certification is \$50 for the ECE scale.** The fee for renewal is \$25 for the ECE scale.

The EEC application process may take several weeks. If you do not have your EEC, we recommend that you submit your application to The NC Institute for Child Development Professionals prior to January 1, 2024.

4. If I don't have an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) yet, am I still eligible for a PDI?

Early childhood professionals without at least an Associate Degree in ECE must have completed at least one college course with a grade of "B-" or better in a birth to five focused course during Summer 2023, Fall 2023, Winter 2024 &/or Spring 2024 semester. Due to the focus of the program, no exceptions will be considered for this requirement.

Visit Piedmont Community College at www.piedmontcc.edu to see the **Early Childhood Program options** or contact CCPFC at 336-694-1538 or ccp4child@esinc.net if you need help selecting your college courses.

5. What is a Professional Development Plan?

An email or written statement from your college or university advisor about which courses you plan to take, leading towards your degree. The Professional Development Plan should outline the courses you plan to take each semester to complete your degree in Early Childhood Education. The Plan should include the following:

- a. The date you met with your college or university advisor
- b. The advisor's name
- c. The Certificate, Diploma or Degree you are working to complete
- d. The courses you plan to take and which semester(s) you plan to enroll in the courses
- e. The date you expect to earn your degree

If you do not have your Associate Degree in ECE, we recommend that you begin working with your college or university advisor in the Fall semester to develop your professional development plan.

6. When is the application due?

Applications will be accepted between Monday, April 1 and Wednesday, May 17, 2024! Please review your application for accuracy and completeness before submission. Submit a completed, **signed original** application and required documentation, including the CCPFC Request for Exception Form, if applicable. If you are completing a college course(s) in Spring 2024, you must have received your grades prior to submitting your application. **Applications must be complete in order to be reviewed. If your application is missing information or incomplete, CCPFC staff will contact you to schedule an appointment to provide the incomplete or missing information.**

7. May I fax or email my application?

No, you must submit a SIGNED ORIGINAL Application with ALL sections completed in order to be considered for a PDI. Be sure to get the center director to verify your information and sign your completed application too!

8. I have not met one of the criteria and would like to request an exception – how do I do that?

Complete the CCPFC Request for Exception Form at the end of the Application to request any and all exceptions in one place and submit with the application by the due date. We recommend that you contact us before submitting your request for an exception to discuss your circumstances and determine what information you will need to submit.

9. Why do I need to complete a W-9 Form?

The incentive is income. Participants will receive an IRS-1099 form at the end of the year if they received \$600 or more (this is the current reporting threshold). Recipients are responsible for reporting and paying any personal income taxes due.

10. What is the PDI based on?

Incentives are calculated by adding together amounts for the following 3 components:

- A. Level of education already achieved** based on the Early Educator Certification (EEC) levels and any Business Administration education Family Child Care Home Providers/Center Directors (ONLY) may have. In addition, a special enhancement is provided to Infant/Toddler teachers and Family Child Care Home Providers.
- B. Continuous Years of service** at same facility, including first 6 months
- C. Approved college credits earned** for degrees in Early Childhood Education or Child Development; for Family Child Care Home Providers/Center Directors only, college credits earned in Business Administration courses

11. If I received an incentive last year, will I receive the same amount this year?
No, the PDI final budget allocation changes each year. Once the total PDI funding is known & number of qualified applicants determined, we use calculations based on established priorities to determine the levels for each year. This all happens at the end of the fiscal year in order to provide the maximum incentive possible.
12. When should I expect my check?
Due to the process described above, incentives are distributed no later than June 30, 2024.
13. What if I leave my center before PDI checks are given out?
You will not be awarded a PDI if you are not employed at the same early childhood program when checks are distributed.
14. Can I apply for and receive both the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® Plus (AWARD\$® Plus) and PDI Salary Supplement?
No, participants can only receive funds from one salary supplement program. When someone applies to AWARD\$ Plus, the applicant signs a statement indicating that he or she is choosing to participate only in AWARD\$ Plus and that they understand they will no longer be eligible to receive funds from a different supplement program. The AWARD\$ Plus supplement targets teachers that work with infants, ones and twos. Applicants should contact Child Care Services Association at www.childcareservices.org or 919-967-3272 to learn more about AWARD\$ Plus and the eligibility criteria.
15. I have NOT completed an application for the PDI Program before. Can CCPFC staff help me complete the application process?
Yes! CCPFC provides group and one on one information sessions to any interested provider. You can find dates and times of group information sessions at www.caswellchildren.org/blog-for-events.
- If this is your first time applying for the Incentive, we recommend that you call us at 336-694-1538 prior to January 1, 2024 to schedule a session to help you get started on completing the application and obtaining all necessary documents.**

***Don't see the answer to your question,
email your question to us at ccp4child@esinc.net and we will add it to the FAQ.***

***Need additional clarification?
Call, email or visit Caswell County Partnership for Children
336-694-1538, ccp4child@esinc.net, 1084 NC Hwy 86 North in Yanceyville***

Caswell County Partnership for Children
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www.caswellchildren.org www.facebook.com/CaswellPartnershipForChildren

a partner in the
smart start network 