
The SEEK Scholarship Handbook

for
Palm Beach County
Early Childcare Practitioners

Policies and Procedures as of July 5, 2011

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Introduction to the Basics

The SEEK Scholarship

Seeking Excellence and Education through Knowledge, commonly referred to as SEEK, is a scholarship program dedicated to improving the quality of Palm Beach County early childhood education environments through staff development. SEEK Scholarship is funded by the Children's Services Council and administered by Palm Beach State College through the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education (IEECE).

Information regarding SEEK Scholarship recipients is maintained in a database and may be shared with **Quality Counts** system partners. This information is accessed to determine funding needs and track professional development. Copies of practitioner information are maintained in secure files.

Additional information regarding the SEEK Scholarship program can be found at www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece.xml

The Quality Counts System

Quality Counts is a voluntary five (5) star rating system that defines quality standards required to ensure children enter school ready to learn. Based on many years of evidence-based research, it has been determined that improving the quality of early childhood experiences has a long-term impact on the children.

Child care programs in Palm Beach County that hold a service agreement with Family Central, Inc. may be eligible to participate. Programs that are accepted into **Quality Counts** receive both professional and financial incentives for the following:

- Educational scholarships
 - SEEK Scholarship
- Wage supplements
 - The WAGE\$ Project
- Financial awards
 - Education Incentive Awards (EIA)
 - Informal Training Incentive Awards (ITIA)
- Translation and Evaluation of foreign college degrees
- Career Advising
- Early Learning Coach
- Technical assistance
- Materials and equipment

Additional information regarding the **Quality Counts** program can be found at www.cscpb.org

The TEACH Scholarship

Teacher **E**ducation **A**nd **C**ompensation **H**elps, commonly referred to as TEACH, is a scholarship program for practitioners who are working towards an Associates Degree or credentials in early childhood education.

TEACH is funded by the Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning. The program involves a three-way partnership between TEACH, the practitioner, and the childcare program, with the majority of tuition and books costs is paid for by TEACH.

To receive TEACH the practitioner, child care center and the Children's Forum enter into a financial contract. An eligible practitioner may also receive a per-semester stipend for travel and internet access, and/or a bonus for completing the scholarship contract. In addition, the early childhood program may be reimbursed for release time given to the participating practitioner.

T.E.A.C.H. does not offer scholarships for every credential or every degree at a specific college.

Additional information regarding the TEACH Scholarship can be found at www.fcforum.org or by calling 877-FL-TEACH.

The Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry

The Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry (The Registry) was created as a part of the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education at Palm Beach State College.

The Registry maintains a database for documenting and acknowledging a practitioner's professional development in the field of early childhood education. The database also contains information regarding approved professional development events for which a SEEK Scholarship may be awarded.

Once a member, the practitioner is required to update any changes in demographic and employment information. Registry membership is a requirement for Quality Counts and to access the SEEK scholarship programs.

A PBC Early Childhood Registry (Registry) application, an Update Form, and a calendar of Registry approved professional development events can be found at www.pbcregistry.org

Chapter 1 – Eligibility Requirement for SEEK Scholarship

Eligibility for SEEK Scholarship

Eligibility for a SEEK Scholarship award is based on the following:

- Employment in a child care program in Palm Beach County that holds a service agreement with Family Central, Inc. in:
 - a family child care home, to include one designated substitute
 - a child care center, to include all professional staff (director, assistant director, education/curriculum specialist, lead teacher, associate teacher, substitute and floater)
 - a Palm Beach County School District Pre-Kindergarten program that participates in **Quality Counts**
- Working directly with children ages 0-5 years (not school-age) for twenty (20) hours or more per week
- Membership in the Palm Beach County (PBC) Early Childhood Registry with current demographic and employment information.

Quality Counts vs. Non-Quality Counts

SEEK Scholarship awards vary depending on the practitioner's place of employment.

A practitioner employed in a **Quality Counts** program will have first priority for SEEK Scholarship funding. Also, the practitioner may be eligible for additional awards and/or for incentive programs.

Please refer to Chapter 3 - *SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for **Quality Counts** Practitioners* for information on specific scholarship awards that may be available.

Please refer to Chapter 4 - *Incentive Awards for **Quality Counts** Practitioners* for information on specific monetary awards that may be available.

A practitioner employed in a child care program that does not participate in **Quality Counts** (to be referred as **Non Quality Counts**) but holds a service agreement with Family Central, Inc. may be eligible for limited scholarship awards.

Please refer to Chapter 5 - *SEEK Scholarship Awards and Process for **Non Quality Counts** Practitioners* for information on specific awards that may be available.

Important SEEK Scholarship Policies

- SEEK Scholarship reserves the right to review and award and/or refuse any request for SEEK Scholarship funding.
- SEEK Scholarships awards are based on availability of funding.
- Successful completion (a grade of C and higher or S for satisfactory) of all professional development events and courses for which a SEEK scholarship is awarded is required to maintain eligibility for future awards.
- SEEK Scholarship is considered the funding of last resort. If a practitioner is receiving tuition assistance from Federal Grants, TEACH, or other financial assistance programs, those funds must be utilized first.
- Practitioners receiving financial aid for college credit coursework are still eligible to apply for other SEEK Scholarship funded professional development events (informal courses, trainings and conferences).
- Reimbursement for college courses must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of the event and be taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher learning.
- Accreditation can only be from the following: *Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Technical and Career Institutions, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (community and junior), Western Association of Schools and Colleges (senior colleges and universities).*
- SEEK scholarship is not available for professional development events for which SEEK funding was previously utilized and the event was successfully completed.
- SEEK will not pay for non-resident tuition.
- SEEK does not fund any of the Department of Child and Families (DCF) Child Care Training.
- SEEK does not fund the Department of Child and Families (DCF) competency exam testing fee(s).
- SEEK does not fund First Aid/CPR training.
- SEEK does not fund the National Child Development Associate (CDA) assessment fee or any material associated with obtaining the credential.

- SEEK does not fund the ECPC/FCCPC/NCDA renewal fee or any material associated with renewing the credential.
- SEEK does not fund school-age courses/trainings.

Chapter 2 – The SEEK Scholarship Application

The SEEK Scholarship Application

The most current SEEK scholarship application must be submitted each time a SEEK Scholarship award is requested. Registration information for coursework, workshops, conferences, or other required documentation must also be submitted, based on the award.

For each application submitted, the practitioner will receive a letter regarding the status of the SEEK Scholarship award.

The scholarship application must be completed in its entirety and signed by the practitioner. Submission of a signed SEEK Scholarship application indicates that the practitioner has read and agrees to abide by both the Participant Agreement and Recipient Responsibilities stated on the application.

Incomplete applications will delay processing and may affect the awarding of a scholarship.

The most current SEEK Scholarship application is available on the Palm Beach State College IEECE website at www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml

The application can also be requested by telephone, fax, or email or can be provided by a Career Advisor.

The practitioner's employment at a childcare program is verified by information in the Registry.

A SEEK Scholarship application cannot be completed by another party on behalf of a practitioner.

Chapter 3 – SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for QC Practitioners

The General Education Development (GED) Test Fee

SEEK Scholarship may be available to reimburse the cost of the GED test fee based upon successful completion.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application, a copy of the official GED transcript, and proof of payment. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount. If approved, the reimbursement payment will be sent within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

The Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC) The Florida Child Care Professional Certificate (FCCPC)

At Palm Beach State College

SEEK scholarship may be available for the ECPC/FCCPC coursework and required book(s) based on:

ECPC requirements:

- Submission of a standard high school or GED diploma as accepted by Palm Beach State College
- 40-Hour Introductory Child Care Certificate (center-based setting)
- 10- Hour Preschool DAP Certificate
- 5-Hour Emergent Literacy Certificate
- 480 hours documented work experience with children ages 5 or younger in a center-based or family child care setting to be obtained **during the training period.**
- As a requirement, official high school diploma or GED transcript must be on file at the Palm Beach State College Registrar's Office by the end of Module I.

FCCPC requirements:

- Submission of a standard high school or GED diploma as accepted by Palm Beach State College
- 40-Hour Introductory Child Care Certificate (center-based setting) or
- 30-hour Introductory Child Care Certificate (family child care setting)
- 5-Hour Emergent Literacy Certificate
- 480 hours documented work experience with children ages 5 or younger in a center-based or family child care setting to be obtained **during the training period.**
- As a requirement, official high school diploma or GED transcript must be on file at the Palm Beach State College Registrar's Office by the end of Module I.
- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college. Please visit

www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term. Do not pay for the course(s) at the time of registration.

With Other State of Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Approved Birth-Five ECPC or FCCPC programs

SEEK scholarship may reimburse the practitioner for successful completion of a State of Florida DCF approved Birth-Five FCCPC or ECPC program. Reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College ECPC/FCCPC tuition rate.

Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner. SEEK scholarship will not reimburse for books and/or other materials associated with other DCF approved ECPC/FCCPC programs.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If the award is approved and after completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

The State of Florida Department of Children and Families Director Credential Coursework

At Palm Beach State College

SEEK scholarship may be available for college credit coursework leading to any level of the FL Director Credential.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college. Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term. Do not pay for the course(s).

*At Other Accredited institutions**

SEEK scholarship may reimburse the practitioner for State of FL DCF Approved coursework leading to any level of the Director Credential.

Reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the course start date and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner. SEEK scholarship will not reimburse for books and/or other materials associated with coursework taken at other accredited institutions.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If the award is approved and after completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will

be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

SEEK scholarship will not pay for education exemption tests for the Director Credential.

Non-Credit Early Childhood Education Coursework

At Palm Beach State College

SEEK Scholarship may be available for select non-credit course in early childhood education.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date(s) for the fall, spring, and/or summer term(s) at the college. Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term. Do not pay for the course(s).

*At Other Accredited Institutions**

SEEK scholarship may reimburse the practitioner for ECPC/FCCPC coursework at other regionally accredited institutions. Reimbursement must be pre-approved and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

SEEK scholarship will not reimburse for books and/or other materials associated with coursework taken at other accredited institutions.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval 14 days prior to the start of the class for the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If an award is approved and upon completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

The Associates Degree In Early Childhood Education

At Palm Beach State College

SEEK scholarships may be available for the following towards obtaining an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education at Palm Beach State College:

- Admission and registration fees
- Testing fees - one time only

- PERT
- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
- COMPASS (for English proficiency)
- College Preparatory courses
- ESOL courses
- Required textbooks and materials
- Credit coursework
 - SEEK Scholarship is only available for General Education courses once a practitioner has completed at least eighteen (18) credits in early childhood education specific coursework and has a primary program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education.
 - To be eligible for approval of three (3) or more courses, a practitioner must have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better and a primary program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education.
 - An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date(s) for the fall, spring, and/or summer term(s) at the college. Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term.
 - Do not pay for the course(s).

*At Other Accredited Institutions**

SEEK scholarship may be available for reimbursement of the tuition for Associate level Early Childhood Education coursework taken at a regionally accredited institution.

To be eligible for approval of three (3) or more courses, a practitioner must have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better and a primary program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education.

Requests for reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of the class(es) and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

SEEK scholarship will reimburse for books and/or other materials associated with coursework taken at other accredited institutions.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If an award is approved and upon completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

The Bachelors Degree in Early Childhood Education

At Florida Atlantic University (FAU)

SEEK scholarship may be available for the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECE) program within the College of Education at FAU.

A practitioner who has been admitted as a degree-seeking student may request SEEK scholarship for all coursework associated to the BECE degree and for required textbooks and materials at the FAU bookstore.

A practitioner who has completed an Associates of Science in Early Childhood Education and is admitted as a non-degree seeking student status may request SEEK scholarship for early childhood education specific coursework and required books at the FAU bookstore for one semester only.

SEEK scholarship does not pay for FAU application fees, parking fees, or Owl Card fees.

- An eligible practitioner submits a specific scholarship *Application for FAU BECE Degree/ECE Master Level Courses* and a copy of course registration by the scholarship deadline indicated on the application. The application can be found at www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml
Do not pay for the course(s).

*At Other Accredited Institutions**

SEEK Scholarship may be available for reimbursement for Bachelor level Early Childhood Education coursework taken at a regionally accredited institution.

A request for a reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of the class and will be based on the current FAU tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

SEEK scholarship will reimburse for books and/or other materials associated with coursework taken at other accredited institutions.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application 14 days prior to the start of class for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If an award is approved and upon completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

Graduate Level Early Childhood Coursework

At Florida Atlantic University (FAU)

SEEK scholarship may be available for up to 12 credits in early childhood education specific masters degree classes and required books and materials at the FAU bookstore.

SEEK scholarship does not pay for application fees, parking fees, and Owl Card fees at FAU.

- An eligible practitioner submits a specific scholarship ***Application for FAU BECE Degree/ECE Master Level Courses*** and a copy of course registration by the scholarship deadline indicated on the application. The application can be found at www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml Do not pay for the course(s).

*At Other Accredited Institutions**

SEEK scholarship may be available for reimbursement of 12 credits of Master level early childhood education specific coursework and required book/materials taken at a regionally accredited institution.

A request for a reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current FAU tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If an award is approved and upon completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

**Regional Accrediting Bodies: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Technical and Career Institutions, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (community and junior), Western Association of Schools and Colleges (senior colleges and universities).*

Translation and Evaluation of Foreign Degrees/Coursework

SEEK scholarship may be available for the translation and/or evaluation of foreign college coursework /degrees for equivalent coursework and degrees in the United States, up to a maximum amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00). The service is provided by Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. through the SEEK Scholarship program.

To be considered, a practitioner must:

- Be a member of the Registry
- Have at least six (6) months of continuous employment at the same QC program
- Provide completion of the State of FL DCF state mandated training

Applications for translation and/or evaluation service are available on a year round basis.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application along with any required documentation. The application is reviewed and the practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request. If approved a voucher for services, an award letter and application for Josef Silny & Associates, Inc.

Palm Beach County Childhood Registry Approved Workshops

SEEK scholarship may be available for the registration fee, up to three hundred and fifty dollars (\$350.00), for early childhood related workshops that have been approved by the Palm Beach County (PBC) Early Childhood Registry. To view Registry approved workshops, please visit www.pbcregistry.org under *Search for Trainings*.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the workshop registration form at least 4 weeks prior to the date of the workshop. If a scholarship is awarded, SEEK Scholarship will make payment directly to the training organization.

Being awarded a SEEK Scholarship does not guarantee registration status; the practitioner must also submit a registration form to the training organization.

Palm Beach County Childhood Registry Approved Conferences

SEEK scholarship may be available for the early registration member fee to early childhood related conferences approved by the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry, up to three hundred and fifty dollars (\$350.00). ***For Quality Counts professional development assessment, Registry approved conferences will only count towards the annual 50 points.***

Information regarding Registry-Approved conferences may be found on the web at www.pbcregistry.org/ConfSearch.asp

If a conference has not been preapproved by the Registry, the practitioner can submit information about the conference to the Registry at least 60 days prior to the event date. Registry staff will contact the organization regarding the process of obtaining registry approval. If the conference is approved, the practitioner will be notified and the conference will be added to the Registry list.

SEEK Scholarship will not pay for pre-conference events or additional workshop fees that may be assessed. SEEK scholarship will not pay for books and/or other materials not included in the registration fee for conferences.

Any costs incurred above the early registration member fee will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the conference registration form at least 4 weeks prior to the early registration date of the conference. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If the award is approved, SEEK Scholarship will make payment directly to the conference organization.

Being awarded a SEEK Scholarship does not guarantee registration status; the practitioner must also submit a registration form to the conference organization.

If the early conference registration deadline for members has passed, a practitioner can apply for reimbursement of the early conference registration member fee.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the conference registration form prior to the start of the event date. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the amount of the award.
- If an award is approved and upon completion of the conference, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

Chapter 4 – Incentive Awards for Quality Counts Practitioners

The Education Incentive Award

Education Incentive Awards, commonly referred to as EIAs, are monetary awards that acknowledge specific educational achievements of a practitioner that are completed between September 1st of one year and August 31st of the next year (fiscal year of the award).

Quality Counts childcare programs are notified through e-mail, the IEECE website and the Career Advisor when the EIA information is available. The web link will contain information regarding the specific awards, the EIA application, and required documents that must be completed and submitted.

EIA awards are subject to change, and all awards are based on availability of funding.

Each EIA is a one time award and must be requested during the award period in which it was completed. Incomplete applications or documents will jeopardize the ability to process and award an EIA.

- An eligible practitioner submits the EIA application and all required documents by the application deadline of **5:00pm on August 31st**. Complete applications are date stamped upon receipt.
 - All EIA applications are processed after the deadline. The practitioner will be notified as to the status of the EIA when all applications have been processed, usually within six (6) to eight (8) weeks but based on the number of applications received.
 - EIA payments are sent directly from Palm Beach State College to the practitioner's home address on file with Palm Beach State College, usually within eight (8) to twelve (12) weeks after the practitioner is notified.

Additional information regarding the Education Incentive Award Program can be found on the IEECE website at www.palmbeachstate.edu/SEEKscholarship.xml

The Informal Incentive Award

Informal Training Incentive Awards, commonly referred to as ITIAs, are monetary awards that acknowledge completion of the Infant Toddler and/or Preschool Informal Training Series. The last course in the series must be completed between September 1st of one year and August 31st of the next year (fiscal year of the award).

Quality Counts childcare programs are notified through e-mail, the IEECE website and the Career Advisor when the ITIA information is available. The web link will include information regarding the specific awards, the ITIA application, and required documents that must be completed and submitted.

ITIA awards are subject to change, and all awards are based on availability of funding.

Each ITIA is a one time award and must be requested during the award period in which it was completed. Incomplete applications or documents will jeopardize the ability to process and award an ITIA.

- An eligible practitioner submits the ITIA application and all required documents by the application deadline of **5:00pm on August 31st**. Complete applications are date stamped upon receipt.
 - All ITIA applications are processed after the deadline. The practitioner will be notified as to the status of the ITIA when all applications have been processed, usually within six (6) to eight (8) weeks but based on the number of applications received.
 - ITIA payments are sent directly from Palm Beach State College to the practitioner's home address on file with Palm Beach State College, usually within eight (8) to twelve (12) weeks after the practitioner is notified.

Additional information regarding the Informal Training Incentive Award Program can be found on the IEECE website at www.palmbeachstate.edu/SEEKscholarship.xml

The Childcare Wage\$® Florida Project

Work **A**nd **G**ain **E**conomic **S**elf-sufficiency, commonly referred to as WAGE\$, may provide education-based salary supplements to a practitioner that obtains formal child care education or training beyond high school. To be considered for WAGE\$, the practitioner must:

- Work directly with children birth to five at least 20 hours a week
- Working less than 35 hours a week will result in a pro-rated supplement
- Work in the same site for at least 1 year
- Earn \$14.00 or less per hour

- An eligible practitioner completes a specific WAGE\$ application and submits it to the Florida Children's Forum with required documentation. The Forum will notify the practitioner as to the status and amount of the award.
- If awarded, half of the supplement amount is sent in 6 month intervals.

The practitioner must submit information regarding continued educational accomplishments to the Forum, as salary supplements are offered at different levels, based on formal child care training. The practitioner must remain employed at the same

Quality Counts childcare program to remain eligible. Additional information regarding the WAGE\$ Program can be found at www.fcforum.org.

Chapter 5 – SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Non-QC Practitioners

The Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC)

The Florida Child Care Professional Certificate (FCCPC)

At Palm Beach State College

SEEK scholarship may be available for the ECPC/FCCPC coursework and required book(s) based on:

ECPC requirements:

- Submission of a standard high school or GED diploma as accepted by Palm Beach State College
- 40-Hour Introductory Child Care Certificate (center-based setting)
- 10- Hour Preschool DAP Certificate
- 5-Hour Emergent Literacy Certificate
- 480 hours documented work experience with children ages 5 or younger in a center-based or family child care setting to be obtained **during the training period.**
- As a requirement, official high school diploma or GED transcript must be on file at the Palm Beach State College Registrar's Office by the end of Module I.

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FCCPC requirements:

- Submission of a standard high school or GED diploma as accepted by Palm Beach State College
- 40-Hour Introductory Child Care Certificate (center-based setting) or
- 30-hour Introductory Child Care Certificate (family child care setting)
- 5-Hour Emergent Literacy Certificate
- 480 hours documented work experience with children ages 5 or younger in a center-based or family child care setting to be obtained **during the training period.**
- As a requirement, official high school diploma or GED transcript must be on file at the Palm Beach State College Registrar's Office by the end of Module I.

With Other State of Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Approved Birth-Five ECPC or FCCPC programs

SEEK scholarship may reimburse the practitioner for successful completion of a State of Florida DCF approved Birth-Five FCCPC or ECPC program.

Reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College ECPC/FCCPC tuition rate.

Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner. SEEK scholarship will not reimburse for books and/or other materials associated with other DCF approved ECPC/FCCPC programs.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
If the award is approved and after completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

The State of Florida Department of Children and Families Director Credential Coursework

At Palm Beach State College

SEEK scholarship may be available for college credit coursework leading to any level of the FL Director Credential.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college. Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term.
Do not pay for the course(s).

*At Other Accredited institutions**

SEEK scholarship may reimburse the practitioner for State of FL DCF Approved coursework leading to the Level 1, Level 2, or Advanced Level Director Credential. SEEK scholarship will not pay for education exemption tests for the Director Credential.

Reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the first day of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner. SEEK scholarship will not reimburse for books and/or other materials associated to coursework taken at other accredited institutions.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
If the award is approved and after completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and

proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

Non-Credit Early Childhood Education Coursework

At Palm Beach State College

SEEK Scholarship may be available for select non-credit course in early childhood education.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date(s) for the fall, spring, and/or summer term(s) at the college. Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term. Do not pay for the course(s).

*At Other Accredited Institutions**

SEEK scholarship may reimburse the practitioner for non-credit coursework and required books/materials at other accredited institutions.

- Reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.
- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount. If an award is approved and upon completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

The Associates Degree In Early Childhood Education

At Palm Beach State College

SEEK scholarships may be available for the following activities towards obtaining an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education at Palm Beach State College:

- Admission and registration fees
- Required textbooks and materials
- Credit coursework
- SEEK Scholarship is only available for up to eighteen (18) credits in early childhood education specific coursework, inclusive of ECE credits already attained.

- To be eligible for approval of three (3) or more courses, a practitioner must have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better and a primary program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education.

All childcare programs that hold a service agreement with Family Central, Inc. are notified of the scholarship application deadline prior to each semester at Palm Beach State College.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date(s) for the fall, spring, and/or summer term(s) at the college. Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4820.xml for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term. Do not pay for the course(s).

*At Other Accredited Institutions**

- SEEK scholarship may be available for reimbursement of the tuition and required books/materials for Associate level Early Childhood Education coursework taken at a regionally accredited institution.
- To be eligible for approval of three (3) or more courses, a practitioner must have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better and a program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education.
- Requests for reimbursement must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.
- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.

If an award is approved and upon completion of the coursework, documentation of successful completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

Chapter 6 – SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement

Reimbursement may be possible for a professional development event for which SEEK Scholarship cannot provide direct payment.

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved 14 days **prior** to the start of the event. Eligibility for reimbursement is based on successful completion of the event, defined as:

- receiving a grade of A, B, C, P , or S for coursework or
- being awarded a certificate of completion for workshops and/or conferences
- submission of completion to the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry
- submission of acceptable proof of payment
- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement, along with information regarding the professional development event for which the reimbursement is being requested. The practitioner will be notified as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If approved and upon successful completion of the event, documentation of completion must be submitted to the PBC Early Childhood Registry and proof of payment must be submitted to SEEK Scholarship. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the practitioner's home address on file with Palm Beach State College within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

The reimbursement request must be submitted no later than 30 days after the completion of the approved event/course.

Chapter 7 – Suspension from the SEEK Scholarship Program

Suspension Policy for Qc-Practitioners

QC-Practitioners who are unsuccessful* in completing a SEEK funded event(s) will be suspended from SEEK. QC-Practitioners suspended between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011 will continue to fall under the current policy which states that a practitioner can pay for any Registry approved, SEEK funded event to be reinstated. Practitioners who are unsuccessful on or after July 1, 2011 are suspended from SEEK and can **only** be reinstated if one of the following options is completed:

QC Practitioner has two (2) options to be reinstated:

1. A QC Practitioner may pay for and successfully complete a Registry approved event(s) that equals or exceeds the dollar amount of the unsuccessfully completed event(s) related to the suspension... AND... provide proof of payment and verification of successful completion when the reinstatement is requested. These documents will be submitted to the SEEK department for review and approval.
2. A QC Practitioner may reimburse the SEEK Department through personal payment. This payment must equal the amount of the SEEK funded event(s) that the practitioner was unsuccessful in completing. If this option is selected, the QC-Practitioner will be reinstated immediately and be eligible for SEEK Scholarship.

Suspension Policy For Non-Qc-Practitioners

Non-QC practitioners who are unsuccessful* in completing a SEEK funded event will forfeit all further SEEK Scholarship eligibility and will not have the option to be reinstated. These Non-QC practitioners will be advised to access other scholarships such as T.E.A.C.H. and financial aid.

A practitioner will follow these policies based on the present child care facility where they are working. If a practitioner changes child care facilities, SEEK reinstatement policies may also change based on the QC or Non-QC designation the facility holds.

***Unsuccessful completion is defined as receiving a grade of D,F,U,W. All classes must be completed with a “C” or better and all trainings/conferences with an “S” or certificate of completion.**

Chapter 8 – Request for an Excused Unsuccessful Completion

A practitioner is expected to attend all professional development events for which a SEEK scholarship is awarded. Any event that is unattended, regardless of cause, reduces the opportunity for others to take advantage of scholarship opportunities.

In the case of a substantiated emergency such as a confining illness, a serious accident, or the death of an immediate relative, a practitioner may be granted an excused unsuccessful completion.

- The practitioner is responsible for immediately informing SEEK Scholarship of an unsuccessful completion of a SEEK Scholarship awarded event. The practitioner can request to complete a ***Request for Excused Unsuccessful Completion of a SEEK Scholarship Funded Event*** Form and must submit documentation that will substantiate the reason. The following documentation is required, based on the type of substantiated emergency:
 - Medical – a letter from a physician or health care agency, on company letterhead, specifically indicates an illness of such severity or duration that prevents the practitioner from continuing in the course(s) or training event. The letter must include dates of the illness and treatment.
 - Accident - documentation from the police or an insurance company that the accident occurred. The documentation must include the date of the accident.
 - Death of Immediate Family Member – documentation of the death and relationship to the deceased. Immediate family members are limited to spouse, child, parent, and sibling.
- The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request and, if approved, the award amount.
- If approved, the practitioner will be granted an excused unsuccessful completion and will continue to be eligible for SEEK Scholarship awards.
- If the unsuccessful completion is not documented, then the practitioner will be held to the SEEK Scholarship suspension process.

In the case of college credit coursework, a practitioner will need to follow the college academic policies as they relate to attendance and tuition refund(s).

- A practitioner is required to complete a college student refund request form and be approved for such to forego the SEEK Scholarship suspension process.