



Smart Start Early Care and Education

2023-2024 Dedication to Education Eligibility Requirements for Individual Level Bonus

Please carefully read all information in this handout to ensure you are submitting the appropriate documentation to qualify for the Dedication to Education Individual Bonus. **Bonus eligibility may have changed** from previous years. (This handout does not need to be turned in with the application.)

Bonus Details

- The *amount* of each bonus and the *number* of bonuses issued will be dependent upon the total number of applications received and funds available
- Priority will be given to those working directly with children

Bonus Levels

- Level I
 - Early Childhood Preschool Certificate or Infant Toddler Care Certificate or Early Childhood Diploma or CDA and/or
 - Level 2 - 7 on the NC Early Educator Certification (EEC)
- Level II
 - Associate, Bachelor's or Master's degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development and/or
 - Level 8 - 13 on the NC Early Educator Certification (EEC)

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must be able to answer yes to all of the following criteria to qualify for the Individual Bonus and will be required to provide documentation to verify employment.

Criteria for DTE Individual Bonus- Educational Attainment	Met (yes/no/na)
Teachers/Caregivers: work directly with children under 5 years at least 20 hours/week	
Administrators: work onsite a minimum of 20 hours/week	
Work in licensed child care facility in New Hanover County	
Hourly wage of \$19 or less (annualized salary of \$39,520)	
Education (degree or certificate) in early childhood or child development OR Early Care & Education Professional Certification Scale (EEC) level 2-13	
Not receiving an award through Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$	
Not holding a B-K add-on endorsement <u>only</u>	

Documentation Requirements (continued on back)

Education

- Copy of EEC card, certificate, or letter from NCICDP **OR**
- Copy of diploma clearly stating major of degree **OR**
- Copy of transcript (official or unofficial) clearly stating major of degree and date earned
- **DO NOT** submit DCDEE Works documentation
- Certificates, diplomas, or degrees must be achieved by Sunday, December 31, 2023

Employment

- Employment Verification completed by administrator on DTE Application
 - Administrators- please have other admin or owner complete this section
 - FCCH- complete this section for self

see reverse side for more details

Income

- Paystub (within 60 days) clearly indicating hourly rate of pay/salary **OR**
- 2023 W2 clearly indicating gross salary **OR**
- 2023 Schedule C clearly showing salary
- Please mark out SSN

Application Details

- Application submission **must** include education and income documentation
 - Do not submit extra documentation
 - Do not submit this handout with application
- Applications must be received or postmarked by **Friday, April 12th, at 5:00pm**
- Submit applications by one of the following methods
 - Mail
 - Smart Start, Attn: Natalie Pond, 3534 S. College Rd. Suite F, Wilmington 28412
 - Hand Delivery
 - Smart Start office between 8:30am-4:30pm
- Emailed or faxed applications and documentation *will not* be accepted

Other

- **Please print clearly on all documentation**
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted
- Check your email (junk/spam) on a regular basis for communication about the DTE bonus
- All applicants will receive confirmation of their status of the DTE bonus by Wednesday, April 24th, 2024
- Smart Start staff will verify the employment and education of all eligible applicants prior to issuing the bonus. Employment may also be checked periodically after the bonus is granted in efforts to track teacher retention.
- Those who are eligible will be asked to provide documentation, including a signed contract, a W-9 tax form, and a direct deposit form for the bonus to be issued. This documentation will be provided by Smart Start.
- The DTE bonus will be issued by direct deposit on or before Friday, June 30, 2024.