



THE CHILDREN'S  
TRUST

**THRIVE  
BY**

**Professional  
Development  
Supports Guide**

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## INTRODUCTION

This document provides information and resources for professional development (PD) supports available to early childhood educators and administrators in Miami-Dade County through initiatives funded by The Children's Trust and other state and local sources. The wide array of PD supports and services available to the Miami-Dade early childhood community include:

- Career advising connecting educators to individualized supports;
- Scholarships for conferences, trainings, and courses in the early childhood field;
- Free early childhood trainings from community agencies;
- Bilingual supports (i.e., document translation, trainings, certificates);
- Participation in the Miami-Dade Professional Development Registry and
- Salary incentives tied to educational progress.

This guide is organized around three major sources of PD supports: (1) The Children's Trust Thrive by 5 Supports; (2) Statewide and National Supports; and (3) Other Local Supports. The Appendix to this guide provides a Professional Development Resource Toolkit of materials and information related to the supports and resources referenced in this guide.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS

### *The Children's Trust Thrive by 5 Supports*

Through the Thrive by 5 initiative, The Children's Trust invests in a multitude of strategies to support young children's physical, cognitive, and social and emotional readiness for starting school. The Thrive by 5 Early Learning Quality Improvement System (QIS) is one of the strategies funded within the Thrive by 5 portfolio, which includes professional development supports among other options available to early childhood programs, teachers, and the children and families they serve.

Thrive by 5 career advising, educator scholarships, and salary incentives are available to Miami-Dade early childhood educators and administrators employed childcare programs (centers and Family Child Care Homes) licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). Career advising and educator scholarships are designed to improve the knowledge and skills of Miami-Dade's early childhood workforce to achieve and maintain high quality learning experiences for young children. Salary incentives through the Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida (INCENTIVE\$) program aims to enhance educator salaries, reward retention, and incentivize increased educational attainment. A description of each of these services follows.

## **Career Advising and Educator Scholarships**

### **Early Learning Career Center**

The Early Learning Career Center (Career Center) operated by the Children's Forum is funded by The Children's Trust with the purpose of providing individualized career advising to connect early childhood educators with training, educational scholarships, and salary incentives. The Career Center has a team of qualified early childhood specialists with experience working in the field, supporting adult learners, and serving the childcare community in Miami-Dade County. The Career Center supports the ongoing professional development needs of Miami-Dade's early childhood workforce through strong partnerships with local colleges, universities, and training agencies that provide diverse course and training options. The following is a list of services provided by the Career Center:

- **Career Advisement:** Educators are provided comprehensive career advising and resource supports to establish Career Development Plans (CDPs) and achieve their professional goals including the attainment of training, credentials, and degrees to enhance their early childhood knowledge, classroom practices, and teacher-child interaction skills.
- **Award Scholarships:** Courses and trainings recommended on the CDP are funded through the Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarship (described in the next section). These scholarships are administered and processed by the Career Center.
- **PD Information Sessions:** The Career Center conducts presentations in Miami-Dade in collaboration with local community agencies. Presentations inform the community on Thrive by 5 scholarships and salary incentives and how to access those supports. Interested childcare programs or other community agencies may request presentations as needed.
- **Partner with Colleges, Universities, and Training Agencies:** The Career Center functions as the liaison between childcare programs and local colleges, universities, training agencies, and conference facilitators. Informed by workforce studies and field experiences, the Career Center makes recommendations for the creation of new courses and trainings based on the needs of early educators. New vendors are continually added as needed to the scholarship system to ensure availability of diverse and culturally sensitive course offerings. The Career Center also presents at local professional development events (i.e., seminars, workshops and local /state conferences) where early childhood educators can network, learn the latest research in child development, and receive information about community services and supports available to them and the families they serve.

### **Career Center Contact Information**

Early Learning Career Center  
7925 NW 12 Street, Suite 106  
Doral, FL 33126  
(888) 352-4453

[careercenter@thechildrensforum.com](mailto:careercenter@thechildrensforum.com)  
[www.elcareercenter.org](http://www.elcareercenter.org)



## **Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarship**

The Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarship program administered by the Career Center is intended to provide early learning educators with high quality courses and trainings to improve their knowledge and skills in the field of early childhood education and positively impact teacher-child interactions in the classroom. These scholarships are available to administrators, educators, and educational support staff currently employed at DCF licensed (or licensed exempt) childcare programs in Miami-Dade County. Scholarship offerings, eligibility, and the process for requesting a scholarship are summarized below. See the Appendix for Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarship resources.

### Scholarships Offerings

Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarships are available for the following courses, trainings, conferences, and document translation supports. Additional early childhood-based courses and trainings are considered on a rolling basis according to community need, availability at local training institutions, and The Children's Trust approval.

- Document Translation of foreign educational documents for purposes of staff credential attainment, credit bearing courses, and participation in the T.E.A.C.H. and/or INCENTIVE\$.
- GED preparation trainings and testing fees
- Courses and trainings toward obtaining and renewing early childhood credentials:
  - Staff credentials (i.e., state and national credentials)
  - Director Credential
  - Advanced Director Credential
  - Credential renewals
- English-language trainings and courses:
  - ESL (English as Second Language)
  - EAP (English for Academic Purposes)
- Early childhood credit-bearing certification courses in English, Spanish, and Creole
- Evidence-based classroom management trainings
- Curriculum trainings
- Early childhood conference registration (for approved conferences)
- On-site trainings (availability varies). On-site trainings are considered by some training institutions/agencies by request. Childcare programs coordinate training dates and times directly with the institution/agency after scholarship application requirements are met.

### Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarship Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility must be established before an educator can apply for a Thrive by 5 Educator

Scholarship. To be eligible, educators must:

- Be employed at a DCF licensed childcare center or home.
- Be employed at a licensed childcare program for more than 90 days.
- Work directly with children for at least 20 hours a week OR provide direct support to teaching staff.
- Submit grades for all trainings or courses for any previously awarded scholarships.
- Have no outstanding debt with any participating college or training institution.
- Submit all required application forms and documents including those required for participation in the Miami-Dade Professional Development Registry (Registry). The Registry is described in detail later in this document.

#### Scholarship Application Process

To request and apply for a scholarship, early childhood educators must follow these steps:

1. Send an email to [careercenter@thechildrensforum.com](mailto:careercenter@thechildrensforum.com) that includes:
  - Name of Educator,
  - Name of childcare program and DCF License number,
  - Scholarship support being requested,
  - Email address, and
  - Phone number.
2. Once a scholarship request is received, the Career Center will confirm receipt by email, provide information on next steps, and advise which specialist will assist with the process.
3. A Professional Development Specialist (PDS) will reach out to the educator to determine eligibility for Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarships and provide career advising and course/training information and resources.
4. Once an educator is deemed eligible, the PDS will inform them of the required scholarship processes and agreements. Educators must follow all scholarship and Registry participation agreements and requirements including submittal of all required documents.
5. Eligible participants are required to submit all required documentation per instruction from their PDS in order for payment to be processed.
6. Once a course/training for which a Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarship has been completed, the educator must provide proof of completion to the PDS by submitting the required unofficial transcript or certificate.
7. The Career Center does not cover late registration, books or any other fees outside of tuition costs.
8. Eligible participants are subject to pay out-of-pocket for certain admissions fees (\$30) depending on the scholarship goal selected.

9. Educators who are awarded scholarships must abide by scholarship participation Agreements. Scholarship requests to the Career Center must be made at least six weeks before the training occurs to ensure all application requirements are completed.

Educators who do not comply with the scholarship agreement are placed on a 12-month scholarship suspension. Once the suspension period expires, educators can apply for an appeal to have their eligibility reinstated for Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarships. The Career Center reviews appeal requests and makes approval decisions dependent on the circumstances. The appeal process is included in the Appendix.

### **Miami-Dade Professional Development Registry**

The Registry, funded by The Children’s Trust and operated by the Children’s Forum, is a workforce and training database that houses information on employment, demographic, education, and scholarship history of educators participating in Thrive by 5 including QIS programs and educators receiving Thrive by 5 professional development supports (i.e., scholarships or salary incentives). Registry data inform Thrive by 5 policies, funding, and scholarship decisions.

Entry into the Registry is accomplished through the Children’s Forum Portal. A summary of the process for Registry participation is shown in the chart below. Note that directors and educators employed at QIS programs are required to complete all of the steps shown in the chart. Educators and directors requesting scholarships who are not employed at a QIS program are required to complete the steps shown in grey (Steps 3, 4, 6, and 7).

Summary of Registry Data Submission in the Children’s Forum Portal <a href="https://login.thechildrensforum.com/login">https://login.thechildrensforum.com/login</a>			
What is Required by Step	Who Submits	When to Submit	Where to Submit in the Portal
1. Business Account	Director	One Time	Create Business Account
2. Demographics Survey	Director	Annually	Demographics
3. Personal Accounts	Director and Staff	One Time	Create Personal Account
4. DCF Transcript	Director and Staff	Annually	My Education – Overview
5. Staff Roster	Director	Annually	Roster
—Add/Remove Staff	Director	One Time	Roster
—Update Staff Information	Director	Annually as needed	Roster
—Paystubs for all staff	Director	Annually	Roster
6. Confirm Employment	Director and Staff	One Time	My Employment
7. Education Documents	Director and Staff	Annually as needed	My Education
—Credentials if held	Director and Staff	Annually as needed	My Education – Credentials
—Degrees if held	Director and Staff	Annually as needed	My Education – Degrees
—College transcripts if held	Director and Staff	Annually as needed	My Education – Credit classes
—High School Diploma*	Director and Staff	Annually as needed	My Education – High School Diploma

**Green** = Completed by QIS directors in the **Business Account** **Grey** = Completed by Directors and Staff in the **Personal Account**.

\*Required if no college transcript with 9+ credits held.

More information on the Registry as well as tutorials for completing each step of Registry process can be found at <https://login.thechildrensforum.com/index/help>. Registry requirements and information specific to Miami QIS programs can also be found at <https://login.thechildrensforum.com/index/help-miamiqis>.

For those requesting scholarships, Career Center advisors also provide details of Registry data requirements as part of the scholarship application process described above.

For questions about the Registry or the Children's Forum Portal, contact the Miami-Dade Registry team at the number or email listed below.

#### **Miami-Dade Registry Team Contact Information**

1211 Governors Square Blvd, Suite 200

Tallahassee, FL 32301

888-FL-CHILD (888) (352-4453)

[registryadmin@thechildrensforum.com](mailto:registryadmin@thechildrensforum.com)

#### **Salary Incentives**

Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$, an affiliate of Child Care WAGES®, rewards early childhood educators with financial incentives based on their education and continuity of employment. In Miami-Dade County the INCENTIVE\$ program is funded by The Children's Trust as part of the Thrive by 5 initiative. Educators on the INCENTIVE\$ program can earn an additional \$200.00 to \$3,000.00 each year while increasing their early childhood knowledge and skills through earning credentials and degrees. INCENTIVE\$ promotes individual professional development efforts and addresses the issue of low wages, without affecting childcare program budgets, regular wages of the educator, or parent fees at a childcare program. Additionally, by incentivizing increased education and retaining early childhood educators at their programs, INCENTIVE\$ affords children more stable relationships with better-educated teachers.

INCENTIVE\$ is licensed by Child Care Services Association of Chapel Hill, NC and administered by the Children's Forum. Eligibility criteria for participation in the INCENTIVE\$ program are listed below. More information on this initiative can be found at <http://incentives-fl.org>. See the Appendix for INCENTIVE\$ resources.

#### **INCENTIVE\$ Eligibility Criteria**

To qualify for INCENTIVE\$ in Miami-Dade County\* educators must meet the following criteria:

- Work a minimum of six months in a participating DCF licensed or license-exempt child care program.
- Work a minimum of 20 hours per week with children ages birth to five in a child care center or home.
- Earn less than \$17.50 an hour.
- Have a formal child care credential and/or some education beyond a high school diploma.

- Submit all required application forms and documents including those required for participation in the Miami-Dade Professional Development Registry.
- Take at least one three-credit course every two years to continue participation (if awarded at levels 2 to 5 on the INCENTIVE\$ scale—see the Appendix).

\*Requirements to participate in the INCENTIVE\$ program vary by county per local funder specifications. The criteria listed above are specific to Miami-Dade County.

### **INCENTIVE\$ Contact information**

Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida  
1211 Governors Square Blvd, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
888-FL-CHILD (888) (352-4453)  
<http://incentives-fl.org>  
[incentives@thechildrensforum.com](mailto:incentives@thechildrensforum.com)

### ***Statewide and National Supports***

#### **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program**

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, funded by the Florida Office of Early Learning, provides scholarships for early childhood educators in Florida to work towards earning an Associate, Bachelor's, or Master's degree or credentials in early childhood education. T.E.A.C.H. is a three-way partnership for the sharing of expenses by the early educator receiving the scholarship, the sponsoring child care center or family child care home, and T.E.A.C.H. These scholarships help educators afford both the time and expense of going to school. Scholarship recipients also receive compensation increases from their employer and T.E.A.C.H. as they make progress toward earning their degrees or credentials. By promoting higher education and including a bonus structure, the program helps to establish a well-qualified, fairly compensated, and stable workforce for Florida's children.

T.E.A.C.H. is licensed by Child Care Services Association of Chapel Hill, NC and administered by the Children's Forum. More information about the TEACH program, eligibility criteria, and how to apply can be found at <http://teach-fl.org>. See the Appendix for T.E.A.C.H. resources.

### **T.E.A.C.H. Contact Information**

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program  
1211 Governors Square Blvd, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
877-FL-TEACH (358-3224)  
<http://teach-fl.org>



### **ECE Directory**

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) directory is a tool developed by the Children's Forum that early childhood educators in Florida can use to locate nearby colleges and universities offering credential or degree coursework in early childhood or child development. The ECE directory can be found at <https://regportal.flchild.com/degreedatabase>. The directory is kept as up to date as possible, but users are encouraged to verify any information found in the directory by visiting the school's website or contacting the school directly.

### **Financial Aid (FAFSA)**

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used by national, state, and local government agencies as well as higher education institutions and private organizations to award financial aid. More information on types of aid, eligibility and how to apply for FAFSA can be found at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>.

### ***Other Local Supports***

#### **Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe Professional Development Institute**

The Professional Development Institute (PDI), a division of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade/Monroe, promotes high quality educational opportunities to early childhood professionals, families and stakeholders thus creating an integrated community responsive and supportive of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth and development of young children birth through age 5 and their caregivers. The PDI goals are to identify professional development gaps, design and coordinate high quality training opportunities, and implement services that build capacity within the community through collaboration. For more information on the PDI, go to <https://trainings.elcmdm.org/>.

#### **Institutions of Higher Education in Miami-Dade County**

A list of public colleges and universities with regional or national accreditation in Miami-Dade County that offer early childhood programs and coursework are listed below along with their contact information. Note that this list does not include private institutions and is not intended to be an exhaustive list of educational institutions serving Miami-Dade County. For more information on colleges and universities offering early childhood programs in the county, consult the ECE directory at <https://regportal.flchild.com/degreedatabase>.

- Miami Dade College School of Education  
[www.mdc.edu/education](http://www.mdc.edu/education)  
(305) 237-7731

- Miami Dade College School of Continuing Education & Professional Development  
[www.mdc.edu/ce](http://www.mdc.edu/ce)  
(305) 237-2000
- Florida International University  
<https://case.fiu.edu/about/index.html>  
(305) 348-2000

## **APPENDIX: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE TOOLKIT**

### **Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarship Resources**

Visit <http://www.elcareercenter.org/early-learning-documents/> for the following Thrive by 5 PD resources. All of these resources are in English and Spanish unless otherwise noted.

- Thrive by 5 Educator Scholarship Participant Agreement Forms (English and Spanish)
- RIF, Eligibility and process documents (English and Spanish)
- Letter explaining the application process (English and Spanish)
- Scholarship Goals and Description (English and Spanish)
- Scholarship Appeal (English and Spanish)
- Career Center Visitor Guide (English and Spanish)
- FIU Bilingual Program Agreements (English and Spanish)
- Training and Training Institution specific flyers (English and Spanish)
- Early Learning Career Center Rack Card (English, Spanish, and Creole)
- Early Learning Career Center Scholarship Flyer (English, Spanish, and Creole)
- Thrive by 5 QIS Workforce Study (English Only)

### **INCENTIVE\$ Resources**

Visit <https://incentives-fl.org/resources/> for the following INCENTIVE\$ resources:

- INCENTIVE\$ Brochures in English and Spanish
- INCENTIVE\$ Scale in English and Spanish

### **T.E.A.C.H. Resources**

Visit <https://teach-fl.org/index.php/scholarship-resources/> for the following T.E.A.C.H. resources:

- T.E.A.C.H. Brochures in English and Spanish
- T.E.A.C.H. Director and Educator flyers
  - For Centers, FCCHs, and Head Starts
  - In English and Spanish



**[TheChildrensTrust.org/ThriveBy5](https://TheChildrensTrust.org/ThriveBy5)**