

T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD® PROJECT

MYTHS AND FACTS

- **Myth:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project provides training for child care providers.
 - ✓ **Fact:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project provides scholarships to child care providers to help them earn college credits leading toward credentials or degrees in Early Childhood education or child development.
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- **Myth:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project will change the dismal wages child care providers receive and eradicate the high turnover rates that plague the field.
 - ✓ **Fact:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project is designed to help child care teachers, directors and family child care providers earn more education. The amount of education, usually in the form of credit hours, is specified in a formal agreement. Those child care providers who participate are guaranteed a compensation award in the form of a raise or bonus when they complete their education. In return, they must commit to staying in their child care program or the field for a specified period of time following the completion of their education requirement. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project has been successful in achieving its goals. For those who participate there has been a significant increase in the amount of education they have and in the compensation they receive, as well as a low turnover rate during their commitment period. However, most child care providers in any given community or state are not T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project participants. Some already have the education they need and want. Others are not interested in participating. Sometimes child care programs are not willing to sponsor staff on scholarships. The outcomes of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project are only for those people who participate. We have much work to do to adequately address the issues of compensation and turnover for the entire field.
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- **Myth:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project limits scholarships to individuals attending Early Childhood education programs in state colleges and universities.
- ✓ **Fact:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project as it currently operates in all participating states does not necessarily limit participation of private colleges and universities with Early Childhood or child development programs. However, the Project has not been willing to reimburse a private college or university for tuition at a rate that is greater than that paid at a public college or university. Funds and scholarships are limited. Thus it is important to make economical decisions about how scholarship dollars are spent. In addition, the Project strives to create equity in the value of a scholarship. With limited resources it would be unfair to provide a scholarship worth \$10,000 to some students while providing other students with a scholarship worth \$500 for the same level of education. In some

states, however, private colleges and universities are willing to forego the difference between what they charge for tuition and the rate paid for scholarships in state colleges or universities.

- **Myth:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project limits scholarships to teachers of preschool children.
 - ✓ **Fact:** In all states where the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project exists, scholarships are available to child care providers who work in regulated child care settings. However, in some states scholarships are only available to teachers, directors and family child care providers who work a certain minimum number of hours per week. Because many teachers who work in school age child care programs are employed for less than twenty hours per week, they may not be eligible for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarship. However, many child care providers who work with school age children are receiving scholarships because they are working the required minimum number of hours.
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- **Myth:** To evaluate the effectiveness of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project an evaluator must measure changes in a participant's knowledge and beliefs about developmentally appropriate practice as well as her/his skills in the classroom.
 - ✓ **Fact:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project is an umbrella for a variety of comprehensive scholarship programs that link acquired education with increased compensation. An evaluation of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project would seek to assess whether the individual scholarship programs achieved their outcomes. Were the specified credit hours obtained? Was the required compensation given? At what rate did the participants leave their sponsoring child care programs before the end of their commitment year? An evaluation of teacher's knowledge, attitudes and practices prior to and after completing college courses is an evaluation of the effectiveness of those college courses, and really an evaluation of the effect of increased education on performance. A number of studies have done this type of assessment already. The Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study demonstrated direct links between teacher education and their performance, as well as the performance of the child in their care. In addition, because participants on a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarship are often only taking one or two classes a semester it may take a number of years before the measurable impact of education can be seen.
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- **Myth:** Getting a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarship precludes receipt of other forms of financial aid.
- ✓ **Fact:** Because many child care providers earn very low wages, they may be eligible for other forms of financial aid. We encourage child care providers who are taking two courses or more a semester to take advantage of these opportunities. However, most forms of financial aid cover only part or all of the cost of tuition and books. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarship

can wrap around those other forms of assistance to provide a comprehensive package that includes paid release time and compensation incentives, and that requires a commitment from the participant to stay in their child care program.

- **Myth:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project will keep child care providers in their child care settings for many years.
 - **Fact:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project was not designed to address the larger issue of turnover in child care. However, many individuals who receive T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarships often spend longer periods of time in their sponsoring child care program, because they have made a commitment to do so. Often it may take an individual working toward an associate degree in Early Childhood education four or five years to complete that milestone. They must then finish out their last commitment year. This individual has now worked for a longer period of time in the same child care program than the typical child care teacher. However, the Project has little impact on the length of stay of teachers who are not on the program. In addition, the Project has no expectation that individuals stay in their sponsoring child care program beyond their commitment period.
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- **Myth:** Information about T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project participants is available to anyone who wants it.
 - ✓ **Fact:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project maintains a great deal of data collected about participants on the program. This data provides substantial summary information about the demographic characteristics of participants as well as data about credit hours achieved, compensation earned and commitments maintained. However, data about individual participants is treated as confidential and not released without the permission of the individual participant.
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- **Myth:** Participation in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project will increase parent fees.
 - ✓ **Fact:** There is no evidence that participation in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project increases parent fees. In fact, most child care directors report that it has no effect on parent fees and that the savings gained from lower turnover more than covers the cost of participation. In addition, because scholarships are limited in most states, participation is often limited to one or two teachers in a center during a given year.
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- **Myth:** Participants who leave their child care programs before finishing their commitment year may never receive another T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarship.

- ✓ **Fact:** The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project takes the signed contract of participants committing to remain in their child care programs very seriously. If a participant leaves her/his program after receiving her/his compensation incentive and before her/his commitment period is completed, she/he may jeopardize her/his ability to receive another T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarship. The Project and employing child care providers, however, do recognize that sometimes leaving a child care program before the end of a commitment period is not within the control of that participant. Family and/or personal situations may arise that make it necessary for an individual to leave. In such a situation, the teacher leaving may be eligible for another T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarship if her/his former sponsoring center is willing to write a letter to the Project stating that they excuse the broken commitment and are willing to sponsor other teachers in the child care program on a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project scholarship.
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- **Myth:** Sponsoring child care programs have to support T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project recipients until they complete a degree.
 - ✓ **Fact:** Sponsoring child care programs and individual teachers sign contracts specifying a certain amount of education to be completed during a contract period. Often the contract period covers a year. When the contract is complete (the specified credit hours have been obtained), then the individual and the sponsoring child care program can decide if they want to enter into another contract. It may take four or more contracts for an individual to earn an associate degree. Sometimes a child care program may decide they cannot afford to sponsor an individual for that length of time.
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- **Myth:** States that are negotiating an agreement to replicate the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project are responsible for selecting an agency to administer its scholarship models.
 - ✓ **Fact:** States work in conjunction with Child Care Services Association to determine the agency or entity that will administer the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project. All eligible agencies are allowed to participate in the "Request for Proposal" process.
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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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