



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For Current Disabilities Grant and ESA Families

January 21, 2022

Contents

Section A – Eligibility	3
A-1. If a student has the Opportunity Scholarship, will they be eligible for the ESA+ program for the 2022-2023 school year?	3
A-2. If you are currently receiving the Disabilities Grant, how do you apply for the higher ESA+ award?	3
A-3. What if your child currently has a Disabilities grant, but they have been diagnosed with autism. Should the family apply or send in updated IEP?	3
A-4. What if my child’s IEP is more than three years old?	4
A-5. What if my child’s area of eligibility has changed?	4
A-6. What is the deadline to submit an updated IEP Eligibility Determination?	4
Section B – Renewals	5
B-1. Will current ESA and Disabilities Grant students be renewed automatically?	5
B-2. If you are currently receiving the Disabilities Grant, how do you apply for the higher ESA+ award?	5
Section C – Payment.....	5
C-1. As a new ESA recipient (spring 2022) should I use ClassWallet to pay the private school?	5
C-2. As a new recipient of ESA funding (for Spring 2022), am I able to submit requests for therapy bills from the fall semester?.....	5
C-3. In the new ESA+ Program, are there any differences for homeschoolers and their filing for reimbursement for qualified expenses?	6
C-4. We were awarded funds for spring 2022. Will we be required to pay taxes on these funds?	6
Section D – Deadlines.....	6
D-1. Does the ESA+ program start with the spring 2022 semester?.....	6
D-2. Can the spring 2022 award be postponed until fall 2022?.....	6

Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides a summary of answers to common questions received during a webinar SEAA hosted for current award recipients on January 14, 2022. The questions and answers will be updated on a regular basis to reflect new questions SEAA receives.

Nothing in this document should be construed to supersede the Program Statute, Program Rules, or other program policies. In addition, any policies contained herein do not represent an exhaustive list of all policies; rather these policies are set forth to provide a broad overview of the ESA + Programs. See the ESA+ Program Rules and Statute on SEAA's website for more details.

Section A – Eligibility

A-1. If a student has the Opportunity Scholarship, will they be eligible for the ESA+ program for the 2022-2023 school year?

Students can receive both the Opportunity Scholarship and ESA+ award. Students will need to apply to determine eligibility. Eligibility for the Opportunity Scholarship and ESA+ are determined separately. Please note [changes to the disabilities programs](#).

A-2. If you are currently receiving the Disabilities Grant, how do you apply for the higher ESA+ award?

SEAA will review all existing IEPs to determine the level of ESA+ award. See updated [Eligibility Guidelines](#) for more information about the areas of disability that determine the levels of ESA+ awards.

A-3. What if your child currently has a Disabilities grant, but they have been diagnosed with autism. Should the family apply or send in updated IEP?

If the student's current IEP already lists autism as a primary or secondary area of disability, you do not need to update it unless it is older than three years. If, however, you have an updated IEP that lists a new / different primary or secondary area of disability that would change the level of ESA+ award funding, please submit that no later than May 1. (To submit, email ESA@ncseaa.edu and request a link in MyPortal.

Indicate that you have an updated IEP to submit.)

A-4. What if my child's IEP is more than three years old?

If the child's primary or secondary disability listed on the child's eligibility determination **has not changed**, refer to the [Document of Continuing Eligibility](#). There are two ways to complete this task:

1. The local public school system assesses the student to determine if the student continues to be a child with a disability. The public school then verifies the outcome via the Eligibility Determination issued by the IEP team at the time of the reevaluation; OR
2. A North Carolina Licensed Psychologist with a school psychology focus or a North Carolina Licensed Psychiatrist evaluates if the student has improved his or her educational performance and would continue to benefit from placement in the Eligible School or Home School, and completes the Continuing Eligibility form.

A-5. What if my child's area of eligibility has changed?

Contact your local public school and request a re-evaluation. A full IEP is not required for this process; only the Eligibility Determination documentation. If you have questions about initiating the special education process, timelines, evaluations, reevaluations, and or eligibility, please contact the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) at **1-800-962-6817** or ecac@ecacmail.org. ECAC provides NC families with tools, resources and information to help them make informed decisions and become their child's best and most effective advocate. ALL of ECAC's services to families are provided at no cost.

Note: Although renewing students have the option to see a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist to document continuing eligibility (see question A-4, above), this process **cannot be used to submit the initial eligibility determination, or to update the primary or secondary area of disability for current students.**

A-6. What is the deadline to submit an updated IEP Eligibility Determination?

The deadline for current students to submit an updated IEP Eligibility Determination that would change the ESA+ award level is May 1, 2022. After that, we cannot ensure that a student's 2022-2023 award level would increase even if an updated document is

submitted.

Section B – Renewals

B-1. Will current ESA and Disabilities Grant students be renewed automatically?

The family will still have to respond to the renewal offer that will be emailed to their MyPortal account in mid-January. However, the renewal will be for the new ESA+ program instead of either the Disabilities Grant or ESA program. Renewing families will receive priority over new applicants.

B-2. If you are currently receiving the Disabilities Grant, how do you apply for the higher ESA+ award?

SEAA will review all existing IEPs to determine the level of ESA+ award. See [Eligibility Guidelines](#) for more information about the areas of disability that govern the levels of ESA+ awards.

Section C – Payment

C-1. As a new ESA recipient (spring 2022) should I use ClassWallet to pay the private school?

SEAA will pay schools directly beginning with the fall 2022 semester (for the spring 2022 semester the previous ESA processes apply; ESA parents transfer funds from the ClassWallet account to pay school costs). Beginning with fall 2022, ESA+ funds remaining after school payments will be distributed in the ClassWallet account for the family to use on behalf of the student for other [Qualified Expenses](#).

C-2. As a new recipient of ESA funding (for Spring 2022), am I able to submit requests for therapy bills from the fall semester?

No. Fall 2021 expenses are not eligible expenses.

C-3. In the new ESA+ Program, are there any differences for homeschoolers and their filing for reimbursement for qualified expenses?

Families of a home school student can only use funds for Qualified Educational Expenses and cannot charge or pay for "tuition and fees". Families will not seek reimbursement in the ESA+ program. For families who homeschool, SEAA will deposit the ESA+ funds into an account provided on the ClassWallet platform where parents can transfer funds to approved providers or make Qualified Educational Expense purchases online.

C-4. We were awarded funds for spring 2022. Will we be required to pay taxes on these funds?

SEAA is required to report to the IRS funds that are not used for tuition and fees. See the following [document](#) for more information. Consult a tax preparer about the implications for you personally.

Section D – Deadlines

D-1. Does the ESA+ program start with the spring 2022 semester?

The new ESA+ program starts with the 2022-2023 school year. For the spring 2022 semester, the current Disabilities Grant and ESA Programs are still in place.

D-2. Can the spring 2022 award be postponed until fall 2022?

The spring award cannot be postponed. Families may apply as a new student, in March, for the 2022-2023 ESA+ program.