



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ESA+ Program, 2022-2023 School Year

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Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides a summary of answers to common questions received during a series of webinars SEAA hosted in January, 2022. The questions and answers will be updated on a regular basis to reflect new questions SEAA receives. Please refer to the [K12 Eligibility Requirements](https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2020/10/K12_Eligibility.pdf) (https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2020/10/K12_Eligibility.pdf) for additional information on program requirements.

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

Section A – Eligibility, Application, and Identification for Services

A-1. Can students moving into the state qualify for the ESA+ program?

Yes, so long as the students apply by the appropriate deadlines and scholarship funds remain available. They must meet new student eligibility requirements.

A-2. If a family selects a school during the application process, can the school option be changed before the beginning of the school year or during the school year? What is the process?

Parents can change the school choice in MyPortal until August 1. For more information, visit: <https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/choosing-a-school/k12-school-choice/>.

A-3. If my child is already in a private school, may I apply?

Yes. Students are not required to attend public school to receive an ESA+ award.

A-4. Does a child need to already be accepted into a private school before completing the application?

No.

A-5. We just moved to the area and enrolled our child in private school. Do I need to explore enrollment with the public school to create a North Carolina IEP?

Students are not required to enroll in public school to create a NC IEP. However, to be eligible for the ESA+ program students must have a North Carolina Eligibility Determination from the IEP process. If you have questions about initiating the special education process, timelines, evaluations, reevaluations, and/or eligibility, please visit [Documentation of a Disability - NCSEAA](https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/esa/documentation-of-a-disability/) (<https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/esa/documentation-of-a-disability/>) or contact the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) at 1-800-962-6817 or ecac@ecacmail.org.

A-6. If there is a lottery, does this mean that even if the student meets eligibility requirements, they may not receive the award/funding?

There is a limited amount of program funding, so there is no guarantee that all eligible students will be offered an award. In the case where there are more eligible students than funds can accommodate, a lottery will be used to select the students for awards.

A-7. How does the lottery apply to siblings and twins?

Students in the same family will receive one lottery number, assuming the parent applies for the students in the family before the priority deadline, and assuming the students are eligible.

A-8. Can a family apply for and receive both the Opportunity Scholarship and the ESA+?

Yes, if they meet the eligibility requirements of each program. They must submit a separate application for each program.

A-9. I can't find an email or document sent by the ESA+ program.

Log into MyPortal and find the Notifications section. Copies of all emails and documents that are sent to you by the program will also appear there.

Section B – Documentation of a Disability

B-1. If a student must have a NC IEP to apply for ESA+, how would they get that if they haven't been in a public school?

The local public school system can assess the student to determine if the student has a disability. This is the case even if the student hasn't been enrolled in a public school. Families can also contact the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) at **1-800-962-6817** or ecac@ecacmail.org.

B-2. When does the 3-year IEP renewal have to be dated? For example, if a student's IEP is dated March 2019, when do they need to renew the IEP?

For prospective new students applying in 2022, for the 2022-2023 school year, an Eligibility Determination dated March 2019 would be sufficient for the new student application process. For continuing students, including the student in this example if awarded, an Eligibility Documentation dated March 2019 would need to be updated prior to payment in January 2023 for the spring 2023 semester. For more information, see <https://www.ncseaa.edu/k12/esa/documentation-of-a-disability/>.

B-3. Can a 504 plan be used in place of an eligibility determination?

No. A 504 plan is not the same thing as an eligibility determination. Applicants must submit a current eligibility determination issued by a North Carolina public school.

Section C – Part-Time and Homeschooling Options

C-1. Does the part-time option for the ESA+ program include homeschool and private school, or just public and private school?

Students attending home school full-time, or part-time home school and part-time private school, can be considered for an award.

- Students who enroll in two private schools (each part-time) can receive a full award.
- Under NC law, a student who is enrolled part-time in a public school may still receive an ESA+ award of \$4,500 *if the student attends a home or private school part-time and is co-enrolled in a public school.*

C-2. Are there any differences for homeschoolers and their filing for reimbursement for qualified expenses?

Families will not seek reimbursement in the ESA+ program. For families with students in a home school, SEAA will deposit the ESA+ funds into an account provided on the for [Qualified Educational Expenses \(https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2020/10/QualifiedExpenses.pdf\)](https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2020/10/QualifiedExpenses.pdf) to providers or make purchases online.

C-3. How does tuition and fees work when a child is in a home school? In that case only Qualified Expenses can be used?

Yes, you can only use funds for Qualified Educational Expenses for a home school student. A parent of a student in a home school cannot charge or pay for "tuition and fees".

Section D – Allowable Use of Funds

D-1. What are allowable uses of ESA+ funds?

Families can use ESA+ funds [for educational therapies, tutoring, and technology \(https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2020/10/QualifiedExpenses.pdf\)](https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2020/10/QualifiedExpenses.pdf). Families of students in a home school can also purchase curriculum. For students enrolled in private schools, funds other than for tuition and fees to schools will go to ClassWallet for parents to access.

D-2. Can summer tutoring and summer "bridge educational books" qualify for ESA+ reimbursement?

Yes.

D-3. What are the qualifications needed for a tutor to be approved? If we ask a provider to submit their information for approval, what will they need to submit?

Providers need to have a recognized [license or credential appropriate for their field \(https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2022/02/ProviderCredentials.pdf\)](https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2022/02/ProviderCredentials.pdf). Provider registration information can be found here: https://www.ncseaa.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1171/2020/10/DG_ESA_ProviderRegistration.pdf

D-4. Can families with a home school only use the ESA+ account to order curriculum that is on the Classwallet marketplace?

The ClassWallet Marketplace is the only venue for families to make purchases of products. There are many large and small companies available through the ClassWallet Marketplace, many of which specialize in materials related to educating children with disabilities.

D-5. Can students who stay in school until age 21 continue to receive a scholarship?

Yes. Students who receive funding from the ESA+ program may continue to receive funding until they reach age 22 if they have not graduated high school.

D-6. Can four-or five-year-olds use program funds for pre-kindergarten programs?

Program funds cannot be used for pre-kindergarten or transitional kindergarten.

Students who are four years old by April 16th who have been evaluated by the private school, and determined to be ready for kindergarten, are old enough for the ESA+ program.

Students who are five years old by August 31 are old enough for the ESA program.

Section E –Timelines

E-1. When will the application open for new students?

The new student application for 2022-2023 will open March 1, 2022. The priority deadline to apply is April 1. The application may remain open after April 1, subject to the availability of funds.

E-2. Is there a deadline to have the Eligibility Determination uploaded?

To ensure that the student's application is considered by its submission date, upload the Eligibility Determination within 7 days (one week) of submitting the application.

E-3. Is there a deadline to withdraw students from public school before we can apply for ESA+?

A parent does not need to withdraw a student from public school to apply for the ESA+ program. The award, if offered, would be for the 2022-2023 school year. A student would transition to the private or home school setting beginning with the fall 2022 semester.

E-4. When will awards be announced for the 2022-2023 school year?

Awards will be made in May or June of 2022.