

SMART START



The Gateways Scholarship Program is available to assist Apprentices from the Smart Start Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program!

The Gateways Scholarship Program is an individual-based scholarship opportunity for professionals working in early care and education. The program provides financial assistance for early childhood education and child development (*ECE/CD*) coursework and degrees offered through participating colleges and universities, dependent on available funding. Scholarships will be awarded to a maximum of 25 Apprentices on a first come, first served basis. The Gateways Scholarship Program is administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (*INCCRRA*) and funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (*IDHS*).

If you are an Apprentice working at a participating Smart Start Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program site, you may be eligible to receive:

- 100% tuition assistance for coursework in approved certificate, endorsement, or degree programs
- Up to \$250 per class for books*
- Debt relief of up to \$1,500 yearly to assist with an outstanding balance at an accredited Illinois college or university**

For more information or to request an application, contact apprenticeship@inccrra.org.

Program Frequently Asked Questions note additional requirements and obligations.

**Acceptable book costs include purchased books, book rentals, e-book purchases, and e-book rentals. Approved book costs may be reimbursed directly to the Apprentice.*

*** Debt Relief payments will be made directly to the accredited Illinois college or university where the outstanding balance is owed. No payments will be made directly to the Apprentice.*