



Institute of *Excellence*
in **Early Care** and **Education**

2016-2017 ACHIEVE Handbook

for
Palm Beach County
Strong Minds In-Network and Promising
Early Childhood Practitioners

Effective October 1, 2016



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ACHIEVE Announcements

The following section includes ACHIEVE Announcements. These announcements indicate recent changes made to the policies and procedures contained within the handbook.

ACHIEVE Announcement Number	Policy/Procedure Impacted
TBA	TBA

Introduction to the ACHIEVE Program – Page 1

ACHIEVE

ACHIEVE is a salary supplement award program for practitioners employed at In-Network and Promising sites that are part of the **Strong Minds Network**. ACHIEVE awards are intended to encourage practitioners' ongoing professional development and to reduce turnover at their current center by providing monetary awards for completion of specific college credit coursework and/or non-college credit Registry-approved training. The program is funded by Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County and administered by Palm Beach State College's (PBSC) Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education (IEECE).

THE STRONG MINDS NETWORK

The **Strong Minds Network** is a voluntary system that emphasizes achievement of child outcomes through more effective teacher-child interactions. The system provides resources that support child care providers, practitioners and families to ensure children receive high-quality care and effective teaching, and ultimately, be ready for kindergarten. The vision is that children will have quality early educational experiences that will increase their chances of achieving school success and becoming productive members of society.

Additional information regarding the **Strong Minds Network** can be found at www.cscpbcc.org

THE PALM BEACH COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD REGISTRY

(Managed by the Children's Forum)

The ACHIEVE Award program relies on information contained in the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry (the Registry) when determining eligibility. **Active Registry membership is a requirement for access to the ACHIEVE Award program.**

The Registry is a data system that maintains information on its members documenting their professional development in the field of early childhood education, including credentials, college coursework, in-service/career pathway training, education and employment information. Once a practitioner becomes a Registry member, they are required to update their record with all changes to their name, address, phone number, email address, employment information, and professional development activities. **It is the practitioner's responsibility to submit all transcripts and completion certificates to the Registry for all courses/trainings completed.**

To become a member of the Registry, learn how to update your personal and professional development information, and search the training calendar for current approved professional development events, visit the Registry website at www.pbcregistry.org. If you have additional questions for the Registry or about information contained in your Registry Record, contact the Children's Forum at 561-740-7000 x4452 or pbregistry@thechildrensforum.com.

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GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE ACHIEVE PROGRAM

- Applications and specific ACHIEVE award information is currently available on the IEECE website: <https://www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece> (“Financial Supports”) and the Registry website: www.pbcregistry.org (“Financial Supports”)
- The ACHIEVE awards are paid directly to the early childhood practitioner on an annual basis with **one** check*.
- Once an award is received, a practitioner must wait until their anniversary date to apply for a new award or a renewal award. (An **Anniversary Date** is considered one calendar year (12 months) from the previous approval date.)
- All award payments will come directly from an agency called **Paychex**. The award check cannot be cashed or deposited until the check date.
- Applicant must meet eligibility requirements at the time the application is submitted. It is the practitioner’s responsibility to ensure that their Registry record is current and that the award criteria is located on the Registry record prior to submitting an application.
- If the same course/training appears more than once in a practitioner’s Registry record, the duplicate training will **not** count toward an award.
- Applicants employed with the School District must be working in classrooms that are designated with Strong Minds In-Network or Promising status.
- If a practitioner meets the criteria of more than one award, only one award will be provided and it will be awarded based on the higher monetary amount.
- Awards are subject to change, are based on availability of funding, and are issued in the order in which they are received.
- PBSC IEECE reserves the right to deny any ACHIEVE award.

****Please be advised that awards that are paid directly to you are reported to the Internal Revenue Services, under the Internal Revenue Code, if the total amount of the award exceeds \$599.00. A 1099 Form will be issued to you, a copy of which also will be sent to the Internal Revenue Service. Please consult with your tax advisor in regard to how you report this income on your tax return.***

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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACHIEVE PROGRAM

Eligibility⁺ for the ACHIEVE Program is based on the following:

- Applicant must be employed at the same Strong Minds In-Network or Promising early childhood program in Palm Beach County for at least one consecutive year (12 months) at the time of application submission.
- Applicant must work with children ages birth-5 years, in an instructional capacity, for at least 20 hours per week on an annual basis:
 - Eligible Positions: Director, Assistant Director, Curriculum Specialist, Lead Teacher, Associate Teacher, Floater, Family Child Care Home Provider, Large Family Child Care Home Employee
 - Ineligible Positions: Non-Instructional Staff, Child Care Center and Family Child Care Home substitutes, School District substitutes, and all employees working less than 20 hours per week.
- Applicant must be an active member of the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry** and all registry documentation, including transcripts, must be up to date.

****IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Before submitting your application, you must verify that your full name, address, work hours and employment location are correct and current in the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry. **If not, your application will be incomplete and cannot be processed.***

- Applicant must be eligible for SEEK Scholarship (i.e. not on suspension status).
- Applicant must earn \$17.00 or less per hour as an early childhood professional.
- Applicant must have successfully completed one of the options of the ACHIEVE Award Pathway (see Appendix A).
- Applicant is only eligible to receive each specific award once (*unless the award is noted with (*)*, in which case the applicant can receive the award on an ongoing annual basis as long as retention eligibility requirements are met).

⁺Eligibility requirements are verified by information contained in the practitioner's Registry record.

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GENERAL RULES OF THE ACHIEVE PROGRAM

ACHIEVE awards are granted after successful completion of specific coursework/training, as outlined in the ACHIEVE Award Pathway (see Appendix A). The pathway provides a variety of award options based on the type of professional development completed, including Career Pathway Training, College Credit Coursework and a combination of both (called the “Hybrid” option). All coursework/training must be documented in a practitioner’s Registry record.

CPT Hours accepted for an ACHIEVE award:

- Career Pathway Training (CPT): CPT is defined as Tier 2 training that is outcomes-driven, that includes an assessment component for transfer of learning and that has gone through the Palm Beach State College IEECE training quality assurance approval process.
- CPT Hours will be calculated on trainings completed during the time period of July 1, 2011 – present. If the same course/training appears more than once in a practitioner’s Registry record, the duplicate training will not count toward an award.
- Trainings completed that are not designated as CPT in the Registry will not be counted for the ACHIEVE award (these include, but are not limited to, Center Trainer modules, nationally researched and recognized curriculum, DCF, DOE, non-credit online training (not Registry approved-QA), content expert trainings, CDA trainings from an independent agency or non-regionally accredited college or university, or any other trainings that do not meet the training approval standards of the IEECE).

College Credit Coursework accepted for an ACHIEVE award:

- Early Childhood (EC)/Child Development (CD) Credits: College Credit courses from regionally-accredited colleges and universities that focus on the early stages of child growth and development from birth to age 5 years. The Palm Beach County Registry will determine which courses can be categorized as EC or CD.
- Total credits: EC or CD, or a combination of both, will be accepted. If the same course/training appears more than once in a practitioner’s Registry record, the duplicate training will not count toward and award.
- EC/CD college credits and degrees must be obtained from regionally accredited* colleges and universities. (**Accreditation must be from one of the following: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Technical and Career Institutions, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.*)
- If a Registry record indicates that the 12 ECE Credit Benchmark had been met prior to 10/1/2014, that benchmark will count toward Option 1 of the College Credit Pathway award (12 EC/CD credits). For all other award options, only actual EC/CD credits will be counted in award determinations.
- EC/CD “related” college credits, other than those included in the 12 ECE Credit Benchmark noted above (whether or not from regionally accredited colleges and universities) will **not** count toward ACHIEVE awards.

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- Degrees and credits earned from a non-regionally accredited college or university will **not** count toward an ACHIEVE award. Such degrees will be recorded in the Registry as non-regionally accredited.
- Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) prior to application for ACHIEVE (*SEEK Scholarship may be available to cover the costs associated with such translation. Contact your Career Advisor or the SEEK website for additional information*).

Hybrid:

- The Hybrid option is a combination of Career Pathway Training and College Credit Coursework which can be completed online or face-to-face. The general rules for each of those as noted above are applicable for the Hybrid option as well.

Continuous Annual Awards (Completion Points):

- Only certain ACHIEVE award options are eligible for a continuous annual award. These options are referred to as Completion Points. Once a Completion Point is reached, a practitioner can reapply for the award every year, provided the general eligibility and retention eligibility requirements are met. Practitioners can reapply on or after their anniversary date, generally one calendar year (12 months) from the date of the prior award approval.
- Annual retention eligibility requirements must be met in the 12 month period prior to the practitioner's completed renewal application submission date. If the same course/training appears more than once in a practitioner's Registry record during the timeframe, the duplicate training will not count toward an award.
- Once at the Career Pathway Training, Option 4 (Completion Point), a practitioner is able to receive a continuous annual ACHIEVE award by completing at least 24 CPT hours or one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.
- Once at the College Credit Pathway, Option 6 (Completion Point), a practitioner is able to receive a continuous annual ACHIEVE award by completing at least 24 CPT hours or one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.
- Once at the College Credit Pathway, Option 7 (Completion Point), a practitioner is able to receive a continuous annual ACHIEVE award by completing at least 24 CPT hours or one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.
- Once at the College Credit Pathway, Option 8 (Completion Point), a practitioner is able to receive a continuous annual ACHIEVE award by completing at least 24 CPT hours or one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.

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THE ACHIEVE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications and related forms are available on the below website:
 - <https://www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece> (“Financial Supports”)
 - www.pbcregistry.org (“Financial Supports”)
- First time applicants can submit an application at any time. Practitioners who have received an ACHIEVE award previously must wait until their anniversary date to submit another application.
- Prior to submitting the application, applicants must verify that the award criteria is located on the Palm Beach County Registry Record. Applicant must also verify that all information in the Registry such as employment, full name and address are correct and match the information on the application form.
- Applications must include the following for wage verification based on the type of position held:
 - ALL Applicants: Complete and clearly written W9 Form (*Social Security Numbers collected on the US tax form will be used for information reporting to the Internal Revenue Service pursuant to Section 6109 Title 26 US Tax Code*)
 - Center Employees and Large Family Child Care Employees: (1) paystub from current employment site (must be the most recent)
 - FCCH Owners: If a paystub cannot be provided, must submit most recent tax documentation (Form 1040 and 1040 Schedule C, if applicable)
 - Center Owners: If a paystub cannot be provided, must submit most recent tax documentation (Form 1040 and 1040 Schedule C, if applicable)
- Completed ACHIEVE application and required documentation must be received via fax (**561-868-7042**) or email (iefaxes@palmbeachstate.edu). Applications or documentation sent by mail or delivered in person will be returned.
- It is recommended that applicants call (561) 868-3695 to confirm receipt of complete applications and supporting documents.
- Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed and complete applications will be processed in the order received.
- For awards that can be renewed each year (those with Completion Points), the annual timeframe of eligibility is considered one calendar year (12 months) from the previous approval date. On or after this anniversary date, applicants will be required to submit another application to reapply to receive the ACHIEVE award again. The approval date of the renewal award will be the applicant’s new anniversary date. This process will continue annually.

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- If an applicant changes Strong Minds In-Network or Promising sites, he or she will be able to re-enter the ACHIEVE Program by completing an application, after 12 consecutive months of employment at the new Strong Minds In-Network or Promising site. Movement from one “sister” In-Network or Promising site to another or movement from one In-Network or Promising School District classroom to another will be considered continuous employment.
- If the applicant is not eligible, for any reason, the application will be processed as a denial and a denial letter will be emailed to the applicant. All documents of denied applicants will be discarded and will have to be resubmitted upon reapplication.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

The ACHIEVE Program provides a formal and informal grievance process open to all individuals facing a dispute regarding policies and procedures of the program.

Informal Resolutions:

The ACHIEVE Program encourages applicants to seek informal resolutions. As such, the ACHIEVE Program staff is available personally to discuss the appeal and to review all pertinent documentation to work toward resolving the problem, informally. Response to applicants will be within 10 business days of receipt of request for informal discussion for resolution.

The ACHIEVE Program phone: (561) 868-3828

The ACHIEVE Program email: scuderiz@palmbeachstate.edu

Formal Resolutions:

If a resolution cannot be met after the informal path has been exhausted, an applicant may submit a formal petition to the ACHIEVE Program in writing.

Any applicant seeking a formal resolution is required to submit the request in writing to the ACHIEVE Program within 10 business days following the receipt of a denial or incident that has occurred. The request must include a letter of appeal and documentation detailing concerns. All written appeals must be submitted via **certified** mail to:

Palm Beach State College-Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education
The ACHIEVE Program
812 Fern Street
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Throughout the review, which can take place face-to-face or through electronic means, the ACHIEVE Program may request, in writing, additional information from the applicant in order to make a decision on the appeal. This additional documentation is to be received within 5 business days of the request from the ACHIEVE Program. If the additional documentation is not received within that time period, the appeal will automatically be denied. The ACHIEVE Program will meet within 20 business days of receipt of all required materials to review the appeal and make a decision. Possible outcomes are:

- Grant the appeal. The ACHIEVE Program will notify the applicant, in writing, within 20 business days of review.
- Grant the appeal with specific requirements. The ACHIEVE Program will notify the applicant, in writing, within 20 business days of review.
- Deny the appeal. The ACHIEVE Program will notify the applicant, in writing, within 20 business days of review.

ACHIEVE

Salary Supplement Awards for Strong Minds In-Network and Promising Practitioners

This program is dedicated to practitioners employed at Strong Minds In-Network or Promising sites in Palm Beach County who work directly with children from birth to age five.

ACHIEVE Award Pathway

Career Pathway Training <i>Non-Credit, Registry Approved Training Events (CPT)</i>		
Pathway Options	Achieve Award	Award Amount
4	*180 CPT Hours	\$300.00
3	135 CPT Hours	\$225.00
2	90 CPT Hours	\$150.00
1	45 CPT Hours	\$75.00

Hybrid Pathway <i>Combination of Non-Credit, Registry Approved Training Events (CPT) and EC/CD College Credit Coursework</i>		
Pathway Options	Achieve Award	Award Amount
3	12 EC/CD Credits and 135 CPT Hours	\$825.00
2	9 EC/CD Credits and 90 CPT Hours	\$600.00
1	6 EC/CD Credits and 45 CPT Hours	\$375.00

College Credit Pathway <i>College Credit Coursework (Specific to EC/CD)</i>		
Pathway Options	Achieve Awards	Award Amounts
8	*Bachelor Degree or higher with at least 24 EC/CD Credits	\$3000.00
7	*Bachelor Degree or higher in related field	\$2750.00
6	*Associate Degree with at least 24 EC/CD Credits	\$2500.00
5	45 College Credits including 24 EC/CD Credits	\$2000.00
4	30 College Credits including 24 EC/CD Credits	\$1500.00
3	24 EC/CD Credits	\$1200.00
2	18 EC/CD Credits	\$900.00
1	12 EC/CD Credits	\$600.00

- ***Career Pathway Training - Option 4 - 180 CPT Hours (Completion Point)** - To retain annual eligibility, complete at least 24 CPT hours or one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.
- ***College Credit Pathway - Option 6 - Associate Degree with at least 24 EC/CD Credits (Completion Point)** - To retain annual eligibility, complete at least 24 CPT hours or one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.
- ***College Credit Pathway - Option 7 - Bachelor Degree or higher in related field (Completion Point)** - To retain annual eligibility, complete at least 24 CPT hours or one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.
- ***College Credit Pathway - Option 8 - Bachelor Degree or higher with at least 24 EC/CD Credits (Completion Point)** - To retain annual eligibility, complete at least 24 CPT hours or one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.

Awards marked with (*) are provided annually, as long as retention eligibility requirements are met. All other awards are provided one-time only.



The mission of the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education is to provide the child care workforce of Palm Beach County with a comprehensive approach to career development in the field of early childhood education.



ACHIEVE Award Descriptions

Career Pathway Training Options	COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS
Option 4 \$300.00 180 CPT Hours (Completion Point)	<u>CPT Hours</u> ✓ Must have completed 180 hours of Career Pathway Training (CPT) since July 1, 2011
Option 3 \$225.00 135 CPT Hours	<u>CPT Hours</u> ✓ Must have completed 135 hours of Career Pathway Training (CPT) since July 1, 2011
Option 2 \$150.00 90 CPT Hours	<u>CPT Hours</u> ✓ Must have completed 90 hours of Career Pathway Training (CPT) since July 1, 2011
Option 1 \$75.00 45 CPT Hours	<u>CPT Hours</u> ✓ Must have completed 45 hours of Career Pathway Training (CPT) since July 1, 2011
Hybrid Pathway Options	COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS
Option 3 \$825.00 12 EC/CD Credits and 135 CPT Hours	<u>EC/CD Credits</u> ✓ Must have completed 12 Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university. ✓ Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <u>CPT Hours</u> ✓ Must have completed 135 hours of Career Pathway Training (CPT) since July 1, 2011
Option 2 \$600.00 9 EC/CD Credits and 90 CPT Hours	<u>EC/CD Credits</u> ✓ Must have completed 9 Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university. ✓ Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both. ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <u>CPT Hours</u> ✓ Must have completed 90 hours of Career Pathway Training (CPT) since July 1, 2011
Option 1 \$375.00 6 EC/CD Credits and 45 CPT Hours	<u>EC/CD Credits</u> ✓ Must have completed 6 Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university. ✓ Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both. ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <u>CPT Hours</u> ✓ Must have completed 45 hours of Career Pathway Training (CPT) since July 1, 2011

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College Credit Pathway Options	COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS
Option 8 \$3,000.00 Bachelor Degree or Higher with at least 24 EC/CD Credits (Completion Point)	<u>Regionally Accredited Degree and EC/CD Credits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must have completed a Bachelor’s degree from regionally accredited colleges and universities, which includes at least 24 Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university ✓ The 24 Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)
Option 7 \$2,750.00 Bachelor Degree or Higher in Related Field (Completion Point)	<u>Regionally Accredited Degree and EC/CD Credits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must have completed a Bachelor’s degree from regionally accredited colleges and universities in related field ✓ Related fields include, but are not limited to: elementary education, education, social work/sociology, psychology, family studies, special education, and business administration. ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)
Option 6 \$2,500.00 Associate Degree with at least 24 EC/CD credits (Completion Point)	<u>Regionally Accredited Degree and EC/CD Credits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must have completed an Associate degree from regionally accredited colleges and universities, which includes at least 24 Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university ✓ The 24 Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)
Option 5 \$2,000.00 45 College Credits Including 24 EC/CD Credits	<u>EC/CD Credits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must have completed at least 45 college credits from regionally accredited colleges and universities, and 24 of the 45 credits must be Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university. ✓ The 24 Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)
Option 4 \$1,500.00 30 College Credits Including 24 EC/CD Credits	<u>EC/CD Credits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must have completed at least 30 college credits from regionally accredited colleges and universities, and 24 of the 30 credits must be Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university. ✓ The 24 Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)
Option 3 \$1,200.00 24 EC/CD Credits	<u>EC/CD Credits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must have completed 24 Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university ✓ Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)
Option 2 \$900.00 18 EC/CD Credits	<u>EC/CD Credits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must have completed 18 Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university ✓ Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)
Option 1 \$600.00 12 EC/CD Credits	<u>EC/CD Credits</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must have completed 12 Early Childhood (EC) or Child Development (CD) college credits from a regionally accredited college or university <u>or</u> met the 12 ECE benchmark prior to 10/1/2014. ✓ Credits must be EC or CD, or a combination of both ✓ Foreign college credits must be translated and evaluated by an agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)