



## Scholarships for Early Childhood Educator

### Program Summary

Project Pathfinders is a scholarship program designed to support current child care and preschool teachers and providers, or high school students who are also enrolled in the Virginia Community College System for early childhood education coursework, with financial support to pursue credentials, certificates, and degrees through Virginia's Community College System and select 4-year associate-to-baccalaureate degree transfer programs. It is funded through a state appropriation and administered by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

### Who Is Eligible?

To be eligible for a Project Pathfinders scholarship, an applicant must:

- Be an **early childhood professional** seeking to complete an **early childhood certificate or early childhood associates degree through the Virginia Community College System**
- Be **currently employed in a Virginia preschool or child care setting** working directly with young children (infants-prekindergarten) or a **high school student who is also dually enrolled as a student in the Virginia Community College System in an early childhood program**
- Be **enrolled, or enroll in, a Virginia Community College or a select group of 4-year associate-to-baccalaureate degree transfer programs**. If you need assistance with the enrollment process, please contact your chosen admissions office or the Project Pathfinders Advisor, Mila Spaulding, at [pathfinders@vecf.org](mailto:pathfinders@vecf.org) or 804-749-8149
- **Community College Students:** Apply to the Virginia Department of Social Services for the Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program (<http://egov.virginia.gov/DSS/VCCPSP>) or have reached the lifetime allowable amount for that program
- **Baccalaureate Degree Students:** Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1 of each year. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>

Note: Priority will be given to individuals working with at-risk children based on socioeconomic factors (such as children benefitting from child care subsidies, qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, or participating in public preschool programs such as Head Start or Virginia Preschool Initiative).

### How Do I Apply?

Your Pathfinders Application can be completed in just a few minutes if you gather the items listed below before you start.

- **A valid student ID.** (If you would like assistance with enrollment, please contact your chosen community college admissions office, or Project Pathfinders Advisor, Mila Spaulding, at [pathfinders@vecf.org](mailto:pathfinders@vecf.org) or 804-749-8149.)
- **The name and number of the course(s)** that you want to take, and wish to apply for Pathfinders assistance with tuition, fees and/or textbook
- **The name and address of your current employer or the high school you attend**

Applications may be submitted through our online system or in paper form. The application link, printable application form, and additional information can be found at [www.vecf.org/project-pathfinders](http://www.vecf.org/project-pathfinders). Paper applications will result in a longer approval process, but can be submitted as follows:

- 1) scan to [pathfinders@vecf.org](mailto:pathfinders@vecf.org);
- 2) fax to 804-358-8353;
- 3) mail to VECF, 1703 North Parham Road, Suite 110, Richmond, VA 23229

A Project Pathfinders Scholarship Advisor is available to assist all applicants. General questions may be directed to [pathfinders@vecf.org](mailto:pathfinders@vecf.org).

**Please note that Pathfinders awards will be applied to a student's account only if a balance exists after other financial aid or grants (such as Pell or VDSS scholarships) have been applied. Applying Pathfinders funds to a student account cannot create a balance that is then given to the student.**

***“One of the most important factors in learning outcomes for young children is the capabilities of the adults who support their growth and learning.” §2.2-208.1 Code of Virginia***

