

## Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities Program Overview

[Introduction](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[Reimbursement](#)

[Application](#)

[For More Information](#)

### Introduction

The Special Education Scholarship Grants for Children with Disabilities Program (CDG Program) was created by the North Carolina General Assembly to help parents pay qualified expenses for children with disabilities who attend school in an eligible nonpublic setting. An eligible school is a nonpublic school that is identified by the [North Carolina Division of Nonpublic Education](#) or can also be a North Carolina public school if the parent is required to pay tuition. Qualified expenses include items such as (1) [tuition](#), (2) [special education](#), (3) [related services](#), and (4) [educational technology](#). The North Carolina public school system determines who is a “child with a disability” for the CDG Program.

The CDG Program is for children who are just starting school, or who are currently attending a public school and change to an [eligible school](#). Children who have not received the grant and are already attending school in a nonpublic setting are not eligible. The grant is renewable for children who continue to meet the CDG Program eligibility criteria. CDG funds are awarded first to children who are already receiving a grant, and then are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until the funds are exhausted.

The CDG Program is a reimbursement program. A parent applies to prequalify for a grant that reimburses the parent for expenses that he or she will incur the following academic year. Applications that meet the CDG Program criteria will be conditionally approved. At the end of the semester, the parent submits documentation of qualifying expenses. After the qualifying expenses are approved, the parent will receive a grant that reimburses the parent for the actual expenses incurred up to \$3,000 per semester. The CDG Program has a preapproval process that assists parents in planning for their child’s education. Parents are encouraged to use the preapproval process. You can read more about the preapproval process in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Children who are placed in a nonpublic school by their parents do not have a right to receive all of the special education and related services that they would receive if enrolled in the public schools. Likewise, a private school does not have a legal obligation to provide special education and related services for students who are children with disabilities. Parents are encouraged to select carefully a nonpublic school and establish a plan to meet their child's educational needs prior to enrollment. Consult the CDG Program [recommendations](#).

## **Eligibility**

The CDG Program eligibility criteria are set out below. At first this criteria may look complicated; read it carefully to see who qualifies for the CDG Program.

A child must meet *all* of the following criteria to receive a grant:

1. Is determined to be a child with a disability by the North Carolina public school system;
2. Is eligible to attend a North Carolina public school;
3. Is enrolled in an eligible school in a grade level no lower than kindergarten;
4. Has or will reach the age of 5 by August 31<sup>st</sup> but is younger than 22;
5. Has not been placed in an eligible school or facility by a public agency at public expense;
6. Has not been enrolled full-time in a postsecondary institution;
7. Does not have a high school diploma or its equivalent; and
8. Is *one* of the following:
  - a. Was approved for a grant the previous semester;
  - b. Was a full-time student assigned to and attending a North Carolina public school for at least 75 school days of the previous semester; or
  - c. Is identified as a child with a disability prior to the end of the spring semester of initial enrollment in kindergarten or first grade in a North Carolina public school.

## **Reimbursement**

Eligibility for reimbursement depends in part on what kind of school the child attends. There are some limitations for home school students. All parents are encouraged to use the preapproval process to make sure that expenses they incur will be reimbursable.

There are rules that apply to all reimbursements. The expense must have been incurred during the semester the grant was approved. The reimbursable amount of the expense is limited to the actual amount of expense incurred by the parent. The expense must be paid for by the parent and may not be subject to reimbursement by other sources. The Authority will disapprove any expense submitted by a parent for reimbursement if the Authority determines

that the expense is inconsistent with the purpose of the CDG Program. Types of expenses are listed below. Additional information may be found in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

1. Tuition Reimbursement.

- a. The CDG Program will reimburse tuition payments at an eligible school if the child attends at least 75 days of the semester the parent seeks reimbursement.
- b. Home school students are not eligible for reimbursement of tuition payments.

2. Special Education Reimbursement.

- a. The CDG Program will reimburse payments for special education if the parent certifies that the student received special education for at least 75 days of the semester the parent seeks reimbursement.
- b. Special education providers must hold current State-approved, or State-recognized, qualifications or their equivalent as applicable to their respective professional disciplines.
- c. Special Education providers must not be a member of the student's immediate family and, if the student is a home school student, must not be a member of the households of the student's home school.

3. Related Services Reimbursement.

- a. The CDG Program will reimburse payment for related services if the parent certifies that the student also received special education for at least 75 days of the semester the parent seeks reimbursement.
- b. Related services providers must hold current State-approved, or State-recognized, qualifications as applicable to their professional discipline.
- c. Related services providers must not be a member of the student's immediate family and, if the student is a home school student, must not be a member of the households of the student's home school.

4. Educational Technology Reimbursement.

- a. The CDG Program will reimburse payment for educational technology if the parent certifies that the student used the educational technology for at least 75 days of the semester the parent seeks reimbursement.
- b. The educational technology must assist the student to benefit from special education and be used primarily for educational purposes.
- c. A list of approved educational technology is posted [here](#). Any updates to the list of approved will apply retroactively to the year in which the update is made.

## **Reimbursement Process**

At the end of the semester, the parent must submit documentation of their qualifying reimbursable expenses. The documentation must establish that the parent incurred the expense, that the expense was not subject to reimbursement from other sources, and that the child met the eligibility criteria. You can read more about the reimbursement process in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

## **Application**

You must apply online for the CDG Program. Applications are available May 1 for the following academic year. You can find the application [here](#). Reimbursement will be made to the parent who completes the application. Parent means more than a biological parent; you can read the definition [here](#).

You will need documentation that indicates that the North Carolina public schools have determined that your child is a child with a disability. When you complete the application, you also need to be prepared to identify what expenses you expect to incur for the next academic year.

Parents will receive a conditional approval by July 1 for the following academic year.

## **For More Information**

You may find some of your questions answered in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#). You can also contact the CDG staff by phone or email. The CDG staff encourages you to ask questions and use the preapproval process to make sure that you will be eligible for reimbursement of expenses before you incur them.

This program is administered by the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (the SEAA).

### **Contact information for the SEAA:**

Phone: 1-855-330-3955 (toll-free)

Email: [DGrants@ncseaa.edu](mailto:DGrants@ncseaa.edu)

Fax: 919-248-4687

Website: [www.ncseaa.edu](http://www.ncseaa.edu)