

The Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) Program

The Empowerment Scholarship Account program, commonly referred to as ESA, began in Arizona in 2011. ESA's are a unique and exciting option for Arizona families with students who qualify. Families can apply for an ESA year round. The ESA program is administered by the Arizona Department of Education and provides educational options for qualified Arizona students. According to ADE, parents who choose an ESA for their child are accessing alternatives for their education, such as private school or a home - based educational model. This allows families to utilize tutors and therapists in order to meet the unique educational needs of their child. Please visit the Arizona Department of Education ESA homepage for more information on application questions, processing deadlines, etc. If you have questions about the ESA program, please feel free to reach out to us at hello@loveyourschool.org We would love to help answer any questions you may have.

Who qualifies for an ESA?

There are several categories of students who qualify for an ESA according to <http://www.azed.gov/esa/eligibility-requirements/> :

1. Preschool student with a disability - According the Arizona Department of Education, the student must be two years and nine months at the time of application.

- The Student has a current **MET/Evaluation Report** or Individualized Education Program (**IEP**) from an Arizona public school.
- The Applicant (the person applying) must be the legal parent or guardian.
- The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona.
- This eligibility type does **not** need to meet the first 100 day requirement.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

2. K - 12 student with a disability - According to the Arizona Department of Education, the student must be at least five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. Your student needs to be 5 years of age by September 1st by the application year to qualify for Kindergarten level funding. If your student does not meet the age requirement, you must provide a letter from a public school to show a student has been evaluated and determined ready for Kindergarten. The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona. If the student is eligible to attend 1-12 grade, the student must meet the first 100 day requirement. (If the student is eligible for kindergarten for the application year, they are exempt from this requirement.) This means the student must have attended the first 100 days of the school year prior to the application year. To verify the 100th day, check the public school's website to locate their calendar. This requirement can also be met with online hours: [CLICK HERE](#) to see what the 2018/2019 Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) 100 Day Equivalency is.

If the Student received a Qualifying STO (DD/Lexie's Law only), please provide the STO letter verification that the STO award was received (on letterhead) and: The Student must have attended at least 90 days or one semester the year prior to receiving the STO. For example, if the student received the STO for the 14/15 school year, ESA can consider enrollment information for the 13/14 school year.

The Student has a current **MET/Evaluation Report** or Individualized Education Program (**IEP**) or **504 Plan** from an Arizona public school. The Applicant (the person applying) must be the legal parent or guardian.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

3. Student with a Parent who is Active Duty Military - Student must have a parent or guardian who is Active Duty Military. The Student must be at least five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. Your student needs to be 5 years of age by September 1st by the application year to qualify for Kindergarten level funding. If your student does not meet the age requirement, you must provide a letter from a public school to show a student has been evaluated and determined ready for Kindergarten. The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona. This eligibility type does **not** need to meet the first 100 day requirement. The Applicant (the person applying) must be the legal parent or guardian and:

The Applicant is an active duty (not reserve) service member, in either the **Marines, Army, Air Force, Navy, or Coast Guard**. Or The Applicant is a dependent of the military service member (who is also the legal parent or guardian of the Student) in either the **Marines, Army, Air Force, Navy, or Coast Guard**.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

4. Student with a Parent who was Killed in the Line of Duty

The Student must be five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. Your student needs to be 5 years of age by September 1st by the application year to qualify for Kindergarten level funding. If your student does not meet the age requirement, you must provide a letter from a public school to show a student has been evaluated and determined ready for Kindergarten. The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona. This eligibility type does **not** need to meet the first 100 day requirement. The Applicant (the person applying) must be the legal parent or guardian and: The Applicant is a dependent of the military service member (who is also the legal parent or guardian of the Student) in either the **Marines, Army, Air Force, Navy, or Coast Guard**.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

5. Student with a Parent who is Legally Blind, Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The Student must be at least five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. Your student needs to be 5 years of age by September 1st by the application year to qualify for Kindergarten level funding. If your student does not meet the age requirement, you must provide a letter from a public school to show a student has been evaluated and determined ready for Kindergarten. The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona. If the student is eligible to attend 1-12 grade, the student must meet the first 100 day requirement. (If the student is in kindergarten for the application year, they are exempt from this requirement.) This means the student must have attended the first 100 days of the school year prior to the application year. To verify the 100th day, check the public school's website to locate their calendar. This requirement can also be met with online hours: [CLICK HERE](#) to see what the 2018/2019 Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) 100 Day Equivalency is.

The Applicant (the person applying) must be the legal parent or guardian and:

The Applicant/Legal Guardian is either blind, deaf or hard of hearing, as defined by Arizona Legislature: Blind, pursuant to [Section 41-1973 sub-section C](#), means any person who: Has no vision or visual acuity; Has central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with the best correction by single magnification; Has a field defect in which the peripheral field has been contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees

Deaf, pursuant to [Section 36-1941](#), means those persons who cannot generally understand speech sounds with or without a hearing aid when in optimal listening conditions

Hard of Hearing, pursuant to [Section 36-1941](#), means those persons who have a degree of hearing loss greater than 40dB PTA-2, but less than 85dB PTA-2, in the better ear "PTA-2" means the average of hearing levels at one thousand, two thousand and four thousand Hz.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

6. The Student Attends a D or F Rated School - According to the Arizona Department of Education, if the student is eligible to attend kindergarten for the application year: they must be assigned to a D/F school. If the student is eligible to attend 1-12 grade for the application year: they must be attending the D/F school at the time of application. That means if you are applying on 8/1, we need to see enrollment in a D/F school overlapping 8/1. The Student must be at least five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. Your student needs to be 5 years of age by September 1st by the application year to qualify for Kindergarten level funding. If your student does not meet the age requirement, you must provide a letter from a public school to show a student has been evaluated and determined ready for Kindergarten.

The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona. If the student is eligible to attend 1-12 grade, the student must meet the first 100 day requirement. (If the student is in kindergarten for

the application year, they are exempt from this requirement.) This means the student must have attended the first 100 days of the school year prior to the application year. To verify the 100th day, check the public school's website to locate their calendar. This requirement can also be met with online hours: [CLICK HERE](#) to see what the 2018/2019 Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) 100 Day Equivalency is. The Applicant (the person applying) must be the legal parent or guardian.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

7. The Student Resides within a Native American Reservation - According to the Arizona Department of Education, the student must be at least five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. Your student needs to be 5 years of age by September 1st by the application year to qualify for Kindergarten level funding. If your student does not meet the age requirement, you must provide a letter from a public school to show a student has been evaluated and determined ready for Kindergarten. The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona and reside within a Native American Reservation. The Applicant (the person applying) must be the legal parent or guardian. If the student is eligible to attend 1-12 grade, the student must meet the first 100 day requirement. (If the student is in kindergarten for the application year, they are exempt from this requirement.) This means the student must have attended the first 100 days of the school year prior to the application year. To verify the 100th day, check the public school's website to locate their calendar. This requirement can also be met with online hours: [CLICK HERE](#) to see what the 2018/2019 Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) 100 Day Equivalency is.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

8. The Student is a Sibling of a Current or Previous Recipient - According to the Arizona Department of Education, the student must be the sibling of a current or previous ESA recipient. The Student must be at least five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. Your student needs to be 5 years of age by September 1st by the application year to qualify for Kindergarten level funding. If your student does not meet the age requirement, you must provide a letter from a public school to show a student has been evaluated and determined ready for Kindergarten. The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona. If the student is eligible to attend 1-12 grade, the student must meet the first 100 day requirement. (If the student is in kindergarten for the application year, they are exempt from this requirement. This means the student must have attended the first 100 days of the school year prior to the application year. To verify the 100th day, check the public school's website to locate their calendar. This requirement can also be met with online hours. [CLICK HERE](#) to see what the 2018/2019 Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) 100 Day Equivalency is. The Applicant (the person applying) must be the legal parent or guardian of the student and sibling (their name must be on both birth certificates).

- The Student has a sibling in **one** of the following situations:

- Sibling was previously on the ESA Program and funds were spent appropriately;
- Sibling is currently on the ESA Program;
- Sibling is a qualifying student for the current application year and accepts the contract.
- Adoptive siblings do qualify with supporting adoption paperwork.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

9. The Student was a Ward of Court - According to the Arizona Department of Education, the student must be at least five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. Your student needs to be 5 years of age by September 1st by the application year to qualify for Kindergarten level funding. If your student does not meet the age requirement, you must provide a letter from a public school to show a student has been evaluated and determined ready for Kindergarten. The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona.

If the student is eligible to attend 1-12 grade, the student must meet the first 100 day requirement. (If the student is in kindergarten for the application year, they are exempt from this requirement.) This means the student must have attended the first 100 days of the school year prior to the application year. To verify the 100th day, check the public school's website to locate their calendar. This requirement can also be met with online hours: [CLICK HERE](#) to see what the 2018/2019 Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) 100 Day Equivalency is. The Applicant (the person applying) must be on the birth certificate or on legal (court) documentation. The student must have been a Ward of the Court, and there must be court documentation of a Plan to Adopt or Adoption must have finalized.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

10. The Student was a Previous ESA Recipient - The Student must be at least five years of age as of September 1st of the application year. The Student must have been previously funded by ESA. Terminated Account Holders cannot reapply. The Student and Applicant must be residents of Arizona. This eligibility type does **not** need to meet the first 100 day requirement. The Applicant (the person applying) must be on the birth certificate or on legal (court) documentation. Please be aware, if the student was previously funded as a student with an eligibility, it is unlikely the student receive similar funding if reapplying under this eligibility type without a current IEP, MET, or 504 Plan.

Please visit the Department of Education ESA page for more information on the specific required documents to apply.

Please click here to apply for an Arizona Empowerment Scholarship Account at the Arizona Department of Education Website: <https://esaonline.azed.gov/OnlineApplication> .