



Dear Little Star Financial Aid Applicant, Thank you for your interest in Little Star's financial aid program! Please read this entire letter carefully so that you understand our financial aid process and steps. We understand and appreciate the financial commitment families undertake to send their children to Little Star. Each year we work hard to raise funds to make tuition more affordable for families in low and middle income ranges. Financial aid is issued either as direct aid or a tuition deferral plan, and awards typically range from 5% to 95% of annual tuition.

As a general guideline, **if your family makes less than \$105,000 per year (for a family of four with 2 children attending Little Star) you may qualify for an award or tuition deferral plan.** We've increased this number from last year's \$85,000 to better support middle income families and help mitigate the ever increasing cost of living in the Methow Valley. We recognize that income alone does not necessarily give a full picture of a family's financial situation – If your income is above that level and you feel that you are in need of assistance, or if you have any other questions, please contact the Executive Director (brad@littlestarschool.org, or 509-996-2801).

Please be aware that although we budget to issue over \$115,000 of aid annually, we are not able to meet all of the need in our community.

Before you apply, please [review our Financial Aid FAQ](#) if you have any questions.

If you need in-person assistance with applying for financial aid, don't have access to a computer, or need other family support services, please connect with our partner organization Room One (<http://www.roomone.org/>, 509-997-2050).

Steps To Apply for Financial Aid

1. Check if you are eligible for Washington State's [Working Connections Child Care program](#) (WCCC, managed by DCYF)- scroll down to find the eligibility table and application instructions. If you qualify, please apply! With the passage of the Fair Start for Children Act, eligibility for this program continues to expand each year. If you have applied for this program in the past and have not been eligible, please check again and apply if you now meet the requirements. If



you apply for aid directly from Little Star and the financial aid committee determines that you may be eligible for DCYF subsidies, you will be asked to apply to that program first (possibly causing a 3-6 week delay in your Little Star application).

2. If your income does not meet requirements to qualify for the DCYF/WCCC program, please click the following link to apply for Little Star's financial aid program via the ISM FAST website: apply.ismfast.com. For those of you who have applied for financial aid in the past, you'll notice that FAST has updated its dashboard and you are now required to create an account to apply, but the overall process has not changed.
 1. If you have any issues while filling out the FAST form, please call ISM FAST directly at 877-326-3278, or email parentsupport@ismfast.com. Their help center is open 24/7 and is very responsive. In addition, here are some helpful documents and video from FAST about the application:
 - i. [Family User Guide \[PDF\]](#)
 - ii. [Family FAQ](#)
 - iii. [Video: Guide to Completing the FAST Family Application](#)
 - iv. [Video: How to Upload Additional Documents](#)
 - v. [Video: How to Authorize Your Taxes](#)
 2. The application primarily asks for information about last year's income (ie 2024). We recognize that your income may be different in 2025 due to a job change or loss of a job, return to school, or other circumstances. If this is the case, please provide detailed information about how your financial situation has changed or will change from last year in the narrative question section. Please share specific numbers (ie "I lost X amount of income because I was laid off" or "My monthly income was X in 2024, but it is now Y in 2025").
 3. When selecting the program level (infant/toddler/early childhood), days per week, and tuition rate, please choose the program and days per week that most closely



corresponds with your desired schedule. FAST is not able to process the varying tuition rates that Little Star uses; your actual tuition will be entered manually by an administrator after you've submitted your application.

4. On the final screen when FAST asks for a promo code, please enter LITTLESTAR SCHOOL. Little Star covers the cost of each application; if you do not enter the code, FAST will require that you pay before you can submit your application.

In order to be considered for a financial aid award for the 2025-2026 school year, you must complete the online application by March 28, 2025. Applications received after the deadline will still be considered but awards will depend on availability of funds. Please note that depending on your income level, you may be asked to apply for DCYF assistance before being granted a financial aid package.

In the online application, there is space for you to write a description of your situation and why you are in need of assistance. Please provide as much detail as possible; the financial aid committee is better able to issue you an award if we fully understand your circumstances. You may be asked to provide additional information if your narrative is missing information.

Please keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. As a financial aid recipient, you are required to contact the Little Star office staff should your financial situation improve to ensure that families in greater need receive assistance. It is your responsibility to report income changes to Little Star. Cases of false reporting or failure to report are subject to removal of award and denial the following year.
2. As with all Little Star families, financial aid recipients are expected to complete family volunteer hours, make tuition payments by the 15th of each month, and maintain regular attendance.



Sincerely,

The Little Star Financial Aid Committee