

## General Information

Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESA) is administered by Arizona's Department of Education which is funded by state tax dollars to provide educational options for qualified Arizona students. ESA gives families the choice in educating their child.

Autism Academy accepts ESA recipients who have been awarded funding with a primary eligibility of Autism (even if the total amount awarded is less than Autism Academy's yearly tuition rate). A copy of the student's ESA contract must be provided to Autism Academy each year.

The Parent/Guardian must abide by rules stipulated by Arizona Department of Education (ADE) as set forth by Arizona State Legislature. (The state statutes concerning the ESA program are outlined in A.R.S. 15-2401 through A.R.S. 15-2404).

By signing and returning an ESA contract, the parent/guardian gives up the right to FAPE (Free and Appropriate Education). The parent/guardian now becomes the "school district" for their child.

Students cannot be enrolled concurrently in an ESA program and a public/charter school including summer programs.

Applicants may accept a School Tuition Organization (STO) scholarship prior to or following an ESA. Applicants cannot accept a STO and an ESA at the same time within the same year.

The Parent/Guardian must submit a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) that is current at the time of enrollment into the program to ESA in order to receive a renewal contract for future school years.

### ESA Contact Information

Website : <http://www.azed.gov/esa/>

Phone Number : 602-364-1969

Email : [esa@azed.gov](mailto:esa@azed.gov)

### *Academy for Education and Development*

1540 North Burk Street

Gilbert, Arizona 85234

### *A+ Academy for Education and Development*

7541 South Willow Drive

Tempe, Arizona 85283

### *Autism Academy for Education and Development*

6810 West Thunderbird Road

Peoria, Arizona 85381

Phone : 480-240-9255

[www.aaed.org](http://www.aaed.org)

We are here to assist in making this process as easy as possible.

If you have any questions or need our assistance, please contact Kym Wilbur (Funding Specialist)

[kwilbur@aaed.org](mailto:kwilbur@aaed.org)

480-525-6197



# INFORMATION GUIDE TO THE EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNT PROGRAM

Tuition funding is easy at Autism Academy. Most students can qualify for the ESA scholarship.

## Eligibility

- Open to Students in grades K-12

### *All Students Need*

- Must have a current Arizona public/charter school MET or IEP which lists Autism as the primary eligibility
- Both the student and parent/guardian are listed on the Birth Certificate
- Both the student and parent/guardian are Arizona residents

### *Kindergarten Requirements*

- Student must be 5 years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the application year

### *Grades 1- 12 Requirements*

- Student attended an Arizona public or charter school the first 100 days of the prior school year  
OR
- For students attending an online public or charter school the requirements are based on hours completed not days.  
1st – 3rd grade = 400 hours. 4th – 12th grade = 500 hours  
OR
- Student received a Disabled/Displaced scholarship from a School Tuition Organization (STO)

## Applying for an ESA

Parents/Guardians can apply at any time during the entire school year. There are no deadlines.

ESA applications are located at <https://esa.azed.gov/esa>

Items needed for applying:

- \* Birth Certificate listing both the student and parent/guardian
- \* Current IEP or MET. Applying with MET is preferred.
- \* Proof of Residency (i.e. Arizona Driver License, Utility Bill, etc.)
- \* If qualifying using a STO, you will need a letter from the STO that includes the following information:
  - Name of award (disabled/displaced)
  - Amount of award
  - School awarded
  - Person of contact

These items will need to be uploaded. If the application is incomplete, an email request for information will be sent listing any additional required documentation from ESA.

## Finalizing Acceptance

- \* Applicants (parent/guardian) will receive a letter of approval or denial within 45 days of submitting a completed application
- \* If approved, a contract will be issued to the applicant
- \* Parent/Guardian must return the 4 page signed contract, Bank Form, Handbook Acknowledgment, and public/charter school withdrawal form to ESA before funding begins
- \* Parent/Guardian must withdraw the student from the public/charter school they were attending prior to their award beginning

## Autism Academy

### Requirements

- Copy of 4 page signed ESA scholarship contract
- Completed Autism Academy Student Enrolment form

### Funding

- \* Kindergarten is only funded for half day
- \* Parents/Guardians wanting their child to attend full day Kindergarten are responsible for the remaining tuition at Autism Academy
- \* Funding will begin the following quarter after acceptance of the contract and required documents are received
- \* Parent/Guardian will receive a pre-paid credit card to use for payment of tuition
- \* Funding is distributed quarterly (July, October, January, and April)

### Parent Responsibilities

- \* Quarterly expense reports must be turned in to ESA with required documentation by the given deadlines in order to receive the next quarter's funding
- \* Parent/Guardian must spend a portion of their quarterly funds each quarter