

2025 Ignite! Early Childhood Champion Awards Invitation to Participate

CORE Network Nashville and the United Way of Greater Nashville invite you to the 2025 Ignite! Early Childhood Champion Awards, part of the Ignite! Early Childhood Education Conference. This event will take place on the evening of Tuesday, July 22, 2025.

This annual awards ceremony honors our community's early childhood educators and legislative champions, highlights their important work, and encourages community engagement in early childhood education. **Report your school's honorees by March 3rd via [Google Form](#).**

For further information, please contact Elandriel Lewis at elandriel.lewis@unitedwaygn.org.

Participation Details:

- **Eligibility:** Any early childhood educational institution can participate by selecting a teacher for the following categories:
 - **Early Childhood Educator of the Year:** For educators with 4 or more years of experience.
 - **Beginning Beacon Early Educator of the Year:** For educators with 1-3 years of experience.

Steps to Participate:

1. Select an educator from your staff based on their contributions during the 2024-2025 school year. A copy of the county-level application questions is attached to help guide your selection process.
2. Ensure your chosen educator meets the following criteria:
 - Employed at a TN DHS or DOE-licensed school or care provider in Davidson County.
 - Works or teaches most of the hours the provider is open (at least 25 hours per week).
 - Directly impacts the care and education of children in a birth to pre-K program or classroom (e.g., classroom teacher, classroom aide or paraprofessional, family provider, etc.)
3. **Report your school's honorees by March 3rd via [Google Form](#).** All reported honorees will be invited to apply for the county-level awards. All honorees, along with their school names, will be recognized through social media and a press release.

Encouraged Participants:

- Any TN DHS or DOE-licensed school or care provider in Davidson County
 - Public and private institutions, For-profit and non-profit organizations, Family and group childcare providers

We look forward to celebrating the dedication and achievements of our early childhood educators!

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Davidson County – Application Questions and Selection Guide

1. Personal Information: (unscored)

- Name and contact information

2. Professional Background: (30 points)

- Describe your educational background and any relevant certifications. (unscored)
- Attach
 - a personal statement (double-spaced, 12 font, 1 page to 2 pages - i.e., why do you work in ECE, what inspired you to become an EC educator, describe your professional experiences), (6 points)
 - a supervisor (director or principal reference - double-spaced, 12 font, 1 page to 2 pages), (12 points)
 - two-parent/family references (double-spaced, 12 font, 1 page to 2 pages). (12 points)

3. Teaching Philosophy and Practices: (40 points - 8 points each)

- With regards to your teaching philosophy, please answer the following questions:
 - What are your beliefs about how children learn?
 - How do you create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for children aged birth to 5?
 - Describe a typical day in your classroom, including how you incorporate play-based learning and support students with exceptional needs.
 - How do you take language, culture, and unique abilities into account in your environmental and material design?
 - What is your belief about the role families play in children’s learning and how do you connect and engage with families to support them in playing these roles?

4. Impact and Achievements: (24 points - 8 points each)

- Share a specific example of a successful lesson or project you have implemented with your students.
- How have you positively impacted the development and learning of your students?
- What are you most proud of as a teacher? (different from previous examples)
- List any awards or recognitions you have received in your teaching career. (unscored)

5. Future Goals: (6 points)

- How do you ensure that you are continuing to grow as an educator?

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