



Scholarships your children may be eligible for

It's a mistake to assume that your child has to be a football prodigy or a genius to get a scholarship, says Rob Taylor, senior editor at EDge Interactive, which oversees the content of a family of school-related websites, including ScholarshipsCanada.com.

In fact, ScholarshipsCanada.com manages a database of awards numbering well over 15,000, awarded by some 300 Canadian organizations. Some do require academic prowess, but many others focus on other areas – everything from agricultural involvement to athletic talent, extracurricular activity, and leadership experience and school or community service.

Of course, grades are still a significant consideration for many scholarships. But, says Taylor, anything that makes your child different from the other students applying for scholarships is important.

"I recommend sitting down and thinking about it. Make a list. Something that seems routine to you might be extraordinary to someone else."

To get information, your child should start by talking to a school guidance counsellor about how to approach the search for scholarships. Next in line, says Taylor, are sources close to home, such as the parents' employers or unions, which may offer scholarships to employees' children without advertising them externally.

One reason why there's a general perception that scholarships are only for the brilliant, says Taylor, is that many people are under the mistaken impression that all scholarships are of the "automatic consideration" variety, meaning that no application is necessary – the scholarship lands on your lap like a gift. Actually, there is a whole host of "need to apply" scholarships, says Taylor, and these are the ones you need to spend some time searching for.





WHEN AND HOW TO APPLY

Taylor says the most important advice he gives students is to prepare ahead of time.

“Even if you aren’t going to start school next year, I’d recommend starting to look now,” he says. “Not to apply, necessarily, but to see what’s out there in the way of scholarships, grants and bursaries. See what kinds of deadlines and requirements exist. It’s better to know about an essay that’s required for a scholarship nine months before it’s due rather than finding out about it a week before.”

For “automatic consideration” scholarships, there’s nothing to do but cross your fingers. For the “need to apply” kind, follow the instructions that come with it.

LINKS TO WEBSITES

You can find more information about the ins and outs of scholarships at some of these websites. Good luck!

- www.scholarshipscanada.com
- www.millenniumscholarships.ca
- www.scholarships-bourses-ca.org
- www.studentawards.com
- www.epsb.ca/students/awards_info.shtml

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