BUSTING THE MYTHS

Making the Case for an Educated and Fairly Compensated Workforce
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

There has been a great deal of attention this past year on the early childhood workforce. Media outlets across the country, from The Washington Post to the San Francisco Chronicle to the online magazine Politico to local community columnists, seem to finally be concluding what we’ve known for more than a quarter of a century—that the role teachers play in the lives of children birth to five in early care and education settings is the key to great learning outcomes.

And in order to maintain quality, we need to ensure our early childhood teachers are college educated and compensated on parity with their public school Pre-k teacher peers. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation weighted in on this issue with a report this year in support of high quality child care and recognized that the key driver of child care quality is the quality of the workforce.

Unfortunately, not everyone supports our pursuit of a highly educated and fairly compensated workforce. In fact, the myths about the desires, needs and abilities of our workforce to become college educated continue. Often the naysayers base their case on the lack of family resources to pay what this would cost. And many believe, even in the field of education, that early education teachers don’t need or want a college education. And some imply that our diverse early childhood workforce cannot earn those needed degrees.

But our experiences over the past 28 years with T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE$® programs have consistently demonstrated that early education teachers need and want a college education; that with a combination of economic and social supports they can attain college certificates and degrees without going into debt; and that they will realize real wage and career progression. As a field, we need to set the standards for a college educated and fairly compensated teaching workforce and we need to advocate for and implement strategies that can and are making a difference. Our teachers deserve the opportunity to be degreed, early childhood professionals; and all our children deserve teachers who have the knowledge and skills to support their early learning.

Sue Russell


“Low pay combined with low entry standards, little professional training, and lack of performance accountability has yielded a childcare workforce that falls short of what’s needed for high-quality care. Pay in the childcare field is lower than in 97% of all U.S. occupations. Such low pay impedes recruitment and retention of a high-quality workforce, causing high turnover among current workers and discouraging talented young people from pursuing a career working with young children.”

FUNDER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD® NATIONAL CENTER

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center works across states to ensure accountable workforce development strategies that lead to measurable education and compensation gains and real career mobility and stability. The development, quality and growth of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE$® programs are components of the National Center’s key strategies. To that end our mission states:

Every child in an early childhood setting has a teacher who is well educated and well compensated. Every early childhood teacher has access to affordable college education and workforce supports and earns a living wage.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Initiative is an evidence-based model that provides debt-free college education with comprehensive supports for the early education workforce. It provides the structure for a comprehensive, sequenced program of early childhood higher education opportunities that recognizes the diverse educational backgrounds of early childhood teachers. T.E.A.C.H. targets increased education leading to credentials and degrees, increased compensation and job and career retention. Employer and employee dollars are partnered with public and/or private funds in each state to support their early education workforce.

The Child Care WAGE$® Project was created in response to research-based evidence showing that the quality of care children receive is lowered by high turnover rates and inadequate teacher education. But the combination of a lack of resources and efforts to maintain affordability for parents means many early childhood teachers are severely underpaid and leave the field for better paying jobs. And others never consider the profession as an option. Child Care WAGE$® provides tiered education-based salary supplements to teachers, directors and family child care educators working with children from birth to five and that leads to better educated teachers and continuity of care for young children.

Funding Support for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE$® FY17

- $33.5 million funded 17,247 scholarship recipients in T.E.A.C.H. programs in 23 states and the District of Columbia.
- $10.4 million funded 5,189 WAGE$ participants in 5 states.

HIGHLIGHT FROM THE CENTER

Guiding State Programs to Fidelity

Each year Center staff works closely with all T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ programs to ensure the integrity of, and safeguard financial investments in, these programs. Through the Center’s provision of technical assistance, monitoring and quality assurance performance measures coupled with the hard work of state program staff, these programs continually demonstrate the many ways in which they support the workforce in their college going experiences.

* Visit www.teachecnationalcenter.org to access a PDF with live links.
**MYTH 1:** Young children don’t need educated teachers; they just need warm, loving care.

**TRUTHS**
- Educating young children in group settings is not the same as parenting.
- An *educated teacher* understands the complexities of child development, implements effective group management practices with diverse groups of children, and provides high quality learning environments, activities and interactions that support their social, emotional and cognitive growth.
- "...higher teacher qualifications are significantly correlated with higher quality early childhood education and care."

**T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Colleges and Universities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* 90,991 credit hours completed</td>
<td>* 533 participating community colleges and universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>* 88.5% of participants work as teachers or family child care educators</td>
<td>– * 17.8% of participating community colleges offer full online associate degree option</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– * 24.4% of participating universities offer full online bachelor’s degree option</td>
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**Voices FROM THE FIELD**


- **Educational Progression:** Associate Degree in ECE; Bachelor’s Degree in ECE Unified (including Teaching Certificate Birth – Grade 3)
- **Career Pathway:** Teacher Aide; Lead Teacher in Early Head Start classroom
- **Compensation Gain over 12 years:** 67% indexed to 2017 wages

“I worked as a nanny right out of high school and now, through earning my two degrees, I realize I knew so little. I didn’t realize how much my influence as a teacher impacts the lives of the children in my classroom.”

**T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Is More Than a Scholarship**

T.E.A.C.H. scholarships provide robust economic supports (tuition and book assistance, paid leave time, internet and/or travel stipend and completion bonus) as well as individual counselors for each scholar. T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients are working students who may not have been to college or who are the first in their families to go to college. Counselors help them navigate their educational journey—from processing scholarship applications and college enrollment to managing scholarship responsibilities and providing guidance on balancing work, family and school—so that each T.E.A.C.H. recipient can be successful in their education goals. This chart describes just a few of those functions performed to help recipients achieve their goals.

**HIGHLIGHT FROM THE CENTER**

**T.E.A.C.H. Is More Than a Scholarship**

**Navigating Higher Education Challenges**

- Helped navigate a personal crisis that could affect academic progress: 77%
- Helped navigate a challenge with their employers: 82%
- Helped navigate a challenge with particular courses or instructors: 73%
- Helped navigate the course enrollment process: 86%

Percentage of 22 T.E.A.C.H. Programs engaged in each activity

* Visit [www.teachecnationalcenter.org](http://www.teachecnationalcenter.org) to access a PDF with live links.
MYTH 2: The early childhood workforce cannot earn college degrees.

TRUTHS

• The early childhood teaching workforce is made up mostly of women earning very low wages, with low levels of education and most often with children of their own.

• Many teachers are women of color and/or of Hispanic origin, reflecting the children in their classrooms.

• Initiatives like T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE$® provide debt-free college education and needed economic and social supports.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipients

• 50.8% of recipients were people of color and/or of Hispanic origin

• 48.6% of recipients came from families with no college graduates

• 56.3% of recipients began T.E.A.C.H. with only a high school diploma

Average Annual Credit Hours Completed

• 14.3 credit hours—Associate degree scholarships

• 17.0 credit hours—Bachelor’s degree scholarships

Average Annual Recipient Grade Point Averages

• 3.3 GPA—Associate degree scholarships

• 3.5 GPA—Bachelor’s degree scholarships

Child Care WAGE$®

WAGE$ Participants

• 61% of WAGE$ participants were people of color and/or of Hispanic origin

• 99% were women

• 60% of participants earned less than $12 per hour

Education

• 77%—WAGE$ participants who either have an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education or higher OR who submitted documentation that they had completed additional coursework

PROFILE


• Educational Progression: Associate Degree in ECE Birth – 2nd Grade; Bachelor’s Degree in Education Studies, Concentration in ECE Birth – 2nd Grade; Certification in Child Advocacy; Administration Credential and Teaching License

• Career Pathway: Teacher

• Compensation Gain over 5 years: 24% indexed to 2017 wages

“My education has helped me in the classroom; knowing what is developmentally appropriate for different age groups has been critical. And in order to be an innovative voice in the field and understand public policy and regulations, education is paramount. My prospects of becoming a Childcare Facility Owner/Administrative Director and working as a child advocate wouldn’t be possible without my knowledge, hands-on experience, college degrees, and credentials.”

HIGHLIGHT FROM THE CENTER

Equity of Access to Flexible, Affordable Education through Strengthening Articulation

Sustaining strong articulation efforts in states is hard work, requiring coordination of multiple stakeholders. This past year, our work with T.E.A.C.H. states to better understand the articulation landscape and provide technical assistance toward improving articulation efforts in those states resulted in measurable progress on multiple fronts. This chart describes just some of the activities that T.E.A.C.H. states were engaged in this past year to address those goals.

IMPROVING ARTICULATION & GRADUATION

Addressed the challenge of student teaching when required in classrooms other than where the student works

Worked to improve articulation policies and practices within community college and university systems

Worked to improve articulation policies and practices between particular 2 and 4 year institutions

Worked to improve articulation policies for accepting the CDA credential for defined college credits

Percentage of 22 T.E.A.C.H. Programs engaged in each activity
**MYTH 3:** If we invest in teachers, they won’t earn more and they will leave. Our investment will be lost.

**TRUTHS:**
- Many T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients make a 10 year commitment to their child care program while completing their college education.
- They often move from assistant teachers to teachers to lead teachers and even assistant directors. And their annual *earning gains* on both T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ are far better than we are seeing field-wide.
- The degrees they earn are in early childhood education, which gives them an opportunity to advance their careers and earnings in the field.
- Site-based turnover rates for both T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ participants are much lower than site-based turnover field-wide.

### T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood™

**Employers**
- **8,344** sponsored T.E.A.C.H. recipients on a scholarship
- **18.4%** of recipients worked with children in publicly funded pre-K programs
- **12.4%** of recipients worked in Head Start programs
- **696,312** children were served by T.E.A.C.H. recipients and their sponsors

**Average Annual Recipient Hourly Wage Increase**
- **9%**—Associate degree scholarships
- **8%**—Bachelor’s degree scholarships

**Average Annual Recipient Site-based Retention Rates**
- **94%**—Associate degree scholarships
- **95%**—Bachelor’s degree scholarships

### Child Care WAGE$®

**Employers**
- **91%** of participants worked in center-based settings
- **9%** of participants worked in child care homes
- **100,437** children were served by WAGE$ participants

**Average Six-Month Supplement**
- **$893** (about 8% gain annually)

**Retention**
- **14%**—Average annual site-based turnover rate

### Voices FROM THE FIELD


- **Educational Progression:** NC Early Childhood Credential, Associate Degree in ECE; Bachelor’s Degree in Child Development and Family Relations; Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Studies; Advanced 7 education levels during 12 years on the WAGE$ Supplement Scale
- **Career Pathway:** Assistant Teacher, Teacher, Program Coordinator, Early Head Start Resource Teacher; Member T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ NC Advisory Committee
- **Compensation Gain over 10 years:** 38% gain indexed to 2017 wages

“WAGE$ has been a big motivator in my professional career as a teacher. It encouraged me to increase my level of professionalism, knowledge of early childhood education and reach my goal of obtaining my degrees, all while balancing the challenges of being a single mom. T.E.A.C.H. scholarship bonuses and WAGE$ salary supplements allowed my young daughter and me to move out of a dangerous neighborhood and buy our own home. And just this fall, my daughter, with academic scholarships of her own, started college. I couldn’t be prouder.”

Recently Hurricane Irma left the roof of my early childhood family home badly damaged and we lost a lot of children’s equipment. After being denied food stamps and support from FEMA, I was so thankful that my Child Care WAGE$® supplement came that I called the T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ office in tears. That $1,500 will go far in helping to repair the roof and making my family child care home whole again. Ya’ll open doors for people and make all of the difference. I’m so excited and blessed to be part of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$!”

Adrienne Donaldson, T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$® Recipient, Jitta Large Family Child Care Home, Florida

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* Visit [www.teachecnationalcenter.org](http://www.teachecnationalcenter.org) to access a PDF with live links.
MYTH 4: Parent fees can support the salaries and benefits needed by the early education workforce.

TRUTHS:

- **Families should not be expected to pay more than 10% of their income on child care** in order for it to be considered affordable and yet, for many families, their child care costs far exceed this standard.

- **The cost for full day, year round high quality care varies by region**, but is often higher than the cost of college tuition at a 4-year public university.

- The early education workforce cannot continue to subsidize early childhood education through their **forgone wages**.

- Science is telling us that kindergarten is too late for many of our children to succeed in school. Early education needs significant public funding and should not be treated as a commodity in the open market.

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“I have been a licensed family child care provider in central Minnesota since 1988. In that time, I have seen tremendous changes in this profession and in the knowledge base of early childhood education. Without my college degrees, I would not be able to offer a quality education program. My job is every bit as important as that of an elementary school teacher. Since we require college degrees of them, I cannot fathom why anyone would think this wouldn’t be optimal in early childhood programs, including family child care.”

Tammy Oveson, Family Child Care Educator, Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, Associate Degree & Bachelor’s Degree in ECE earned through T.E.A.C.H. MINNESOTA

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HIGHLIGHT FROM THE CENTER

**Equity of Access to Better Compensation: Moving the Needle on Compensation**

Through grants from the Alliance for Early Success and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Center worked with 8 T.E.A.C.H. state teams (Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin) to raise awareness about early childhood workforce compensation issues and create new or expand existing strategies to improve compensation within the states. A Moving the Needle on Compensation National Summit brought all eight state teams together for two days of learning and planning. Teams heard from national speakers, learned from each other and had opportunities to solidify their State Policy, Advocacy and Funding Action Plans. States are making progress on many fronts and with funding secured for a second year of this project, support for their work can continue and the Center can disseminate findings through presentations, tools and articles.

This year T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ Programs were housed in a group of statewide organizations serving the early childhood community in 23 states and the District of Columbia.

- Alabama
  Alabama Partnership for Children
- Colorado
  Qualistar Early Learning
- Delaware*
  Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children
- Florida*
  Children’s Forum
- Indiana
  Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children
- Iowa*
  Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
- Kansas
  Child Care Aware® of Kansas
- Michigan
  Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children
- Minnesota
  Child Care Aware® of Minnesota
- Missouri
  Child Care Aware® of Missouri
- Nebraska
  Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children
- Nevada
  Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children
- New Mexico*
  New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children
- North Carolina*
  Child Care Services Association
- Ohio
  Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association
- Pennsylvania
  Pennsylvania Child Care Association
- Rhode Island
  Ready to Learn Providence
- South Carolina
  Center for Child Care Career Development
- Texas
  Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
- Utah
  Utah Association for the Education of Young Children
- Vermont
  Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
- Washington DC
  National Black Child Development Institute
- West Virginia
  River Valley Child Development Services
- Wisconsin
  Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

*Denotes both T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ Programs operating in the state

NOTE: to access live links in this report, visit teachecnationalcenter.org for the electronic version.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Advisory Committee Members

As a natural extension of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center, a ten-member T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Advisory Committee is in place to advise the Center on broad issues affecting the Center’s work and all T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE$ programs.

- Helen Blank
  National Women’s Law Center
- Carol Brunson Day
  Brunson, Phillips & Day, Inc.
- Ana De Hoyos O’Connor
  San Antonio College
- Chip Donohue
  Erikson Institute
- Autumn Gehri
  Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
- Phyllis Kalifeh
  The Children’s Forum
- Edith Locke
  Child Care Services Association
- Barb Merrill
  Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
- Michelle Raybon
  Alabama Partnership for Children
- Peg Sprague
  Consultant
- Sue Russell
  T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center
  Ex-officio

For more information contact:
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center
PO Box 901
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919.967.3272 – telephone
919.442.1988 – facsimile
www.teachecnationalcenter.org

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