

# Child Care WAGE\$<sup>®</sup> Overview

**What is Child Care WAGE\$<sup>®</sup>?** The Child Care WAGE\$<sup>®</sup> Initiative (WAGE\$) provides education-based salary supplements to teachers, directors and family child care providers (early educators) working with young children in regulated early care and education settings to increase workforce retention, education, and compensation. Every six months a WAGE\$ recipient receives a graduated supplement tied to the level of her education and retention in her program.

**Why is WAGE\$ needed in every state?** Educated, compensated and consistent/stable teachers are critical to the successful growth and development of young children. WAGE\$ is an evidence-informed model that advances the education level of early educators, increases their compensation levels and results in the retention of a qualified early care and education (ECE) workforce.

## Education

The education within the early care and education workforce has traditionally been low. WAGE\$ offers graduated supplements that increase as education levels are reached, providing a constant incentive to pursue additional coursework.

## Compensation

The early childhood field struggles with high staff turnover rates due to low workforce compensation. WAGE\$ increases the compensation of early educators and makes a career in early childhood a more attractive option.

## Retention

A large percentage of the early care and education workforce must use one or more forms of public assistance to survive on low wages.

**How does WAGE\$ work?** A sole non-profit organization in each state is selected by the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood<sup>®</sup> National Center (the National Center) through a robust application process to implement the licensed, evidence-informed model. Support for administering organizations is provided by the National Center to guide the careful planning for and implementation of a WAGE\$ Program to ensure model fidelity. Funding for WAGE\$ supplements in each state may be provided by public and/or private sources to address local/state needs.

## An investment in WAGE\$ helps...

### Early Educators

- Motivate early educators to pursue higher education, which impacts classroom quality and sets a strong and positive example for their own children.
- Allow early educators who work in a severely under-compensated field to earn enough to pay basic bills and provide for their families.
- Provide recognition early educators deserve.

### Families

- Sustain an educated early care and education workforce without additional cost to parents.
- Give parents peace of mind and the ability to be productive members of the workforce because they know educated, consistent early educators are working with their children.

### Businesses

- Attract qualified early educators.
- Increase retention of ECE staff, thus reducing hiring and training for early care and education businesses.
- Sustain small early care and education businesses, which struggle with paying higher salaries.
- Enable early care and education programs to work toward and receive quality ratings, which in turn can increase enrollment and revenue.

## WAGE\$ FY17

### By the Numbers

#### Investments

- \$10.4 million invested in WAGE\$ in five states

#### Impact

- 5,189 teachers, directors and home providers

#### Compensation

- \$893 average six-month supplement amount

#### Education

- 77% — WAGE\$ participants either had the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education or higher or submitted documentation during the year that they had completed additional coursework

#### Retention

- 14% —Average annual turnover rate

#### Diversity of the Workforce

- 61% of WAGE\$ participants were people of color or of Hispanic origin and 99% were women

A product of the  
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood<sup>®</sup> National Center

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