

# Child Care WAGE\$® Overview

**What is Child Care WAGE\$®?** The Child Care WAGE\$® Initiative (WAGE\$) provides education-based salary supplements to teachers, directors and family child care providers 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 and results in the retention of a qualified early care and education (ECE) workforce.

## Education

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

## Compensation

Compensation is so low in the early childhood field that a large percentage of the early care and education workforce must use one or more forms of public assistance to survive. WAGE\$ supplements help the workforce earn more, thereby increasing retention, which is important for young children.

## Retention

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 more attractive.

**How does WAGE\$ work?** One non-profit in each state is selected by the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center at Child Care Services Association (the National Center) through a robust application process to implement the licensed, evidence-informed model. The National Center supports administering organizations to help 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.

## Early Educators

- Motivate early educators to pursue higher education, which improves classroom quality and sets a strong and positive example for their own children.
- Allow early educators 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 can increase enrollment and revenue.

## WAGE\$ FY20

### By the Numbers

#### Investments

- \$15.6 million invested in WAGE\$ in six states

#### Impact

- 8,511 teachers, directors and home providers

#### Compensation

- \$791 average six-month supplement amount

#### Education

- 61% — WAGE\$ participants either had the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education or higher or submitted documentation during the year showing they completed additional coursework

#### Retention

- 11% — Average annual turnover rate

#### Diversity of the Workforce

- 63% 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® National Center at  
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