

# Child Care WAGE\$® Project

## North Carolina 2008-2009

An Education-Based Salary Supplement Program for  
Child Care Teachers, Directors and Family Child Care Providers



### The Problem

According to workforce data collected in 2003 by Child Care Services Association, North Carolina is faced with an average teacher turnover rate of 24% per year. This rate is a notable drop from the 31% turnover rate established previously and reveals the impact of programs created to address retention. Despite the progress, this rate of departure means that children still struggle with inconsistent educators in the years when the establishment of trust and the promotion of learning in a stable environment are most important. The median wage for teachers is \$8.00 an hour, and teachers cite low pay as a primary reason for leaving. According to the study, 79% of teachers statewide who do not see themselves in the child care field in three years indicate that better pay might entice them to stay. Lack of resources and an effort to maintain affordability for parents often make it difficult for individual child care programs to offer sufficient wages to retain educated staff and to reward or encourage teacher education. Research continues to show that teacher education and turnover rates affect children's development, so fair compensation of child care professionals is essential.

### The Purpose

Improve child care quality, through salary supplements, by reducing turnover and encouraging the continued education of teachers, directors and family child care providers.

### The Program

- **Rewards Attained Education:** Supplement award amounts are based on the level of education an individual has attained.
- **Rewards Consistency:** Supplements are distributed in six month increments, after the recipient has spent a continuous six-month period in the same child care setting.
- **Maintains Marketplace Competition for Better Salaries:** Supplements vary based only on education attained, not on wages earned.
- **Integrates with Other Education and Compensation Initiatives:** The Child Care WAGE\$® Project builds on and collaborates with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project. Whereas T.E.A.C.H. rewards child care professionals seeking more education and helps them attain it, WAGE\$ rewards those who have already attained education and helps keep them in their child care programs.
- **Provides a Direct, Graduated Supplement that is Logical and Sufficient:** Supplements recognize individual professional development efforts regardless of the work environment and address low wages without affecting center budgets, regular wages or parent fees. Amounts are sufficient to make a difference and the scale levels and awards represent logical progress in the educational system.
- **Does Not Increase Costs to Parents:** Because funding for the Child Care WAGE\$® Project comes from external sources and goes directly to individual child care providers, families can have the benefit of better educated, more consistent staff without having to pay more.

## In the Words of Participating Teachers, Directors & Home Providers, the Child Care WAGE\$® Project is Benefiting Children...

- *"It is a huge financial benefit. It benefits children because I am determined to stay to keep my supplement checks. It benefits the early childhood community because it encourages professionals to enroll in college coursework." - Brunswick, teacher*
- *"This program helps keep educated and knowledgeable teachers working with our children. If we want the children in our communities to become educated adults, then they must be taught by educated teachers. If you want educated teachers (who have paid a great deal for their schooling) to stay in a field with low pay, providing a WAGE\$ supplement helps encourage them to stay. WAGE\$ helps to keep decent, good, quality people interacting with and teaching the next generation. Thank you for all you have done and all you do!" - Chatham, director*
- *"WAGE\$ has helped me keep tuition low so that parents can afford to work and make a living. ... At this point, I cannot raise day care tuition. Many families are suffering in this economy. They would be forced to remove their children and leave them with neighbors or family members, which would leave me with no income at all and our preschoolers without the care and education they deserve." - Cleveland, home provider*
- *"Without Smart Start, I would not have pursued the education. The funds made it possible for me to stay in this position and get the education. The education gave me the tools I needed to be the best care provider that I can be. The difference in my attitude and knowledge cannot be measured. It has been a 'win-win' situation for me, my center and more importantly the children." - Davidson, teacher*
- *"The WAGE\$ Project has allowed me to continue my education and work on obtaining my dream of being a teacher. The children in my care have benefited from the increased knowledge I have of how children develop. They are the reason I go to school." - Davie, teacher*
- *"It's important because it helps me to strive and work towards higher education. I absolutely feel wonderful about myself going to college and making great grades. My eyes are opened more to the needs and care of each child in my day care." - Harnett, home provider*
- *"Because of WAGE\$, the teachers at my center are going to school and are staying longer at the center. Not only do they have the opportunity to stay at a higher pay, but they can work for a better future by getting a higher education." - Surry, teacher*
- *"Thank you so much for your encouragement and support in helping me and other teachers in this profession become noticed as professionals and not just babysitters. Without this program, I probably would not have thought I could get my degree. Thank you." - Transylvania, teacher*
- *"It has helped me keep my home and have funds for my children. It has helped me to make it everyday. Thank you for saving my home, giving us food and keeping me from being homeless. Thank you from the top and bottom of my heart." - Wake, teacher*
- *"It is important because without this program, I would not have been able to get my degree in early childhood. Because of my degree, I have enhanced my program and my star rating." - Warren, home provider*

# Selected Results: Fiscal Year 2008-2009

During fiscal year 2008-2009, Child Care Services Association administered the statewide Child Care WAGE\$® Project in 69 North Carolina counties. See below for statewide outcome data and for data from a small sample of participating counties.

## Reduced Turnover

### WAGE\$ turnover FY 2008-2009

<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>15%</b>
Alamance	<b>9%</b>
Avery	<b>16%</b>
Nash-Edgecombe (Down East)	<b>11%</b>
New Hanover	<b>14%</b>

## Increased Education

The following percentages reflect active participants with education below the Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or its equivalent who submitted coursework in 2008-2009; many moved up a level on the supplement scale and increased their awards as a result.

	Active participants that submitted coursework	Active participants that reached a new level
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<b>North Carolina</b>	31%	19%
Iredell	35%	20%
Johnston	36%	21%
Mitchell-Yancey	32%	24%
Onslow	43%	28%

## Evaluation Techniques

Several tools are used to determine the impact of the Child Care WAGE\$® Project.

- An annual written survey is sent to a sample of recipients and to a sample of directors with staff participating in the Child Care WAGE\$® Project. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the survey respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the program and its administration.
- Turnover rates for Child Care WAGE\$® participants are determined through employment confirmation calls at the end of each individual's six month commitment period and at the end of the fiscal year.
- Transcripts or grade reports submitted by participants verify educational accomplishments attained during the year.

**The Child Care WAGE\$® Project was available in the following counties during fiscal year 2008-2009.**

Alamance	Duplin	Macon	Stanly
Alleghany	Durham	Martin	Stokes
Avery	Edgecombe	Mitchell	Surry
Beaufort	Forsyth	Moore	Swain
Bladen	Franklin	Nash	Transylvania
Brunswick	Gaston	New Hanover	Union
Catawba	Graham	Northampton	Vance
Chatham	Granville	Onslow	Wake
Cherokee	Guilford	Orange	Warren
Chowan	Halifax	Pender	Watauga
Clay	Harnett	Perquimans	Wayne
Cleveland	Haywood	Pitt	Wilkes
Columbus	Hyde	Polk	Wilson
Craven	Iredell	Randolph	Yadkin
Cumberland	Jackson	Rockingham	Yancey
Dare	Johnston	Rowan	
Davidson	Lee	Rutherford	
Davie	Lincoln	Sampson	

**Child Care WAGE\$® Project, 2008-2009**



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