

# Compensation Matters

## Making the Most Out of Your WAGE\$ Investment

As a funder of the Child Care WAGE\$® Project, you are already keenly aware of the challenges early educators face when it comes to fair compensation; you know the impact that compensation can have on education levels, retention, and overall quality, as well as on the well-being of teachers and the children they serve.

Thankfully, this issue is getting more national attention and efforts are being made to raise public awareness. Blogs, articles and deeper research are becoming more available that illustrate the problem. For a few recent examples, please see the links below:



[If We Care About Early Learning, We Cannot Ignore Teacher Well-Being](#)

[Half of America's childcare workers need food stamps, welfare payments or Medicaid](#)

[Quality Jobs, Quality Child Care](#)

There is no easy solution for the “compensation conundrum” -- increasing the base pay to what the workforce truly needs and deserves without burdening parents who cannot typically afford to pay more. WAGE\$, though, is one solution that helps address the compensation gap and at the same time, it rewards and encourages education and consistency. We know from participant feedback that the WAGE\$ supplements make a significant difference in their lives, and encourage them to stay and/or go back to school. We also know from that feedback that many still struggle to meet the needs of their families. With the low unemployment rates, other better-paying jobs may continue to lure some of our best-educated teachers away from young children.

WAGE\$ offers a [five-tier system](#) to help increase the compensation that participating Smart Start partnerships can offer to their early educators. In other words, if you want to increase the investment you make in the workforce, you may choose a higher supplement structure (tier) or offer a percentage increase on top of the tier you are currently using. As a result, the participants you support through WAGE\$ will receive more money to help meet all of these important goals. Investing in the workforce *is* investing in children.

*“Sometimes I feel like working in child care forces me to live in poverty. ... Teachers do this for the love and growth of the children, however, we need money to survive. Child Care WAGE\$® helps out a great deal.” (teacher)*

*“My WAGE\$ supplements have meant more financial stability. It helps me pay my rent and put food on the table. There are no words that can describe how WAGE\$ has relieved stress from my life. Thank you so much.” (teacher)*

For more information on how you can increase the WAGE\$ awards and to discuss possible budget needs, please call 919-967-3272 or email [allisonm@childcareservices.org](mailto:allisonm@childcareservices.org).