



Child Care WAGES[®] Project Statewide Final Report Fiscal Year 2017

REPORT CONTENTS

The Child Care WAGES[®] final report includes a detailed narrative, data tables to support many of the findings discussed and appendices that showcase participant feedback. Please see below for more information on the report's contents, which are listed in the order they are presented.

Project Description – Includes a brief overview of the project and its funding support.

Statewide Project Eligibility – Highlights primary requirements to participate in the Child Care WAGES[®] Project.

Project Overall Impact – Reviews the WAGES\$ impact by providing a summary and select tables for the following categories:

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Outputs – Includes the contracted outputs in table format with additional information on the activities that supported output achievement. (Table D: Outputs)

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Project Challenges – Summarizes the primary challenges faced within the reporting year.

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Table 3 – Identifies the number of participants funded on each scale and at each education level and indicates the percentage of participants at permanent levels *or* who have submitted coursework during the reporting period.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Child Care WAGE\$® Project is an education-based salary supplement program for teachers, directors and family child care providers. The education, position and work schedule for each applicant are assessed to determine the annual award. To encourage consistency, installments based on half of the annual award are issued after each six-month period the participant completes in the same early care and education program. Because these supplements reward teacher education and continuity of care, children ages birth to five benefit from more stable relationships with better educated teachers. In FY17, WAGE\$ was a funding partnership between Smart Start and the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE).

STATEWIDE PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for at least one six-month payment during the fiscal year, applicants must:

- work in a county that uses Smart Start funds to support the Child Care WAGE\$® Project
- work in a licensed child care program (center, home or public school site)
- work at least 10 hours per week with children birth to five
- earn at or below the income cap selected by the funding partnership (three options)
 - \$17 per hour
 - \$15 per hour
 - \$13 per hour
- have a level of education funded on the Child Care WAGE\$® scale (from regionally accredited schools)
- work at least six months in the same child care program
- be employed at this same child care program when funding is available and a final confirmation has been completed

PROJECT OVERALL IMPACT

The Child Care WAGE\$® Project impacts the community by improving the quality of early care and education for young children. Most evidence suggests there are three primary factors associated with teacher quality: education, stability and compensation. WAGE\$ addresses all three. Through graduated salary supplements, the project helps decrease turnover and encourages the continued educational pursuits of the child care workforce. As of June 2017, 2,712 child care professionals in 1,230 child care programs from 53 North Carolina counties were active participants in the statewide Child Care WAGE\$® Project. Of these individuals, 99% are women and 54% are people of color. Ninety-eight percent (98%) work at least part of their schedules in the classroom with children (including all teacher positions, family child care providers and center directors who spend some time in the classroom on a regular basis). Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the participants work in four and five star licensed centers or homes.

As of June 2017, 310 of the active participants were reported by their employers as being NC Pre-K teachers and assistants. Of this group, 67 are teachers and 243 are assistant teachers in NC Pre-K classrooms. These individuals work in 263 different child care programs in 48

counties. Of these, 98% are women and 49% are people of color. One hundred percent (100%) work in four and five star licensed centers.

Participation Overview

The Smart Start-funded WAGE\$ counties were given options for their participation that included tier selection (award amounts increase with higher tiers) and income cap requirements (participants are eligible only if they earn at or below the selected cap). The impact of limited funding can be seen in the choices made. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the counties funded one of the lowest two tiers in FY17. In addition to the use of lower tiers, many counties also selected the lowest income cap, with 26% of the participating counties setting income eligibility at \$13 per hour.

Table A below depicts the breakdown of the partnership choices for their counties.

Table A: Tier and Income Cap Selections*

	\$13 per hour	\$15 per hour	\$17 per hour	Totals
Tier One	13	26	2	41
Tier One HEO**	0	1	0	1
Tier Two	1	5	3	9
Tier Two HEO**	0	1	0	1
Tier Three	0	1	0	1
Totals	14	34	5	53

**Numbers represent unduplicated counties participating in each category.*

***HEO refers to tiers using the Higher Education Option.*

In order to help partnerships handle budget constraints and keep the WAGE\$ supplements a possible option for early childhood professionals in their counties, the Education and Compensation Advisory Committee approved several county-level eligibility and/or payment options. Partnerships may:

- Cut Tier One supplement awards by a percentage.
- Eliminate funding for participants at level two on the WAGE\$ scale (which includes, for example, 12 semester hours of birth to five focused coursework).
- Eliminate funding for administrator/director time. Directors who have classroom time are still eligible to receive full or partial awards on the teacher scale.
- Fund only those working in sites with at least three stars.

Twenty-five (25) counties implemented one or a combination of these strategies. Please note that tier decreases and reduced income caps are not discussed here; partnerships *must* choose a tier and income cap each year whereas the list above includes options to utilize if needed. See below for additional information on the cuts applied for FY17.

- Cut administrator time only – four counties
- Cut those working in sites with fewer than three stars only – 10 counties
- Cut administrator time and those working in sites with fewer than three stars – three counties

- Cut those working in sites with fewer than three stars and those at level two on the scale – one county
- Cut those working in sites with fewer than three stars and cut awards by a percentage – two counties
- Cut administrator time, those working in sites with fewer than three stars and those at level two on the scale – two counties
- Cut administrator time, those working in sites with fewer than three stars, those at level two on the scale and cut awards by a percentage – one county
- Cut awards by a percentage – two counties

Eleven counties were able to fund a percentage *increase* in awards during the fiscal year and four of these counties had implemented at least one kind of eligibility cut.

Turnover

Turnover numbers for the Child Care WAGE\$® Project reflect active participants who left their child care programs during the fiscal year (June 15, 2016 through June 14, 2017 for WAGE\$ payment periods and reporting). In addition to regular monthly confirmation calls, each participating center was contacted by mail, fax or phone to assess year-end employment. Information for FY17 has now been collected and is presented in these reports.

If a participant leaves her/his program and resumes eligibility at a new site, s/he will not be factored into the report at all until s/he has completed a full six-month period at her/his new site. Once s/he receives a supplement, s/he will again be recognized as an active participant. Only participants for whom WAGE\$ could have impacted the decision to stay or leave are factored into the turnover data. For example, participants who become ineligible for reasons other than leaving their child care programs (i.e. over the income cap due to raise, change of position within the program) are not considered turnover.

The turnover rate of WAGE\$ participants for FY17 was 16%, a significant overall improvement compared to the 31% full time teacher turnover rate in North Carolina prior to WAGE\$ becoming a statewide opportunity (Child Care Services Association, 1998). This rate is also below the goal of 25%, originally established within Smart Start’s Performance Based Incentive System, recently renamed Community Early Childhood Profile - Smart Start Measures of Impact. Unsurprisingly, 67% of those who left were earning less than \$12 per hour from their child care programs. The turnover rate among WAGE\$ NC Pre-K teachers and assistants was 13%. The 19% turnover rate of full-time teachers in the state’s early childhood workforce reflects both North Carolina’s supports for the workforce, like WAGE\$, and the economy in recent years (Child Care Services Association, 2015). A comparison of turnover data can be seen in Table B below.

Table B: Turnover Rate Comparison

	Statewide Workforce Pre-Program	Statewide Workforce 2015	Original PBIS Goal	WAGE\$ FY17
Turnover Rates	31%	19%	25%	16%

The turnover rate of early educators is impacted by the economy as in every other industry. When jobs are scarce, the decision to leave is more complicated and difficult. As the economy continues to improve and higher paying jobs are more available, the low pay in the field increases its vulnerability to turnover. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of April 2017, North Carolina's unemployment rate was at a low 4.7%, meaning that early educators have many more opportunities available. The turnover of early childhood teachers, earning on average \$10.97 per hour in North Carolina, may increase. In fact, the turnover of WAGE\$ participants, though still low, has increased slightly over the past couple of years, making the WAGE\$ supplements even more critical in order to compete with these growing opportunities. The Child Care WAGE\$® Project awards address retention and make it more possible for educated professionals to afford to teach young children. The level of compensation also has an impact. The two counties that support Tier Two HEO or Tier Three have a significantly lower turnover rate (10%) than the rest of the counties (16%).

The WAGE\$ turnover rate covers all eligible positions, including part time employees, and is not a straightforward comparison to the workforce study data in general. However, it is expected that the WAGE\$ population of educated professionals would have more job opportunities than the child care workforce at large. Without the WAGE\$ supplement, the turnover rate would likely be much higher.

One of the arguments given by child care directors for not supporting the continuing education of their staff has been that if teachers get more education they will leave. The WAGE\$ data on participants continue to refute that claim. Of all WAGE\$ participants statewide with an Associate Degree focused on early childhood education or higher, only 14% left their programs this past year. Of all participants with less education, 24% left their programs. This figure may differ for the workforce not receiving higher compensation through supplements, but it appears that if salaries are supplemented or teachers are more fairly compensated, those with higher education will not leave at a higher rate. In fact, for the past several years, retention has been *better* among the more highly educated participants. Research makes it clear that children need stable and engaging relationships with the best educated teachers to help facilitate their development during these most critical years. The higher retention of this educated group of WAGE\$ participants is key; the field must aspire to stabilize this group in order to provide children and families what they really need.

Equally important to note is that the turnover of these best educated teachers is comparable to the turnover rates of those teachers working in public schools, who earn significantly more and have benefits that most in the early childhood field do not. Over the past four years from FY13 through FY16, public school teachers left the *profession* at approximately 13% per year (rates ranging from 9% to 15% over this time period). The best educated WAGE\$ participants have turnover rates (leaving their *programs*) ranging from 11% - 13% over this same time period, and the rate is only 14% for FY17.

In addition to statistical data showing an impact on retention, WAGE\$ participants shared through evaluation feedback that supplements play a role in the decision and ability to stay in the field. See Appendix A for selected survey comments regarding retention.

*“I would have searched for a higher paying job since I am a single mom who is 100% supporting my child. I am staying at my job, growing my knowledge of child care and developing stronger relationships with the children in my care and my co-workers, etc. I feel satisfied with my income as a child care worker due to the WAGE\$ Project.”
(Macon, teacher)*

Education

Education gains for the Child Care WAGE\$® Project have been notable. Ninety percent (90%) of the active FY17 WAGE\$ participants (and 96% of those participants working in NC Pre-K classrooms) are being funded for having an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, its equivalent or higher based on the WAGE\$ scale *or* have submitted documentation during the year to verify their pursuit of additional coursework. The WAGE\$ Project has a number of temporary award levels, which require that participants with lower education advance up the scale to remain eligible.

A sample of participants at temporary levels was surveyed during the year to learn more about their educational plans and potential barriers. Out of 330 completed calls this year, 86% indicated that they do still intend to take coursework in order to remain eligible for their WAGE\$ supplements. When given a list of possible benefits resulting from WAGE\$, 90% of participants overall who responded to the annual survey, and 95% of those funded at temporary levels, agreed that the supplements provide an incentive to seek additional coursework or help make the pursuit of that coursework more financially feasible. Participants do recognize WAGE\$ as an incentive to pursue additional coursework.

Although sending in education documentation is encouraged so that participants may earn more supplement money, it is not typically required at any specific time. Thus, it is possible that additional participants have completed coursework but not yet submitted it to the Child Care WAGE\$® Project.

When examining education by ethnicity, 86% of the participants of color have earned an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, its equivalent or higher on the WAGE\$ scale compared to 81% of the White/European American participants. WAGE\$ is encouraging a diverse population to pursue education. Given the diverse population of children attending child care in North Carolina, this educational equity is very important.

Through survey feedback, participants and directors with participating staff took the opportunity to express the importance of education and how WAGE\$ has made a difference in their educational pursuits. See Appendix B for samples.

“WAGE\$ provides teachers an incentive to further their education. Participating in WAGE\$ is equivalent to receiving a bonus each year or recognition for your efforts to increase your knowledge to become more effective in the classroom. Our staff loves Child Care WAGE\$® and the excitement demonstrated when I inform a teacher that WAGE\$ just called for an employment confirmation is no less than a child on Christmas morning.” (Alamance, director)

Compensation

The Child Care WAGE\$® Project increases the compensation of participants through salary supplements. Despite obtained education, compensation in the field continues to be low and is not competitive with many other professions. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the active WAGE\$ participants earn less than \$12 per hour (62% of teachers, 89% of family child care providers or small facility operators and 44% of directors or those with partial administrative time earn less than \$12). While this is a slight improvement from FY16, it reveals the ongoing compensation challenges in the field. Looking only at those participants working in NC Pre-K classrooms, 39% earn less than \$12 per hour. Forty-one percent (41%) of the NC Pre-K teacher assistants and 31% of the teachers earn less than \$12 per hour.

The poor compensation across the board highlights the need for salary supplements in order to attract and retain qualified staff. WAGE\$ survey results support this. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the respondents stated that WAGE\$ encourages them to stay with their current child care programs.

The average six-month supplement payment issued statewide during FY17 was \$1,000. The average payment amount includes all participating counties and all applicable tiers. Since the supplements are based on the education earned, the average will vary by county even within the same tier category. The average six-month supplements statewide ranged from \$399 to \$1,769. The average six-month supplement at each tier level can be seen in Table C below. In the Tier One category, five counties are included that issued payments at a percentage cut. Eleven counties in both Tier One and Tier Two categories provided percentage increases.

Table C: Compensation by Tier

Tiers Funded FY17	Number of Participating Counties by Tier	Average Six-Month Supplement
All Tiers	53	\$1,000
Tier One	41	\$808
Tier One HEO	1	\$1,163
Tier Two	9	\$1,200
Tier Two HEO	1	\$1,741
Tier Three	1	\$1,769

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of evaluation respondents statewide indicated that receiving a WAGE\$ supplement helps ease financial stress. When asked about the financial impact, 82% said that they are better able to pay their bills and 74% said they are more able to address the basic needs of their families (food/housing). Seventy-two percent (72%) use the funds to provide additional resources for their classrooms or child care programs, and 70% rely on the supplements to help address transportation costs. In a separate question, a greater number of respondents (92%) stated that providing resources for their programs was a benefit of WAGE\$.

Economic insecurity impacts teacher well-being, and can have consequences for the quality of interactions they have with the children in their care. Studies continue to highlight how stress and adversity can affect the health of teachers and thus how effective they can be in promoting the supportive environments and engaging interactions children need. Easing financial stress is critical for the participants, their families and for the children they serve.

Throughout the survey, respondents discussed the importance of this additional compensation. Please see Appendix C for sample comments.

“Sometimes I feel like working in child care forces me to live in poverty. As teachers we are with these children eight and ten hours a day. 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.” (Rowan, teacher)

OUTPUTS

This section highlights the projected outputs of the Child Care WAGE\$® Project statewide for FY17 and the program’s effectiveness in reaching these goals. Primary results are shown in Table D below followed by additional detail as applicable.

Table D: Outputs

	Projected Output	Results
1	WAGE\$ will offer five different funding options (tiers), four county-specific eligibility/cut options and implement tier changes, percentage cuts and/or increases as requested.	Output met. WAGE\$ offered and implemented five different funding tiers. Including the option to choose the income cap, counties utilized four different eligibility options and WAGE\$ has implemented percentage cuts/increases as needed.
2	Approximately 3,500 applicants will receive or be eligible to receive WAGE\$ payments as of June 30, 2017.	Output exceeded. As of June 2017, 3,927 applicants had received or were eligible to receive WAGE\$ payments.
3	At least 2,500 WAGE\$ informational and/or recruitment emails will be sent.	Output exceeded. WAGE\$ sent 4,600 recruitment emails or mailings.
4	Child Care WAGE\$® staff will conduct up to 15 outreach opportunities assuming travel dollars are available and presentation offers are accepted.	Output exceeded. WAGE\$ conducted 34 outreach sessions.

5	WAGE\$ will email at least three spending projections to each participating partnership.	Output exceeded. WAGE\$ provided four spending projections to funding partnerships.
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Funding and eligibility options: All participating counties chose their income caps, and 25 of the counties further restricted eligibility in one or a combination of ways and/or cut supplement awards. Additional details are shared in the participation overview above.

WAGE\$ payments: Three thousand two hundred ninety-nine (3,299) participants were paid for completing at least one six-month period on the Child Care WAGE\$® Project during FY17. These participants worked in 1,385 facilities serving approximately 56,879 children. This number is an unduplicated count of supplement recipients. Of these, 384 were NC Pre-K teachers or assistants, a small increase from FY16. In addition, 628 new applicants eligible to be paid in FY17 are on hold due to insufficient funding. WAGE\$ has a total of 721 new or reactivated applicants as of June 2017, but others are either not due until FY18 or were paid in FY17 and reapplied to WAGE\$ after they became ineligible. The combination of those already paid and those eligible to receive the supplement in FY17 (3,927) exceeds the projected goal.

Recruitment: For FY17, WAGE\$ conducted 4,600 recruitment activities with 2,001 sites. Those activities included recruitment emails to all eligible sites in participating counties with email addresses on file and additional mailed materials to all eligible child care programs in counties with funds available for new applicants. Follow-up postcards were mailed if funds were still available after primary recruitment packets or emails had been sent. WAGE\$ also sent recruitment information to Smart Start partnerships, resource and referral agencies, community colleges and Head Start grantees in participating counties.

In addition to the emails or mailed items included in the 4,600 activities, follow-up calls were made to many of the non-participating sites to verify receipt of the email/packet, answer questions and encourage participation. During each employment confirmation completed with a participating site, the counselor inquired about any possible eligible staff not yet accessing a supplement.

Outreach: Thirty-four (34) outreach sessions were done upon request or as a result of WAGE\$ solicitation between June 15, 2016 and June 14, 2017. Many were completed in conjunction with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® North Carolina Scholarship Program, thus giving audience members an opportunity to learn about both initiatives.

Spending Projections: Four spending projections were provided to funding partnerships, including an early estimate to ensure that their projection was in line with their chosen tier and eligibility requirements and one to offer guidance on final amendments. WAGE\$ also provided individual projections upon request.

OUTCOMES

Table E below details the primary outcomes of the Child Care WAGE\$® Project and the program’s effectiveness in reaching these goals.

Table E: Outcomes

	Projected Outcome	Results
1	By June 30, 2017, the turnover rate of Child Care WAGE\$® participants for the year will be less than 25% (the goal established within Smart Start's Performance Based Incentive System).	Outcome met. The turnover rate for WAGE\$ participants was only 16%, well below the Smart Start benchmark of 25%.
2	By June 30, 2017, 80% of active WAGE\$ participants have a permanent level on the scale (Associate's Degree plus or including at least 24 birth to five focused semester hours or above) or are continuing their education as documented by coursework taken since application to WAGE\$ and submitted in the current fiscal year.*	Outcome exceeded. In FY17, 90% of active WAGE\$ participants have a permanent level on the scale or are continuing their education as documented by coursework submitted in the current fiscal year.

**Participants in newer counties need time to pursue coursework and advance to higher levels on the scale. As a result, counties providing supplements for two years or less will not be included in outcome calculation. For FY17, one county has been excluded.*

Outcome #1 is measured through employment confirmations completed as each participant concludes a six-month commitment period on the program and at the end of the fiscal year. The information regarding turnover is entered into a database that produces the percentages. Outcomes #2 and #3 are based on education documentation voluntarily submitted by participants.

PROJECT EVALUATIONS

The information below reflects the impact of WAGE\$ from the perspectives of participants and their employers. Salary supplement recipients and center directors who did not receive supplements but who had recipients among their staff participated in an annual evaluation of the Child Care WAGE\$® Project. Survey samples were created based on the number of potential respondents by position in each county. If the pool of participating teachers in a county was between 1 and 50, the entire teacher recipient population was mailed a survey. A 40% sample was drawn when the teacher recipient population was between 51 and 100 and a 25% sample was drawn if the teacher population was 101 or more. All participating directors and directors not on the program but who had participating staff were also surveyed.

All participants in the sample who had email addresses on file with WAGE\$ were invited to complete the survey online. Reminder emails were sent to encourage online response. Those who did not participate online or who did not have email addresses on file were also mailed surveys. The survey was mailed again to remaining non-respondents two months later. One final attempt was made to secure non-respondent surveys via phone in counties with low response rates. All respondents were given the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for professional resources.

Overall, 74% of the sampled population returned surveys (1,541 of 2,084), which included the following:

- 70% of participating teachers/family child care providers (952 of 1,352)
- 82% of participating directors (152 of 186)
- 80% of directors with participating staff (437 of 546)

Sample responses

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of responding participants indicated that their receipt of a supplement had an impact on either their inclination to stay in the field or on their pursuit of further education. When asked to examine a list of possible benefits resulting from the Child Care WAGE\$® Project and indicate whether or not they are true for the respondent, 98% indicated that WAGE\$ either encourages them to stay in their current programs or to pursue further education. Responses to the individual options were as follows, with many providing additional examples of assistance:

- WAGE\$ helps me feel more satisfied with my job. – 96%
- WAGE\$ is an incentive for me to seek additional education and/or it helps make pursuing coursework more financially feasible. – 90%
- The WAGE\$ supplement helps ease financial stress. – 98%
- WAGE\$ encourages me to stay with my current program. – 96%
- My WAGE\$ supplement helps me to provide more resources for my program or classroom. – 92%
- Receiving the WAGE\$ supplement makes me feel more appreciated and recognized for my work. – 97%

Ninety-four percent (94%) of responding directors indicated that staff participation in WAGE\$ benefits the children in their centers in some way. When asked to select from a list of options explaining how participation in the Child Care WAGE\$® Project may be beneficial to the children in their programs, including an option stating that no benefits have been noticed, 94% of responding directors indicated that staff participation in WAGE\$ benefits the children in some way. The two most popular examples of impact were that improved morale has created more positive child-teacher interactions and that staff members are seeking more education, which leads to higher quality care for children.

Ninety-nine percent (99%) of all respondents stated that they are satisfied with the program and its administration.

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of responding directors reported positive attitudes toward WAGE\$ in their child care programs.

While some respondents stated that they have not had the opportunity to speak with the WAGE\$ staff, 99% of those who have had interactions found the staff to be pleasant and helpful. Many respondents took the opportunity to share additional comments about their interactions with WAGE\$ staff. Not only did the respondents report that they received helpful and pleasant customer service, but many also talked about how important the encouragement

from WAGE\$ staff has been in terms of participation in the program and pursuit of education. A few examples of participant feedback are listed below:

“They are very supportive, proactive and helpful. They have gone beyond the answering of my basic questions to call me and let me know if a deadline is coming up that would benefit me. They are great people to work with and I’m glad to have them on my side and feel that they care so much about my education and financial well being.” (teacher)

“Each time that I have called, I got a friendly, helpful person. My needs were always met the first time. Thanks WAGE\$ staff. You guys rock!” (teacher)

“Everyone has helped me, not only to stay with the program, but have explained things with great detail and patience.” (teacher)

“They are wonderful, so helpful, and they take the time to keep you informed about changes. They are really working for us.” (teacher)

“The WAGE\$ staff I have talked with are very friendly and helpful. They also are very supportive and happy with your personal accomplishments.” (director)

• Ninety-seven percent (97%) of responding participants indicated that, as a result of WAGE\$, they feel more appreciated and recognized for their work, and 73% of responding directors noted increased morale and more positive child-teacher interactions. Recipients and directors with participating staff continue to emphasize the importance of the recognition and appreciation associated with the receipt of the WAGE\$ supplements and the impact this has on self-esteem, professionalism and morale. Not only are these things significant in themselves, but they enhance the likelihood that participants will stay in the field and seek additional education. See Appendix D for a sample of their feedback.

“It really makes you feel like you are doing a job well. Some people look down on you and say you are only babysitting, not understanding the full duties of the job. With WAGE\$, I feel as if you’re saying, ‘Thank you, we know your worth and dedication.’” (Vance, teacher)

PROJECT CHALLENGES

Three primary challenges continue to be shared through survey feedback as well as through ongoing interactions with participants and their employers. Though funding was available this year to pay a number of new applicants in many counties, other counties still have significant waiting lists and there is ongoing concern expressed by and on behalf of those who cannot participate as a result. A second issue consistently shared is that many partnerships elect not to fund director time despite their significant role in community programs. Finally, WAGE\$ regularly receives questions and feedback about the income caps, particularly when the lower income cap has been selected. Many have specifically identified the challenge of obtaining higher education and its accompanying raise, only to lose eligibility when they exceed the income cap. As a result, teachers may experience lower morale and greater financial insecurity.

One respondent summed up these challenges by saying, “The waiting list is too long. The salary cap is too low. Once a teacher gets to that point, they lose the benefit. I also think the director should get to participate.”

As of FY18, the hourly income caps offered to the partnerships will be changing to \$14, \$16, and \$18 – each a dollar higher than the previous cap at each level. While many partnerships may take this opportunity to increase their income cap, and that will be necessary for those that previously used the \$13 cap, it is also possible that some partnerships may choose a lower cap. For example, a partnership previously using the highest cap of \$17 could choose to use the middle cap of \$16 instead. While the hope of the advisory committee in increasing these caps was that partnerships would at least choose to stay in their same level (low, middle or highest cap), it is still the option of the partnership and a decrease is possible. Partnerships will be selecting their caps after they have confirmed participation for next fiscal year.

SMART START

The Child Care WAGE\$® Project works hard to publicize the collaboration with local partnerships and identifies the funding sources in a variety of ways. Special notices are sent with every check stating which specific Smart Start partnership, along with the Division of Child Development and Early Education, provides funding. The county/region partnership is listed on the check stub and labels are attached to check envelopes to identify the funder. The Child Care WAGE\$® fact sheets, application-based project agreements and letters clarify the funding arrangement for the project and WAGE\$ representatives explain the funding for the program in field presentations across the state. Finally, the project evaluations state that the funds for the Child Care WAGE\$® supplements are provided by local Smart Start partnerships and respondents are given the opportunity to share messages regarding the supplements with their local Smart Starts. See Appendix E for a sample of those messages for FY17.

“THANK YOU!! Without this supplement, there would be many stressed, unhappy, worried and struggling teachers. Including myself. You all have made a huge impact in many lives.” (Rockingham, teacher)



Table 1
Demographic Profile of the 2,712 Participants in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017



	# of Participants	% of Participants
Ethnicity		
American Indian	22	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	0%
Biracial	20	1%
Black/African American	1327	49%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	62	2%
White/European American	1223	45%
Not Given	33	1%
Other	14	1%
Gender		
Female	2688	99%
Male	24	1%
Age Range of Participants		
20-24 years	94	3%
25-34 years	621	23%
35-44 years	681	25%
45-54 years	684	25%
55-59 years	303	11%
60-64 years	220	8%
65 and over	109	4%
Position		
Teacher	1543	57%
Teacher (In Home Educator)	4	0%
Teacher (Assistant Director)	35	1%
Teacher (Director)	45	2%
Teacher (Director Owner)	30	1%
Assistant Teacher	567	21%
Director	34	1%
Director (Owner)	9	0%
Assistant Director	22	1%
Small Home Provider	288	11%
Small Facility (<13) Operator	24	1%
Split Position	111	4%
Ages of Children Served		
Birth up to Three	831	31%
Three to Five	1219	45%
Mixed Ages	662	24%
Education Level		
12 birth to five sem. hours	21	1%
18 general sem. hours including 4 birth to five sem. hours	24	1%
24 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	72	3%
70 general sem. hours (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	6	0%
AAS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	10	0%

**Table 1 (cont.)
Demographic Profile of the 2,712 Participants in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017**

	# of Participants	% of Participants
36 general sem. hours including 12 birth to five sem. hours	48	2%
70 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	4	0%
AAS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	12	0%
45 general sem. hours including 18 birth to five sem. hours	66	2%
AAS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	15	1%
57 general sem. hours including 24 birth to five sem. hours	126	5%
AAS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	8	0%
BA/BS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	31	1%
MA/MS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	2	0%
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	1451	54%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	43	2%
MA/MS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	6	0%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	156	6%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	81	3%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	475	18%
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	14	1%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	41	2%
Wage Rate*		
Below \$7.25 per hour	190	7%
\$7.25 - \$9.99 per hour	706	26%
\$10.00 - \$11.99 per hour	829	31%
\$12.00 - \$13.99 per hour	703	26%
\$14.00 - \$15.99 per hour	247	9%
\$16.00 - \$17.00 per hour	37	1%
Years in Program: Participant's Start Date to Report End Date		
0 to .99 Years	70	3%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	240	9%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	285	11%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	243	9%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	213	8%
5.00 or More Years	1661	61%

* The first category under Wage Rate reflects those earning below North Carolina's minimum wage, typically home providers or owners whose income is dependent upon revenue. Pay rates will also reflect bonus compensation if awarded by the employer.



Table 2
Child Care Center Profile for North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017



	Programs	Participants
Center	939	2,416
1 STAR	3	6
2 STAR	4	5
3 STAR	132	259
4 STAR	232	510
5 STAR	538	1,582
GS-110	19	31
PROV	2	2
SPPROV	1	3
Temporary	8	18
Family Provider	291	296
1 STAR	1	1
3 STAR	25	25
4 STAR	198	203
5 STAR	64	64
PROV	1	1
Temporary	2	2
TOTALS	<u>1,230</u>	<u>2,712</u>



Table 3
Educational Award Levels Profile of the 2,712 Participants
in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017



The Child Care WAGES® Project funds the same levels of education regardless of position, but the award amounts may differ depending on role. Teachers and home providers are funded using the same award scale, but are shown differently below to highlight their positions in the field. Directors, or those funded solely for administration time, are funded on the director scale. Participants who have both roles and are funded on both scales are shown as "teacher and director" in the table below. The "% of Participants Out of Scale" shows the percentage funded at each level out of the total number for each role/scale. The "% Participants Out of Active" shows the percentage funded at each level out of the total number of active participants as of the end of the reporting period.

90% have a permanent level on the scale (AAS ECE or above) or are continuing their education as documented by coursework taken since original application to WAGES submitted in the current fiscal year. *Participants need time to continue their education and move up the supplement scale, thus the percentage includes only those counties who have participated for two or more years.*

	# of Participants	% of Participants Out Of Scale	% of Participants Out Of Active
Teacher Scale	2224	100%	82%
Two	39	2%	1%
Three	67	3%	2%
Four	57	3%	2%
Five	12	1%	0%
Six	71	3%	3%
Seven	114	5%	4%
Eight	1240	56%	46%
Nine	39	2%	1%
Ten	197	9%	7%
Eleven	366	16%	13%
Twelve	22	1%	1%
Teacher/Home Provider Scale	312	100%	12%
Two	3	1%	0%
Three	4	1%	0%
Four	6	2%	0%
Five	1	0%	0%
Six	6	2%	0%
Seven	9	3%	0%
Eight	164	53%	6%
Nine	5	2%	0%
Ten	28	9%	1%
Eleven	77	25%	3%
Twelve	9	3%	0%
Director Scale	65	100%	2%
Two	1	2%	0%
Five	1	2%	0%
Six	1	2%	0%
Seven	4	6%	0%
Eight	25	38%	1%



**Table 3 (cont.)
Educational Award Levels Profile of the 2,712 Participants
in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017**



	# of Participants	% of Participants Out Of Scale	% of Participants Out Of Active
Nine	3	5%	0%
Ten	7	11%	0%
Eleven	18	28%	1%
Twelve	5	8%	0%
Teacher and Director Scales	111	100%	4%
Two	2	2%	0%
Three	1	1%	0%
Four	1	1%	0%
Five	2	2%	0%
Six	3	3%	0%
Seven	7	6%	0%
Eight	55	50%	2%
Nine	2	2%	0%
Ten	5	5%	0%
Eleven	28	25%	1%
Twelve	5	5%	0%



Table 4
Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017



3,299 unduplicated participants received a supplement for completing a six month period that ended during this reporting period; these participants worked in 1,385 different child care programs serving approximately 56,879 children.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 5
Center	2,967	1,058	55,463
Family Provider	333	327	1,416
<u>Total</u>	<u>3,300</u>	<u>1,385</u>	<u>56,879</u>

* This may reflect a duplicated number of people paid if participants moved between a center and a home and were paid from both locations. Refer to the number at the top for an unduplicated count of people paid.



Table 5
Annual Turnover Summary of the 3,212 Participants
in North Carolina
Child Care WAGE\$® Project
June 2016 - June 2017



The annual turnover percentage is based on an overall population of 3,212 participants. This population includes those individuals that were active during the reporting period of June 2016 - June 2017 (2,712) and those who left their centers during this time (500). Active participants meet all eligibility requirements and have worked at least six months in their child care programs. Active participants might also include individuals who have left a child care program, but have since worked six eligible months in a new site. (These “reactivated” participants are not factored into the report at all until they have completed this six month period.) The annual turnover percentage is obtained by dividing the total number of participants who left their center into the total number of participants.

People who became ineligible for other reasons (i.e. position change within center, became over-income due to raise, center closure, noncompliance with the program’s income documentation guidelines, failure to obtain necessary coursework) are not included in the table. They have been removed from the overall total and the turnover numbers since they were no longer eligible for the Child Care WAGE\$® Project, and the supplement could not have been an incentive for them to stay.

Individuals who left their child care programs and those who became ineligible due to other reasons may or may not have been paid during the current fiscal year for completing one or more commitment periods. However, they have all been paid at some time during their participation on WAGE\$ and thus earned active status prior to becoming ineligible.

Annual Turnover (June 2016 - June 2017)	
Total Participants	= 3,212
Active Participants	= 2,712
Left Center	= 500
Turnover Percentage	= 16%



Table 5
North Carolina Counties Included in Turnover Results
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017



Alamance
Alexander
Alleghany
Avery
Brunswick
Buncombe
Caldwell
Cherokee
Chowan
Clay
Cleveland
Columbus
Craven
Cumberland
Davidson
Davie
Durham
Edgecombe
Forsyth
Franklin
Gaston
Graham
Granville
Halifax
Harnett
Haywood
Hertford
Iredell
Jackson
Johnston
Lincoln
Macon
Martin

Table 5
North Carolina Counties Included in Turnover Results
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017

Mitchell
Nash
Northampton
Perquimans
Pitt
Randolph
Rockingham
Rowan
Rutherford
Stanly
Surry
Swain
Transylvania
Vance
Warren
Watauga
Wayne
Wilkes
Wilson
Yancey



Table 5
Profile of Participants who Left their Programs in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017



	# of Participants	% of Participants
Ethnicity		
American Indian	1	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	1%
Biracial	6	1%
Black/African American	217	43%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	6	1%
White/European American	258	52%
Not Given	4	1%
Other	3	1%
Gender		
Female	496	99%
Male	4	1%
Position		
Teacher	321	64%
Teacher (Assistant Director)	7	1%
Teacher (Director)	6	1%
Assistant Teacher	105	21%
Director	5	1%
Assistant Director	6	1%
Small Home Provider	34	7%
Small Facility (<13) Operator	1	0%
Split Position	15	3%
Education Level		
12 birth to five sem. hours	8	2%
18 general sem. hours including 4 birth to five sem. hours	11	2%
24 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	26	5%
AAS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	4	1%
36 general sem. hours including 12 birth to five sem. hours	14	3%
AAS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	2	0%
45 general sem. hours including 18 birth to five sem. hours	20	4%
AAS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	6	1%
57 general sem. hours including 24 birth to five sem. hours	33	7%
AAS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	2	0%
BA/BS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	10	2%
MA/MS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	4	1%
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	204	41%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	13	3%
MA/MS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	1	0%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	24	5%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	8	2%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	99	20%
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	1	0%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	10	2%
Wage Rate*		

**Table 5 (cont.)
Profile of Participants who Left their Programs in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017**

	# of Participants	% of Participants
Below \$7.25 per hour	29	6%
\$7.25 - \$9.99 per hour	160	32%
\$10.00 - \$11.99 per hour	147	29%
\$12.00 - \$13.99 per hour	124	25%
\$14.00 - \$15.99 per hour	35	7%
\$16.00 - \$17.00 per hour	5	1%
Years in Program: Participant's Start Date to Date Ineligible		
0 to .99 Years	26	5%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	70	14%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	81	16%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	65	13%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	46	9%
5.00 or More Years	212	42%
Regulation Type		
1 STAR	3	1%
3 STAR	53	11%
4 STAR	130	26%
5 STAR	301	60%
GS-110	9	2%
Temporary	3	1%
SPPROV	1	0%

* The first category under Wage Rate reflects those earning below North Carolina's minimum wage, typically home providers or owners whose income is dependent upon revenue.



**Partner Organizations
Child Care WAGES® Project
June 2016 - June 2017**



Alamance Partnership for Children
Alexander County Partnership for Children
Alleghany Partnership for Children
Blue Ridge Partnership for Children
Buncombe Partnership for Children
Caldwell County Smart Start
Children's Council of Watauga County, Inc.
Chowan-Perquimans Smart Start Partnership
Cleveland County Partnership for Children
Columbus County Partnership for Children
Craven Smart Start, Inc.
Down East Partnership for Children
Durham's Partnership for Children
Franklin Granville Vance Smart Start, Inc.
Halifax-Warren Smart Start Partnership for Children
Harnett County Partnership for Children, Inc.
Hertford-Northampton Smart Start Partnership for Children
Iredell County Partnership for Young Children, Inc.
Martin-Pitt Partnership for Children, Inc.
North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education
Partnership for Children of Johnston County, Inc.
Partnership for Children of Lincoln/Gaston Counties
Partnership for Children of the Foothills
Randolph County Partnership for Children
Region A Partnership for Children
Rockingham County Partnership for Children, Inc.
Smart Start of Brunswick County, Inc.
Smart Start of Davidson County, Inc.
Smart Start of Davie County
Smart Start of Forsyth County
Smart Start of Transylvania County
Smart Start Rowan, Inc.
Stanly County Partnership for Children
Surry County Early Childhood Partnership



**Partner Organizations
Child Care WAGE\$® Project
June 2016 - June 2017**



The Partnership for Children of Cumberland County

The Partnership for Children of Wayne County, Inc.

Wilkes Community Partnership for Children

Wilson County Partnership for Children



Appendix A: Retention Feedback Collected from WAGES Surveys FY17

“This program has helped me to retain good staff. THANK YOU!” (Alexander, director)

“It makes you want to stay in this field and be constant in the lives of the children we serve. It makes you feel more appreciated and gives you more incentive to keep pushing on and doing the best job you can and love and care for the children.” (Alleghany, director)

“It enables me to supplement my income and stay in a job I love. It also pushes me to be better by encouraging me to take classes.” (Avery, teacher)

“I think that the program is important because it provides an incentive to remain in the same facility, which decreases teacher turnover rates, which in turn provides consistency for the children in their care. The program is also beneficial to those teachers who want to advance their level of education but do not have the financial means without the help of the WAGES* supplements.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGES® Project makes it possible for me to continue to teach in the center I love. I am the only teacher at my center with a four-year degree and I have been able to pass on my knowledge to help other teachers succeed in their classrooms. The children in our center benefit from the help I give to each teacher.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Teachers are more apt to stay with us when they complete their education because of the supplement.” (Caldwell, director)

“It makes it easier to stay where we are. ... In the area we live in, we are desperate for high quality education. WAGES has encouraged me to stay with my program.” (Cherokee, director)

“A lot of the child care providers (after child care-related expenses are deducted) make right at or below poverty level. This is a very important job. It requires many hours of training each year. This time in a young child’s life is the most important. Yet, we are paid minimum wage or less. WAGES helps to keep us where our hearts are ... with small children.” (Cleveland, family child care provider)

“It has been an enormous blessing to me! I had the opportunity to teach K-6 when I finished college, but I decided to stay in child care. I took a major cut in pay, so these supplements have helped me make up the difference in my income.” (Craven, teacher)

“It is very important. Without a compensational incentive, teachers would not stay in the field of child care.” (Cumberland, director)

* Respondents referred to the Child Care WAGES® Project in a variety of ways. Throughout the quotes, the name has been corrected when necessary. Abbreviated references have been retained.

“This is important because I work for a facility that cannot pay the wages the owner would like to pay her staff. The owner knows all of the hard work and education I have and appreciates it. WAGE\$ helps me be able to stay at the facility I am at and provide better child care for the children there.” (Davidson, teacher)

“I am a firm believer that to empower a community and indeed the world, one must support the education of our future, the children. What WAGE\$ does is to help those working in an underappreciated and undercompensated field to continue to work and support families and support the ideal of equal access to education for all children.” (Durham, family child care provider)

“It makes you push more and love your job more. It encourages you to stay in your child care program.” (Edgecombe, director)

“It helped me to continue in my present position and to be more appreciative of the job and the children that I am here to serve.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“WAGE\$ helps me feel more like a professional and enjoy my job and life in general. ... It has allowed me to be more financially stable, which has reduced my stress, allowing me to be creative and happier at my job. This incentive is great for all early child care teachers. We need to continue this program and establish more incentive programs to help decrease the high turnover rates. Children need stability!” (Gaston, teacher)

“My WAGE\$ supplement has been very helpful to me financially, academically and professionally. ... It is important because it helps early childhood teachers, who are not making enough income, to get supplements. It also helps us feel appreciated and secured in our job, making it possible to be dedicated in teaching the children and making a positive impact in their lives.” (Granville, teacher)

“The funds from the program are a great supplement to my income and are an encouragement to stay with my program. It helps me get supplies for my classroom, provide gas for transportation and training. Overall, the funds help teachers in their efforts to be effective and productive.” (Harnett, teacher)

“I think it is wonderful! I love my job and it’s nice to be appreciated enough to receive an extra bonus every six months. I definitely think it is an incentive to keep good workers in child care.” (Haywood, teacher)

“We are so underpaid that WAGE\$ helps supplement income. I think it is an incentive to stay in the field and at your current center.” (Jackson, teacher)

“It helps create consistency and stability for staff and children and attracts higher quality staff.” (Johnston, director)

“I would have searched for a higher paying job since I am a single mom who is 100% supporting my child. I am staying at my job, growing my knowledge of child care and developing stronger

relationships with the children in my care and my co-workers, etc. I feel satisfied with my income as a child care worker due to the WAGE\$ Project.” (Macon, teacher)

“I have had less turnover. WAGE\$ supplements their salaries. It has ignited a desire among staff to obtain more education.” (Martin, director)

“WAGE\$ gives teachers the incentive to stay at a child care center longer and therefore the children benefit with a stable environment.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“It helps in retaining educated staff, boosts morale and encourages staff to continue their education.” (Nash, director)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Project makes me feel appreciated and makes me want to continue working in the early childhood field. It also helps pay my bills, buy much needed items for my classroom and pay for schooling.” (Perquimans, teacher)

“It allows teachers to meet financial responsibilities so we don’t have a lot of teacher turnover. ... Less teacher turnover means a more stable environment and consistency for the kids.” (Pitt, director)

“The WAGE\$ Project is important to teachers who work hard and don’t always receive the pay they deserve. It has helped me stay in the early childhood field and be able to not worry as much about finances. It also has helped me gain more knowledge by using the money to help pay for my associate’s degree.” (Randolph, teacher)

“My supplement has helped me to maintain in the field and at my current job. ... Child Care WAGE\$® helps you gain a stable position at your job and purchase materials for the children. By doing that, it allows you to have a special bond with the children in your care and at the center overall.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“It helps maintain staff with education that otherwise would leave the field due to the lack of funds to pay them.” (Rowan, director)

“It provides a way for early educators to stay employed at the same location, providing consistency for the children.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“It helps child care teachers remain at their jobs. The children benefit from child care professionals who have been working in the field for many years.” (Surry, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has helped me to stay in the early childhood field and to obtain a four-year degree in early childhood education.” (Vance, teacher)

“The supplement is a blessing in my life. It has helped me stay where I am for many years. This creates a bond and stability for the children and families I serve.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® is important because it could mean the difference between being a teacher or not teaching. It has meant that I could teach with a lot less stress about continuing my

education and in return give the children in my care a stronger start and in the community, a place that they feel comfortable about sending their children to.” (Wilkes, teacher)



Appendix B: Education Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY17

“WAGE\$* provides teachers an incentive to further their education. Participating in WAGE\$ is equivalent to receiving a bonus each year or recognition for your efforts to increase your knowledge to become more effective in the classroom. Our staff loves Child Care WAGE\$® and the excitement demonstrated when I inform a teacher that WAGE\$ just called for an employment confirmation is no less than a child on Christmas morning.” (Alamance, director)

“WAGE\$ was a real inspiration for me to complete my four-year degree. ... Child care is one of the lowest paying jobs, but is a super important one! It takes a special person to work with children. The WAGE\$ Project helps make up the difference and encourages workers to continue their education in order to help the field develop.” (Alexander, teacher)

“It allows people to continue their education while not placing a hardship on them.” (Avery, director)

“WAGE\$ has changed the face of child care! ... The supplement helps with education and with retaining staff.” (Brunswick, director)

“Staff go back to school to keep their bonus.” (Buncombe, director)

“It excites staff to know that there is additional help available for them to continue working at the center, go to school and pay the needed expenses that our salaries don’t cover. It shows them that we care.” (Caldwell, director)

“It gives them an incentive to pursue higher education. It makes them feel valued, in that they get rewarded or noticed for their efforts.” (Cherokee, director)

“Getting an education has provided me more opportunities to be involved in my community, workplace, etc. It has made me more confident to have a voice and make a difference.” (Clay, teacher)

“It helped me be able to go to school and use the money for extra things I needed in the classroom. I was able to put some money back into my savings that I used to go to college. As an employer, it has helped me motivate my staff to go back to school.” (Columbus, director)

“Because of WAGE\$, I am able to graduate with my degree in early childhood education this coming May. I wouldn't have been able to be this far along in my program without your help.” (Craven, teacher)

“I have seen staff members get excited about going back to school, which is the goal of everyone working in education.” (Cumberland, director)

* Respondents referred to the Child Care WAGE\$® Project in a variety of ways. Throughout the quotes, the name has been corrected when necessary. Abbreviated references have been retained.

“I think it is important because it helps the teachers to feel the need to seek more education and it gives them incentives, which is great and helpful.” (Davidson, director)

“It helps my staff go back to school and keeps them working at my center.” (Davie, director)

“I could not have finished my education without the financial support from WAGE\$. The families in my care are receiving a higher quality of service due to the education benefits and financial relief that the WAGE\$ supplement provides.” (Durham, family child care provider)

“It provides extra support and encouragement to staff that have, or are seeking, a degree. It is important to the children in the sense it encourages our staff.” (Edgecombe, director)

“The staff I have who are participating in the program have benefited immensely and have definitely continued their education because of the financial assistance. I am able to advertise to incoming parents that we have teachers who have completed their education, which makes a positive difference. With their continued education, the staff are equipped to perform their jobs successfully and with confidence.” (Forsyth, director)

“It is important because it helps to financially help with paying the bills as well as giving the opportunity to pay for schooling. It has meant a lot to me and made a big impact in my life.” (Franklin, teacher)

“It is important because it provides a supplement for teachers who want to continue their education in the early child care field. It encourages the teachers to continue their education and training. By doing this, it provides better quality care for the children and better relationships with the families.” (Gaston, director)

“It is a great help to me with school and makes me feel important.” (Graham, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Project is an important program that has helped me and my staff. We all have an Associate’s Degree in Education or better. We just went through our star rating and received 5 stars.” (Halifax, director)

“It helps employees seeking a higher education to be able to afford it.” (Harnett, director)

“More people are able to get a quality education and are valuable employees.” (Hertford, director)

“The project is important. It helps to compensate my employees that have worked hard to reach their education goals. Child care centers will never be able to pay what these employees are worth.” (Iredell, director)

“Educated teachers equal quality child care, which equals happy families.” (Jackson, director)

“It helps me further my education and has given me knowledge and the confidence needed to reach out and help parents, which positively affects children.” (Johnston, director)

“Child Care WAGE\$® is very important. If it were not for WAGE\$, I probably would not have an Associate Degree in Early Childhood.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® is very important because it helps all of us to look towards furthering and bettering ourselves through education. This in turn helps all of us to become professional child care workers. It has been a great part of our lives and it gives us a sense of hope and it makes us feel appreciated for our services in working with children.” (Martin, teacher)

“It encourages you to get more education and be better in the classroom.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“It helps because if I didn’t have it, I wouldn’t go back to school.” (Perquimans, teacher)

“Staff have obtained so much knowledge by attending early childhood classes. They are so much more involved with children and they take great pride in their education.” (Pitt, director)

“Without the WAGE\$ money, I wouldn’t have been able to quit my part-time job and go back to school and focus on my child care job and education. ... There is no way I could have gone back to school without it.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“It has given me the opportunity to go back to school and it helps me to keep on going.” (Rowan, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ Project gives the staff an incentive to go back to school. ... I think the WAGE\$ Project has been important because it may be financially hard for staff to go back to school, but the Project can help ease some of that hardship.” (Rutherford, director)

“It encourages teachers to further their education and stay at the same center. Better educated teachers make better educated children and a better community.” (Stanly, teacher)

“My staff get very excited over the extra income. It is almost like it hides the stress of going to school because they look forward to the incentive.” (Surry, director)

“My staff really like the fact that there is a bonus for completing classes and earning their degrees. It really helps in keeping qualified staff.” (Swain, director)

“WAGE\$ is important because early educators provide an important role in young children’s lives and WAGE\$ helps child care teachers get more educated and offers monetary supplements to those who go to school and are paid far to little.” (Vance, teacher)

“I look forward to and plan ahead to receive my WAGE\$ check for whatever big thing I have coming up financially. It has also been an incentive for me to continue with my coursework and gain my AAS ECE. I would have never attempted it if it had not been for the WAGE\$ incentive! Now I am so glad I did. I use my course information every day in my Family Child Care Home. I feel more professional having more education.” (Watauga, family child care provider)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Project has given my staff an incentive to continue their education and the morale is higher. More education creates higher quality of care.” (Wayne, director)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has helped me feel more like a teacher than a babysitter. It gives me the desire to continue to seek higher education to make me better, and to make me a better and stronger teacher.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“The staff that receive it are encouraged to gain higher education which helps us when going through the rated licensing. We are able to score higher on education because of our teachers.” (Wilson, director)



Appendix C: Compensation Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY17

“WAGE\$* is important because it is hard living from paycheck to paycheck when you have a child.” (Alamance, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is important to me and my family because everyone wants to have something after working hard for others. It’s important for professionals that serve others to not forget about taking care of themselves too. WAGE\$ helps me take better care of me so that I can better serve the families on my job, in my community and anywhere else in NC I might be.” (Alexander, teacher)

“The money helps me meet the needs of my car, home and personal life. Having less stress from that means I can give more love and attention to the kids without being stressed or sidetracked on worrying how I’m going to get something paid or fixed.” (Alleghany, teacher)

“It always came as a ‘light at the end of the tunnel.’” (Brunswick, teacher)

“It has helped with finances, lessening stress and helping me to be happier in my job and in life.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has made an impact on my personal life. It has helped me to pay back student loans, provide for my family and buy resources for my classroom. It has helped ease financial stress and allowed me to concentrate more on the children in my classroom.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“Our center is a non-profit center that struggles to compete with competitive wages. This is one way staff can be rewarded for their work and commitment to child care.” (Cherokee, director)

“It is an asset to the early childhood community. It relieves pressure with maintaining the facility and helps me pursue education.” (Chowan, family child care provider)

“The WAGE\$ supplement does help to ease the financial stress because of the low pay scale. It enables us to go on to make a difference in the lives of our children doing what we love, teaching our children, seeing them learn and grow.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“It has helped me a lot financially because I was behind in quite a few bills.” (Columbus, teacher)

“WAGE\$ has helped with buying supplies and other materials for classroom activities. It has been a blessing in many ways, at times putting food on my table! I am very grateful and thankful!” (Craven, teacher)

* Respondents referred to the Child Care WAGE\$® Project in a variety of ways. Throughout the quotes, the name has been corrected when necessary. Abbreviated references have been retained.

“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.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I stress about my financial situation all the time. But I know that the check will be coming, so it helps me feel at ease.” (Davie, teacher)

“It helps reduce stress. It reduces anxiety and teacher burnout. I don’t worry about how I will get to or from work or school.” (Durham, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Project is important because it relieves the financial stress when it comes to furthering my education, providing additional resources for my classroom and it makes me feel more appreciated. Thank you!” (Edgecombe, family child care provider)

“Child Care WAGE\$® is important because it helps all providers to be able to not only make ends meet at home, but also be able to provide materials, gifts and awards for the children in their care. As a provider, it is important to have the necessities you need, like food at home and transportation to get to work. If the provider feels taken care of, then that’s less stress and enables the provider to focus on the children. It has helped me tremendously during difficult years in the economy. It has given me the incentive to stay in school for higher education. Through my education, it has taught me important ways to teach and deal with children. As a result I have seen many children who had difficulties with social skills, anger issues, etc., turn into beautiful, smart, loving children. That brings joy to my heart. I love Child Care WAGE\$®!!!” (Forsyth, teacher)

“It helps me as the teacher to be able to do more classroom activities and the children love it.” (Gaston, teacher)

“It allows people with a true interest in children to concentrate on that versus financial needs.” (Granville, teacher)

“Sometimes we do not have the money in the budget to purchase things we would like to integrate into our teaching of the children. The WAGE\$ money helps supplement things I would like to teach my children with - new books, craft items, art materials and board games. ... I believe that Child Care WAGE\$® helps many people that otherwise would not be able to meet the needs of their families, their education goals, personal goals and to help get things for their classroom.” (Halifax, teacher)

“WAGE\$ has helped with support for my family during a financial struggle.” (Harnett, teacher)

“It is a welcomed financial relief. It eases the stress of low wages being paid in our profession.” (Haywood, teacher)

“I think the Child Care WAGE\$® Project is important because it helps ease stress and happy teachers make happy children. If you have happy children you have a better community.” (Hertford, teacher)

“It helps to encourage me to continue to pursue my goals that revolve around increasing my education, financial status and necessities for my family. My self-esteem is empowered when I feel that I am between a hard place and a rock, that I can hope to have relief from WAGES. I enjoy doing extra fun things with the students as well.” (Iredell, director)

“It has helped put my mind more at ease about my finances. I can focus more on the children in my care than worrying about my bills.” (Jackson, teacher)

“The supplement is a lifesaver for my family. ... It helps meet the needs in a worker’s life when pay alone doesn’t. Just to know that we have other support helps ease the stress of taking care of our families.” (Johnston, teacher)

“The extra money helps the staff with their finances and they are less stressed when working.” (Lincoln, director)

“The Child Care WAGES® Project is important because it helps supplement my income. The WAGES Project helps me to buy heating oil for my family and other things my family needs. I have also used the money to buy supplies for my classroom that help enhance my children’s learning.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“By receiving the money every six months, it gives me so much relief. I don’t have to worry like I used to. Thanks so much.” (Nash, teacher)

“I think it is very important because as a child care teacher I do not make enough to meet the basic needs of my family and at times it is very stressful. Every time that check comes in, it is a weight lifted off my shoulders. Without it, I do not know how I would be able to make ends meet.” (Pitt, teacher)

“I think it is very important. We strive to provide the highest quality care and need the highest quality teachers. Parents cannot afford outrageous tuition and we unfortunately cannot pay our teachers what we know they are worth. This Project helps to provide benefits to our staff that we desperately need.” (Randolph, director)

“I was in tears one day because I didn’t have money to pay my light bill and that same day my supplement came. All I could do was thank you all and the Lord.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“Sometimes I feel like working in child care forces me to live in poverty. As teachers we are with these children eight and ten hours a day. Teachers do this for the love and growth of the children, however, we need money to survive. Child Care WAGES® helps out a great deal.” (Rowan, teacher)

“It has helped me to save my house.” (Surry, teacher)

“I have two children and this helps me at work and home. I pay my bills and sometimes my rent and everything my children need. Thanks.” (Swain, teacher)

“It has made a substantial difference in my life. At times, financially, I don't know what I would have done without it. My children at school have gotten new toys and resources to help them be more successful. Without it, I wouldn't feel like I was giving to them as much as I could. I want to supply them with every opportunity I can.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® helps me to meet the needs of my family and it helps to get extra things for my class. You know we get paid very little, so this helps to fill some of the void.” (Vance, teacher)

“It feels good to be recognized in a positive way and monetary way. The Child Care WAGE\$® Project has made things a little less stressful when I can't afford the things I need for my children.” (Warren, teacher)

“Without the WAGE\$ Project, I would not be able to do many things, such as buy things that my classroom needs and the center will not purchase. WAGE\$ also helps me to be able to pay more bills. Without it, life would be very hard for me.” (Watauga, teacher)

“It helps pay my bills. I can focus better on my class if I don't worry about things at home.” (Wayne, teacher)

“It has really helped me to pay my bills – the cost of living goes up, pay checks don't.” (Wilson, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Project is a blessing. It is a way to build my resources for the center and myself. I am able to buy books that I am using to build a resource library for my staff.” (Yancey, director)



Appendix D: Appreciation/Recognition Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY17

“It is the single most helpful tool to empower teachers that I can offer them so they feel validated in the level of education they have achieved.” (Alamance, director)

“Teachers and child care workers don’t receive a lot of money for the important job that they do. WAGE\$* helps teachers and child care workers feel like they are worth more while they follow their passion for working with children.” (Alexander, teacher)

“Unfortunately, teachers are not appreciated (the way they really should be) for what they do. We teach because we love it, not because we can make a fortune, and there are so many people out there that don’t see how much we care for what we do.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“WAGE\$ gives me a little extra lift through the year and makes me smile to know that I am appreciated and benefited for my hard work at my education.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Child care professionals need to be valued for the important job they do. This program helps with that.” (Caldwell, director)

“It shows appreciation and is a morale booster.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“I feel better about what I do for young children. At my current position, we aren’t given many raises, or any bonuses. The WAGE\$ Project makes me feel that what I do is important because they do recognize and reward us for educating ourselves.” (Clay, teacher)

“Sometimes we feel forgotten. The WAGE\$ money revives and encourages me.” (Cleveland, family child care provider)

“It gives the teachers a sense of security and makes the teachers feel like they do matter. It has just made me feel very appreciated and I am thankful that they give me a chance and are appreciating what I do.” (Columbus, teacher)

“It helps teachers feel like their work is worthwhile. Sometimes it can feel like no one appreciates what you do day in and day out. And this supplement helps teachers feel like what they do is appreciated and meaningful and worth the reward for what they strive to do in the lives of the children they serve.” (Davie, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is significant because any time you can recognize the achievements of staff, they feel respected and valued. If staff feel appreciated, morale is affected, which translates to positive ‘energy’ in the classrooms. Essentially, happy teachers, happy children, happy families!” (Durham, director)

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“WAGE\$ helps to bridge the pay gap and makes employees feel they matter.” (Edgecombe, director)

“The WAGE\$ Project makes me feel appreciated. With the hustle and bustle of a day in the life of an early childhood educator, there isn’t nearly enough time for pats on the back or, ‘Job well done.’ (We’re too busy making sure the children are getting those!) Getting WAGE\$ supplements in the mail feels like I’m getting a note saying, ‘I notice your hard work.’” (Forsyth, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ supplement lets me know that people care about what happens in the lives of early childhood teachers like me.” (Franklin, teacher)

“It’s important because it lets me know that my providing care to children is not in vain. The WAGE\$ Project lets me also know that other people see my dedication.” (Gaston, teacher)

“It makes us feel important. Makes us feel like professionals and not babysitters.” (Granville, director)

“Child Care WAGE\$® definitely makes me feel valued in a field that often gets little recognition for the important work that we do. The supplement allows me to purchase classroom resources and gives me a financial cushion for unexpected expenses.” (Halifax, teacher)

“It helps to know we are appreciated and that what we do is very important.” (Harnett, teacher)

“It makes me see that I’ve accomplished a lot in my life.” (Haywood, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Project has given me a great feeling of appreciation and has allowed me the opportunity to continue doing what I love most and get a great feeling of fulfillment at the end of each day.” (Hertford, family child care provider)

“I think child care workers get swept under the rug oftentimes, so it’s nice to have some feelings of recognition!” (Iredell, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is extremely important – it makes us feel valued as child care providers.” (Jackson, family child care provider)

“The WAGE\$ Project has made me and my coworkers feel appreciated in a field where we are often undervalued.” (Macon, teacher)

“Teachers feel needed and want to be at work. Teachers like to feel needed. When the adults feel good about themselves, they are more positive role models for children.” (Mitchell, director)

“Studies show the early childhood years to be the most important for development but that is not reflected in teachers’ pay, so the supplement helps us feel more valued while giving a needed financial boost too.” (Nash, teacher)

“Early childhood teachers are undervalued. WAGE\$ boosts morale and also helps to supplement the low pay.” (Pitt, director)

“WAGE\$ is important because it makes teachers feel like they are valued and appreciated for the work they do. Our hard work doesn’t go unseen and it’s rewarded through this program! It has been a blessing for both my family and my classroom! I’ll forever be grateful for this opportunity!” (Randolph, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Project is important because it shows that the people working with children are valued.” (Rowan, teacher)

“It is important to celebrate early educators. They play a critical part in the lives of others.” (Rutherford, director)

“It helps me feel appreciated and valued in a job that is so important, but often unappreciated by others.” (Surry, teacher)

“It has built my self-esteem as a teacher by knowing someone cares. It helps validate what I do. I am not a day care worker, I am a teacher. It feels good to know that someone cares about not only teachers but the children they work with.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“It really makes you feel like you are doing a job well. Some people look down on you and say you are only babysitting, not understanding the full duties of the job. With WAGE\$, I feel as if you’re saying, ‘Thank you, we know your worth and dedication.’” (Vance, teacher)

“It shows that child care providers are being appreciated and are being supported in the community.” (Watauga, teacher)

“Teachers have become more self confident. They are very enthusiastic and ready to teach. ... The staff are happy to get the supplement. It makes them feel worthy and highly qualified.” (Wayne, director)

“I am extremely thankful for this Project. I appreciate each supplement I receive. They make me feel like I am appreciated for being a teacher assistant in Pre-K and that what I do is recognized as being worthwhile. I already know how important Pre-K is. My hope is that others in our local school system will recognize the importance as well and that we are not just glorified babysitters. We teach these children skills to help them be successful in their educational path. We give them a firm foundation to be lovers of learning.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ Project has helped me to feel better about myself. It has helped me realize that at the end of the day, I play a very special part in my children’s lives.” (Wilson, teacher)

“The child care profession can be a difficult job with little pay. By receiving the money from WAGE\$, it allows me to feel more appreciated for my hard work and to be able to provide extra things for my family.” (Yancey, teacher)



Appendix E: Smart Start Messages Feedback Collected from WAGES Surveys FY17

“The supplements come at just the right time and they provide a better life for my family and me.” (Alamance, teacher)

“I do appreciate the Partnership for helping our teachers receive this financial benefit. The money is not there for teachers and this supplement helps us to stay above water.” (Alexander, teacher)

“It is a real blessing to me and my family and I really appreciate them for supporting us and making us feel like we really do make a difference in the lives of the children we serve. Just glad they see we need extra help and they are working to help and support us in this field.” (Alleghany, director)

“It’s made me feel more appreciated for my position or job.” (Avery, teacher)

“Thank you and please don’t ever stop the supplement. I feel it’s very important to all the educators in the early childhood field!!!” (Brunswick, teacher)

“I am very thankful for the supplement. Without the supplement, I could not continue to work in the preschool I dearly love. I believe the supplement keeps the right kind of teachers in early childhood education.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“I would like the funders to know that **YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE** to my staff and the children we serve. **THANK YOU!**” (Caldwell, director)

“I am very appreciative of the money I get. My total income for the year is about \$21,000. It’s hard to live on this, that’s why I look forward to Child Care WAGES®. Thank you.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“Thanks for your support, it really comes at a great time to ease my financial burdens.” (Chowan, director)

“Thank you so much! I put myself through school. With this supplement, I’m able to give my family a little extra.” (Clay, teacher)

“Thank you so much! It has helped me to be able to continue employment in a job that I truly enjoy, and deal with the expenses of Christmas, vacation and unexpected bills that come along. I really don’t earn enough to plan for these things. Also, it has kept employees from changing jobs so much that the children and their parents also benefit because of you. It is truly a win-win for everyone.” (Cleveland, teacher)

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“Thank you. Child care teachers are not paid enough for what they do and some can’t afford to go back to school. This helps and motivates them.” (Columbus, director)

“It is a stabilizing force for many of us. It helps fix the void because child care is a low paying job. It allows me to provide better nurturing and care for my children and the children in my care.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you for showing me I am appreciated and my education and hard work mean something to someone.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Thank you for believing this supplement is important.” (Davie, director)

“I want to seize this opportunity to thank the partnership for this tremendous supplement. I urge them to please continue or else a lot of early childhood teachers will flee the profession.” (Durham, teacher)

“Thanks to the Smart Start Partnership for such a rewarding program. Over the years you have assisted in my overall development, personally and for my program. I remain grateful.” (Edgecombe, family child care provider)

“I think the supplement is the best thing ever! I thank you from the bottom of my heart, because the supplement has been an inspiration to me and others to stay in this field and to keep helping children in our community.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“I would like to thank both Child Care WAGE\$® and Smart Start for the financial help given to me. It has been a blessing for me and my family.” (Franklin, teacher)

“The supplements help me to continue my education and I will graduate in May 2017.” (Gaston, teacher)

“It has helped me in so many ways financially, as well as relieving the stress of needing money.” (Granville, teacher)

“This program offers a financial cushion, alleviating personal stress that allows me to better perform and enjoy my students and to focus on what is important – helping those precious young people to get a better start in their growth.” (Halifax, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing the need to help committed staff in early education. The incentive means a lot and gives us something to look forward to. Our children deserve to have dedicated teachers.” (Harnett, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is very helpful in maintaining family stability.” (Haywood, teacher)

“Thanks to each and every one of you for all that you do. Thanks for working on our behalf to help keep our hearts encouraged as we continue to work in child care. May God continue to bless you richly.” (Hertford, teacher)

“It is important because it makes me feel better about my job. I could go somewhere else for more money, but I feel dedicated to my children and the extra money really helps and lets me know I can stay where I am.” (Iredell, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ Project has helped me to focus on positive child and family outcomes to close the achievement gap and build a better future for the children and families I work with. Thank you for WAGE\$!” (Jackson, teacher)

“Thanks so much. We really appreciate what you do for us to ensure we stay in the child care field.” (Johnston, family child care provider)

“Thanks for the supplement and allowing me to be able to do more for the children in my classroom as well as for my family.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“The supplements I receive from the WAGE\$ Project have been a great blessing to me and I know it has been invaluable in encouraging men and women to stay in the field of early childhood education and continue their own schooling in the field. Thank you for being a part of this great program!” (Macon, teacher)

“I would tell the Smart Start Partnership to continue the supplements, to rally for us as teachers, and recognize how each teacher is important to our communities.” (Martin, teacher)

“I appreciate and thank Smart Start for providing some financial stability.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“If our hourly wages are going to stay the same or slowly go up, we need WAGE\$ to keep the quality people in the profession. Our love of children will not keep a roof over our heads.” (Nash, teacher)

“I would like to say thank you and it has been a great help.” (Northampton, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® supplements are very much appreciated and needed. It has helped me to overcome several financial hurdles in my life. God bless these funders.” (Perquimans, family child care provider)

“We are fortunate to participate in WAGE\$. It helps so much!” (Pitt, teacher)

“I would like to thank them. Without the extra money from WAGE\$, I would not be able to stay in the field. I love my job and I am very thankful for the amount of stress WAGE\$ has taken away from me.” (Randolph, teacher)

“THANK YOU!! Without this supplement, there would be many stressed, unhappy, worried and struggling teachers. Including myself. You all have made a huge impact in many lives.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“I want to say that this program benefits many people from all walks of life. The classmates that I am in school with are in different places in life. We share the desire to make a better life and hopefully make an impact on children that is positive.” (Rowan, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing that child care workers deserve more for the hard work they put in with the children and community.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“The supplement is a great financial boost in a tough economy.” (Stanly, teacher)

“Thank you and I appreciate the support. It does help to know that there is someone that understands the additional financial need.” (Surry, teacher)

“A big thank you, and I would like them to know it really makes a difference to me and my classroom. When I feel like I am successful and worthy, then the children also feel the same.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“Thank you for seeing how important quality child care is and for providing us, the workers, with this supplement. Without it, many good teachers wouldn’t be in child care and many children wouldn’t be able to have a high quality child care experience. This supplement is so appreciated.” (Vance, teacher)

“Thank you sums it up. I appreciate everything. I am truly grateful.” (Warren, teacher)

“Thank you for valuing child care providers enough to spend your resources on us!” (Watauga, family child care provider)

“It has made it possible to financially keep doing what I love. The program benefits me and benefits the children and families we serve in the community. Thank you so much for this blessing.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you! It has inspired me to be a better teacher for early childhood education.” (Wilkes, family child care provider)

“I really thank you for the supplements as it helps to keep my head above the water.” (Wilson, teacher)

“God bless you all!! These supplements are such an encouragement to all of the ones who receive them in my center. It is greatly appreciated.” (Yancey, director)