



Child Care WAGES[®] Program Statewide Final Report Fiscal Year 2018

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.

Program Description – Includes a brief overview of the program and its funding support.

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

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

- Participation Overview (Table A: Tier and Income Cap Selections)
- Turnover (Table B: Turnover Rate Comparison)
- Compensation (Table C: Compensation by Tier)

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

Outcomes – Includes the contracted outcomes in table format. (Table E: Outcomes)

Program Evaluations – Highlights results from the WAGES\$ surveys for recipients and their employers.

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

Smart Start – Describes the notification procedures for recipients regarding Smart Start's supplement funding.

Table 1 – Provides a demographic profile of active participants. Active participants are those who have been paid at some point in their participation and are still eligible based on their most recent employment confirmation.

Table 2 – Lists the participation results of active participants by the star rating or license status of employing child care facilities.

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.

Table 4 – States the number of individuals paid, their programs and the number of children impacted. Please note that these individuals may or may not still be eligible at the end of the year, so this number will likely be different than the number of active participants represented on other tables.

Table 5 – Describes turnover reporting methods, summarizes turnover data, lists counties included in the results and provides the demographic overview of those who left their programs.

Partner Organizations – Lists funders for the reporting year.

Appendix A – Presents sample survey feedback regarding the WAGES\$ impact on retention.

Appendix B – Presents sample survey feedback regarding the WAGES\$ impact on education.

Appendix C – Presents sample survey feedback regarding the WAGES\$ impact on compensation.

Appendix D – Presents sample survey feedback regarding the WAGES\$ impact on recognition.

Appendix E – Presents survey messages for Smart Start partnerships.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Child Care WAGE\$® Program 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 FY18, WAGE\$ was a funding partnership between Smart Start and the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE).

STATEWIDE PROGRAM 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\$® Program
- 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)
 - \$18 per hour
 - \$16 per hour
 - \$14 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

PROGRAM OVERALL IMPACT

The Child Care WAGE\$® Program 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 program helps decrease turnover and encourages the continued educational pursuits of the child care workforce. As of June 2018, 2,747 child care professionals in 1,219 child care programs from 52 North Carolina counties were active participants in the statewide Child Care WAGE\$® Program. 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-eight percent (88%) of the participants work in four and five star licensed centers or homes.

As of June 2018, 342 of the active participants were reported by their employers as being NC Pre-K teachers and assistants. Of this group, 74 are teachers and 268 are assistant teachers in NC Pre-K classrooms. These individuals work in 245 different child care programs in 49

counties. Of these, 99% are women and 47% are people of color. Ninety-eight percent (98%) 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 FY18. In addition to the use of lower tiers, many counties also selected the lowest income cap, with 31% of the participating counties setting income eligibility at \$14 per hour.

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

Table A: Tier and Income Cap Selections*

	\$14 per hour	\$16 per hour	\$18 per hour	Totals
Tier One	14	24	2	40
Tier One HEO**	0	1	0	1
Tier Two	2	6	1	9
Tier Two HEO**	0	1	0	1
Tier Three	0	1	0	1
Totals	16	33	3	52

**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:

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

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 FY18.

- Cut administrator time only – three counties
- Cut those working in sites with fewer than three stars only – 11 counties
- Cut administrator time and those working in sites with fewer than three stars – one county

- Cut those working in sites with fewer than three stars and those at level two on the scale – one county
- Cut administrator time, those working in sites with fewer than three stars and those at level two on the scale – four counties (one of these joined WAGE\$ in January)
- Cut administrator time, those working in sites with fewer than three stars and cut awards by a percentage – one county
- Cut administrator time, those at level two on the scale and cut awards by a percentage – two counties
- Cut awards by a percentage – two counties

Twelve (12) counties were able to fund a percentage *increase* in awards during the fiscal year and half of these counties had implemented at least one kind of eligibility cut and are included in the list above.

Turnover

Turnover numbers for the Child Care WAGE\$® Program reflect active participants who left their child care programs during the fiscal year (June 15, 2017 through June 14, 2018 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 FY18 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 FY18 was 14%, 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, renamed Community Early Childhood Profile - Smart Start Measures of Impact. It is a slight decrease compared to the turnover rate of 16% in FY17. The turnover rate among WAGE\$ NC Pre-K teachers and assistants was 12%.

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). 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. 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\$ FY18
Turnover Rates	31%	19%	25%	14%

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. The turnover of early childhood teachers, earning on average \$10.97 per hour in North Carolina, may increase, making the WAGE\$ supplements even more critical in order to compete with growing opportunities for better pay. The Child Care WAGE\$® Program 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 lower turnover rate (11%) than the rest of the counties (14%).

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 13% left their programs this past year. Of all participants with less education, 20% 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 five years from FY13 through FY17, public school teachers left the *profession* at approximately 12% per year (rates ranging from approximately 9% to 15% over this time period). The best educated WAGE\$ participants have turnover rates (leaving their *programs*) ranging from 11% - 14% over this same time period, and the rate is only 13% for FY18.

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.

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program gives early childhood professionals a positive incentive that encourages them to continue to work with their child care program, build trusting relationships and bonds with the children and families they serve and provide a reliable, continual child care resource for their community.” (Halifax, teacher)

Education

Education gains for the Child Care WAGE\$® Program have been notable. Ninety percent (90%) of the active FY18 WAGE\$ participants whose counties have participated at least two years (and 93% 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\$ Program 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 241 completed calls this year, 83% 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\$, 88% 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\$® Program.

When examining education by ethnicity, 87% of the participants of color have earned an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, its equivalent or higher on the WAGE\$ scale compared to 82% 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.

“With WAGE\$, I am able to further my education and work towards my bachelor’s degree. Without WAGE\$, this would not be possible. Also, getting a little extra help twice a year really helps to relieve some of the financial burden that can accrue throughout the year. ... I love my children, my job and my classroom, and thanks to WAGE\$ I am learning more every day through my education to be better prepared to provide care for my children and their families.” (Cleveland, teacher)

Compensation

The Child Care WAGE\$® Program 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. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the active WAGE\$ participants earn less than \$12 per hour (55% of teachers, 90% of family child care providers or small facility operators and 39% of directors or those with partial administrative time earn less than \$12). While this is an improvement from FY17 (64%), it reveals the ongoing compensation challenges in the field. Looking only at those participants working in NC Pre-K classrooms, 28% earn less than \$12 per hour. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the NC Pre-K teacher assistants and 19% 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-seven percent (97%) 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 FY18 was \$992. 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 \$647 to \$1,834. 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 at least one payment at a percentage cut. Twelve (12) counties in both Tier One and Tier Two categories provided percentage increases.

Table C: Compensation by Tier

Tiers Funded FY18	Number of Participating Counties by Tier	Average Six-Month Supplement
All Tiers	52	\$992
Tier One	40	\$813
Tier One HEO	1	\$1,139
Tier Two	9	\$1,243
Tier Two HEO	1	\$1,834
Tier Three	1	\$1,831

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of evaluation respondents statewide indicated that receiving a WAGE\$ supplement helps ease financial stress. When asked about the financial impact, recipients selected from a list of potential benefits. A sample of responses is below:

- 80% are better able to pay their bills
- 72% are more able to address the basic needs of their families (food/housing)
- 68% use the funds to provide additional resources for their classrooms or child care programs

- 68% rely on the supplements to help address transportation costs

In a separate question, a greater number of respondents (91%) stated that providing resources for their programs is 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.

“It is important because it helps people like me to be a little more stress free and being stress free helps us to give better care and better education to the children.” (Rowan, teacher)

OUTPUTS

This section highlights the projected outputs of the Child Care WAGE\$® Program statewide for FY18 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	Approximately 2,500 eligible participants will receive WAGE\$ payments as of June 30, 2018.	Output exceeded. As of June 2018, 3,271 applicants had received WAGE\$ payments.
2	Child Care WAGE\$® staff will conduct 18 outreach opportunities to child care professionals to offer information about the program.	Output exceeded. WAGE\$ conducted 24 outreach sessions.

WAGE\$ payments: Three thousand two hundred seventy-one (3,271) participants were paid for completing at least one six-month period on the Child Care WAGE\$® Program during FY18. These participants worked in 1,348 facilities serving approximately 55,874 children. This number is an unduplicated count of supplement recipients. Of these, 412 were NC Pre-K teachers or assistants. Seven hundred sixty-three (763) applicants are currently on the waiting list, either waiting for funding and/or completing their initial or reactivated six-month commitment period.

Outreach and recruitment: Twenty-four (24) outreach sessions were done upon request or as a result of WAGE\$ solicitation between June 15, 2017 and June 14, 2018. Many were completed

in conjunction with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, thus giving audience members an opportunity to learn about both initiatives. These opportunities included multiple presentations and informational tables directed toward early care and education professionals, site visits and four outreach sessions for funding Smart Start partnerships and their boards. These boards typically include workforce representatives.

In addition to the field outreach, 6,475 recruitment emails or mailings were sent to 2,460 sites. WAGE\$ also sent recruitment information to Smart Start partnerships, resource and referral agencies, community colleges and Head Start grantees in participating counties. 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.

In FY18, WAGE\$ sent a “Busting the Myths” document to participants and programs to help dispel some misconceptions and to encourage application.

OUTCOMES

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

Table E: Outcomes

	Projected Outcome	Results
1	By June 30, 2018, the turnover rate of Child Care WAGE\$® participants will be less than 25% (the goal originally established within Smart Start’s Performance Based Incentive System).	Outcome met. The turnover rate for WAGE\$ participants was only 14%, well below the benchmark of 25%.
2	During FY18, 90% of first-time applicants to WAGE\$ will indicate that they were referred to the program through a WAGE\$ outreach activity or marketing strategy.	Outcome exceeded. All of the applicants (100%) who responded to this question stated that they learned about WAGE\$ through an outreach method that may be tied back to intentional efforts by WAGE\$ staff.

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 is based on application responses. The WAGE\$ application asks how the applicant learned about the program with a list of possible options that may connect back to one of the many outreach efforts undertaken by WAGE\$. Applicants may choose more than one answer or outreach example; they may also state other methods that are not listed. All of the applicants (100%) who responded to this question stated that they learned about WAGE\$ through an

outreach method that may be tied back to intentional efforts by WAGE\$ staff. Those who selected “other” still stated examples that could potentially be tied to WAGE\$ recruitment.

WAGE\$ conducts a variety of different outreach activities, including field presentations, direct mailings, emails, phone calls and Facebook posts. Recruitment targets typically include directors and staff, partners, community members, current participants and potential applicants (such as those who have attended a presentation or table event or who have applied for Early Educator Certification, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program or are in NC Pre-K classrooms). When funding in a county is limited, the primary recruitment effort is conducted through email. Multiple activities are pursued when counties have the funds to pick up new applicants.

Sixty-three percent (63%) of those newly applying to WAGE\$ answered the outreach question. Out of those, by far the highest percentage (65%) learned from their directors. Directors are the primary targets of WAGE\$ outreach. They receive the recruitment emails and when funds are available for new applicants, they may also receive mailed packets, letters and/or postcards. In addition, if the center has staff participating on the program already, the director is asked during regular employment confirmations if other staff may be eligible to apply. If they are not participating, the center director may be called to discuss the opportunity. WAGE\$ may also conduct presentations for director meetings when invited to do so. WAGE\$ encourages directors to act as a recruitment liaison with her/his staff.

The second most popular response was that applicants learned from coworkers. Not only is it likely that the coworkers participate and thus have contact with WAGE\$ staff, but they may also have learned about WAGE\$ originally through a WAGE\$ outreach effort. In addition, one postcard, email and Facebook post that WAGE\$ often uses is to WAGE\$ participants to encourage them to share the WAGE\$ opportunity with their friends and coworkers.

PROGRAM 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\$® Program. 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, 75% of the sampled population returned surveys (1,593 of 2,134), which included the following:

- 73% of participating teachers/family child care providers (1,008 of 1,378)
- 79% of participating directors (133 of 168)
- 77% of directors with participating staff (452 of 588)

Sample responses

Ninety-nine percent (99%) 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\$® Program and indicate whether or not they are true for the respondent, 99% 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. – 97%
- WAGE\$ is an incentive for me to seek additional education and/or it helps make pursuing coursework more financially feasible. – 88% (95% of those at temporary levels)
- The WAGE\$ supplement helps ease financial stress. – 98%
- WAGE\$ encourages me to stay with my current program. – 97%
- My WAGE\$ supplement helps me to provide more resources for my program or classroom. – 91%
- Receiving the WAGE\$ supplement makes me feel more appreciated and recognized for my work. – 98%

Ninety-three percent (93%) 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\$® Program may be beneficial to the children in their programs, including an option stating that no benefits have been noticed, 93% 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-nine percent (99%) 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, nearly 100% 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:

“Everyone I have ever talked to has been extremely helpful and encouraging. They have helped me with the continuation of my education and have been supportive and knowledgeable.” (teacher)

“They have gone above and beyond to help me with paperwork, to make sure I get my check, and congratulate me on education advancements. They're awesome!” (teacher)

“My conversations with all of the WAGE\$ staff have always been pleasant, helpful, and I can end my conversation knowing that my questions have been professionally answered.” (teacher)

“They are very professional and eager to help. They answered any and all questions I had very promptly and encouragingly.” (teacher)

“They are absolutely the most pleasant and friendly staff ever.” (director)

• **Ninety-eight percent (98%) of responding participants indicated that, as a result of WAGE\$, they feel more appreciated and recognized for their work.** 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.

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program has been a blessing to me as well as my staff. The supplements awarded show us that what we are doing in early childhood education is important to the leaders of our county and state and go to show that we are appreciated. This in turn has led to a higher morale among my staff that is reflected in the high quality of care our children are receiving on a daily basis.” (Davidson, director)

PROGRAM 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 or when a county has reduced its cap.

The most significant concern, though, is a much broader challenge for the field and profession. Despite the heightened awareness of and attention to the low compensation for early educators,

progress is slow and difficult. Early childhood teachers in the state earn approximately \$10.97 per hour and the median hourly rate for active WAGE\$ participants (all positions), who must have education in order to participate, is only \$11.32. A salary supplement initiative does not solve the fundamental problem, but until local, state and federal governments, as described in *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*,¹ can provide funding that pays for the true cost of quality care, it is a proven approach with important outcomes. WAGE\$ participants have commonly referred to the program as a “life saver,” as a “game changer,” and the funding provided by participating partnerships and Division of Child Development and Early Education has been critical. With the growing body of research pointing to the link between compensation and quality, perhaps current partnerships will maximize their investments with award increases and additional partnerships will direct funds to support compensation of the workforce. The anticipated statewide funding for Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ is a groundbreaking step forward for the field. The workforce is in crisis with continued low compensation, more opportunities for better salaries outside of the field and fewer educated professionals entering and/or staying in early childhood. Both WAGE\$ and AWARD\$ will be important to help address these issues.

SMART START

The Child Care WAGE\$® Program 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 program agreements and letters clarify the funding arrangement for the program and WAGE\$ representatives explain the funding for the program in field presentations across the state. Finally, the program 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 FY18.

“It is very important for the children in our community to have professional and educated teachers and we need you to keep fighting to keep this life-changing program going year after year. Thanks for all your help.” (Vance, teacher)

¹ National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.



Table 1
Demographic Profile of the 2,747 Participants in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2017 - June 2018



	# of Participants	% of Participants
Ethnicity		
American Indian	23	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	13	0%
Biracial	19	1%
Black/African American	1328	48%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	62	2%
White/European American	1253	46%
Not Given	35	1%
Other	14	1%
Gender		
Female	2722	99%
Male	25	1%
Age Range of Participants		
15-19 years	1	0%
20-24 years	90	3%
25-34 years	608	22%
35-44 years	680	25%
45-54 years	717	26%
55-59 years	292	11%
60-64 years	235	9%
65 and over	124	5%
Position		
Teacher	1557	57%
Teacher (In Home Educator)	3	0%
Teacher (Assistant Director)	47	2%
Teacher (Director)	43	2%
Teacher (Director Owner)	33	1%
Assistant Teacher	615	22%
Director	28	1%
Director (Owner)	11	0%
Assistant Director	12	0%
Small Home Provider	259	9%
Small Facility (<13) Operator	27	1%
Split Position	112	4%
Ages of Children Served		
Birth up to Three	850	31%
Three to Five	1274	46%
Mixed Ages	623	23%
Education Level		
12 birth to five sem. hours	18	1%
18 general sem. hours including 4 birth to five sem. hours	19	1%
24 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	68	2%
70 general sem. hours (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	4	0%

**Table 1 (cont.)
Demographic Profile of the 2,747 Participants in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2017 - June 2018**

	# of Participants	% of Participants
AAS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	14	1%
36 general sem. hours including 12 birth to five sem. hours	48	2%
70 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	6	0%
AAS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	10	0%
45 general sem. hours including 18 birth to five sem. hours	59	2%
AAS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	14	1%
57 general sem. hours including 24 birth to five sem. hours	110	4%
AAS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	13	0%
BA/BS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	44	2%
MA/MS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	4	0%
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	1508	55%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	54	2%
MA/MS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	5	0%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	159	6%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	70	3%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	458	17%
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	13	0%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	49	2%
Wage Rate*		
Below \$7.25 per hour	177	6%
\$7.25 - \$9.99 per hour	601	22%
\$10.00 - \$11.99 per hour	807	29%
\$12.00 - \$13.99 per hour	798	29%
\$14.00 - \$15.99 per hour	322	12%
\$16.00 - \$18.00 per hour	42	2%
Years in Program: Participant's Start Date to Report End Date		
0 to .99 Years	69	3%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	240	9%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	322	12%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	260	9%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	203	7%
5.00 or More Years	1653	60%

* 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® Program
July 2017 - June 2018



	Programs	Participants
Center	959	2,483
1 STAR	6	8
2 STAR	3	4
3 STAR	130	246
4 STAR	234	506
5 STAR	555	1,666
GS-110	19	28
PROB	1	1
PROV	1	1
SPPROV	2	7
Temporary	8	16
Family Provider	260	264
3 STAR	18	18
4 STAR	189	193
5 STAR	51	51
Temporary	2	2
TOTALS	<u>1,219</u>	<u>2,747</u>



Table 3
Educational Award Levels Profile of the 2,747 Participants
in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2017 - June 2018



The Child Care WAGES® Program 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	2298	100%	84%
Two	35	2%	1%
Three	65	3%	2%
Four	61	3%	2%
Five	14	1%	1%
Six	64	3%	2%
Seven	111	5%	4%
Eight	1329	58%	48%
Nine	51	2%	2%
Ten	190	8%	7%
Eleven	352	15%	13%
Twelve	26	1%	1%
Teacher/Home Provider Scale	286	100%	10%
Two	1	0%	0%
Three	3	1%	0%
Four	3	1%	0%
Six	1	0%	0%
Seven	9	3%	0%
Eight	152	53%	6%
Nine	5	2%	0%
Ten	25	9%	1%
Eleven	72	25%	3%
Twelve	15	5%	1%
Director Scale	51	100%	2%
Six	3	6%	0%
Eight	23	45%	1%
Nine	1	2%	0%
Ten	3	6%	0%
Eleven	15	29%	1%
Twelve	6	12%	0%



**Table 3 (cont.)
 Educational Award Levels Profile of the 2,747 Participants
 in North Carolina
 Child Care WAGES® Program
 July 2017 - June 2018**



	# of Participants	% of Participants Out Of Scale	% of Participants Out Of Active
Teacher and Director Scales	112	100%	4%
Two	1	1%	0%
Four	2	2%	0%
Five	2	2%	0%
Six	5	4%	0%
Seven	3	3%	0%
Eight	52	46%	2%
Nine	2	2%	0%
Ten	11	10%	0%
Eleven	32	29%	1%
Twelve	2	2%	0%



Table 4
Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina
Child Care WAGE\$® Program
July 2017 - June 2018



3,271 unduplicated participants received a supplement for completing a six month period that ended during this reporting period; these participants worked in 1,348 different child care programs serving approximately 55,874 children.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 5
Center	2,976	1,054	54,585
Family Provider	296	294	1,289
<u>Total</u>	<u>3,272</u>	<u>1,348</u>	<u>55,874</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 3,190 Participants
in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2017 - June 2018



The annual turnover percentage is based on an overall population of 3,190 participants. This population includes those individuals that were active during the reporting period of June 2017 - June 2018 (2,747) and those who left their centers during this time (443). 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 WAGES® Program, 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 WAGES and thus earned active status prior to becoming ineligible.

Annual Turnover (June 2017 - June 2018)	
Total Participants	= 3,190
Active Participants	= 2,747
Left Center	= 443
Turnover Percentage	= 14%



Table 5
North Carolina Counties Included in Turnover Results
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2017 - June 2018



Alamance
Alexander
Alleghany
Avery
Brunswick
Buncombe
Caldwell
Cherokee
Clay
Cleveland
Columbus
Craven
Cumberland
Dare
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® Program
July 2017 - June 2018

Mitchell
Nash
Northampton
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® Program
July 2017 - June 2018



	# of Participants	% of Participants
Ethnicity		
American Indian	5	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	1%
Biracial	6	1%
Black/African American	193	44%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	15	3%
White/European American	215	49%
Not Given	5	1%
Other	1	0%
Gender		
Female	441	100%
Male	2	0%
Position		
Teacher	287	65%
Teacher (Assistant Director)	3	1%
Teacher (Director)	2	0%
Teacher (Director Owner)	2	0%
Assistant Teacher	99	22%
Director	2	0%
Assistant Director	7	2%
Small Home Provider	26	6%
Small Facility (<13) Operator	1	0%
Split Position	14	3%
Education Level		
12 birth to five sem. hours	8	2%
18 general sem. hours including 4 birth to five sem. hours	3	1%
24 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	22	5%
AAS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	3	1%
36 general sem. hours including 12 birth to five sem. hours	7	2%
70 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	1	0%
AAS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	7	2%
45 general sem. hours including 18 birth to five sem. hours	16	4%
AAS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	5	1%
57 general sem. hours including 24 birth to five sem. hours	18	4%
AAS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	2	0%
BA/BS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	15	3%
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	183	41%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	9	2%
MA/MS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	1	0%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	23	5%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	17	4%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	93	21%
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	1	0%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	9	2%

**Table 5 (cont.)
 Profile of Participants who Left their Programs in North Carolina
 Child Care WAGES® Program
 July 2017 - June 2018**

	# of Participants	% of Participants
Wage Rate*		
Below \$7.25 per hour	20	5%
\$7.25 - \$9.99 per hour	133	30%
\$10.00 - \$11.99 per hour	138	31%
\$12.00 - \$13.99 per hour	103	23%
\$14.00 - \$15.99 per hour	44	10%
\$16.00 - \$18.00 per hour	5	1%
Years in Program: Participant's Start Date to Date Ineligible		
0 to .99 Years	20	5%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	75	17%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	81	18%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	67	15%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	54	12%
5.00 or More Years	146	33%
Regulation Type		
1 STAR	3	1%
3 STAR	43	10%
4 STAR	111	25%
5 STAR	277	63%
GS-110	8	2%
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® Program
July 2017 - June 2018**



Alamance Partnership for Children
Alexander County Partnership for Children
Alleghany Partnership for Children
Blue Ridge Partnership for Children
Buncombe Partnership for Children, Inc.
Caldwell County Smart Start: A Partnership for Young Children
Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County, Inc.
Children's Council of Watauga County, Inc.
Cleveland County Partnership for Children, Inc.
Columbus County Partnership for Children, Inc.
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, Inc.
Harnett County Partnership for Children, Inc.
Hertford-Northampton Smart Start Partnership for Children, Inc.
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, Inc.
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 WAGES® Program
July 2017 - June 2018**



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 FY18

“It has helped me to be able to afford to work in a field that I love. ... I think it’s great because it helps me to stay in my current position, which in turn helps the children in my care be able to keep a stable staff member. If it wasn’t for WAGES^{*}, I would have to look for a job making more money.” (Alamance, teacher)

“It helps me not to change jobs.” (Alexander, teacher)

“WAGES has been the reason I am able to continue working with children, which I love doing. ... As child care employees, we contribute an important support system to our community, but tend to be the lowest paid, due to the financial constraints of our parents. We work with and care for the most precious commodity in our community. If not for the WAGES Program, a lot of us would not be able to continue in our work and support our own families.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“Turnover because of the pay hurts centers. Because of WAGES, more teachers are staying in the field.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“It does give you an incentive to stay where you work.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“It has given me incentive to stay at my job. Without it, I am not sure it is worth making our low wages. McDonald’s workers start out making more even with a degree.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“I am a great teacher and receiving the extra supplements allows me to stay in my current position, keeping me from looking for other employment that offers higher salaries.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“The supplement has been a blessing for me financially. At my center, the other teachers look forward to receiving their bonus also. We have a low staff turnover rate and that stability is better for the children at the center.” (Columbus, director)

“I’m staying at my current center and going to school. It has also helps with financial strain that my job couldn’t.” (Craven, teacher)

“It has helped my center to meet the salaries that my teachers want to stay with us - instead of center hopping for salary only.” (Cumberland, director)

“It encourages me to stick with and grow at something I love. ... It is great encouragement and an incentive to stay where I am and enjoy what I do. ... I think it’s important and beneficial to centers because it reduces staff turnover and improves quality care.” (Davidson, teacher)

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

“It is vitally important! The additional income provided by the Child Care WAGE\$® Program allows us to maintain more qualified staff. Rather than leave for the public school system, they are able to boost their annual income while remaining in early child care.” (Durham, director)

“WAGE\$ encourages continuity of care, higher education and overall value to early education.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“It gives child care workers a reward to look forward to and helps them to stay at their present job instead of moving from job to job.” (Franklin, teacher)

“Because people working in this field are so underpaid, this supplement helps us want to stay with this field and not move on to better paying jobs.” (Graham, teacher)

“It’s important because it provides stability for the children in my class. Also it helps to support low wages for teachers.” (Granville, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program gives early childhood professionals a positive incentive that encourages them to continue to work with their child care program, build trusting relationships and bonds with the children and families they serve and provide a reliable, continual child care resource for their community.” (Halifax, teacher)

“It makes me feel really appreciated. It keeps teachers from leaving their jobs, which helps the children feel safe and attached to the same teacher and therefore, ready to play and learn.” (Harnett, teacher)

“I think it is important for teachers to stay in child care. Children do better with familiar faces and it’s good for them to have teachers that want to be there with them for the right reasons. WAGE\$ helps give teachers incentive to stay.” (Haywood, teacher)

“It has encouraged me to remain at my present employer, which is a benefit to the children I serve.” (Iredell, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is important to us. It helps give teachers incentive to stay with their jobs. It bridges some of the gap in wages.” (Jackson, teacher)

“I am a single mom. WAGE\$ allows me to stay in a job I love, while still being able to provide for my son. ... Many teachers could make more money doing something else, but not be happy where we are. This allows us to do what we love, be happy and provide for our family.” (Johnston, teacher)

“If it were not for this supplemental pay, I would have to go into a different career. I would not stay in this field without this extra pay because I would not be able to afford to.” (Macon, teacher)

“It encourages me and my fellow coworkers to remain in child care and grow in our knowledge of early childhood development.” (Nash, teacher)

“It’s an incentive to want to further my education and continue to work with children.”
(Northampton, teacher)

“It’s extremely important. Consistency for the children is critical and I know several people who would have left their employment if not for the supplement.” (Pitt, teacher)

“It has allowed me to continue doing my job instead of going into another field of work. It helps keep good, loving teachers in the profession rather than just people who are desperate for any job with no passion for this one.” (Randolph, teacher)

Receiving the Child Care WAGE\$® supplement helps to increase my income, which is very low, and encourages me to stay at my facility and continue my education.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“It gives you an incentive to stay with the program and keep working with kids.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“It’s important because it encourages teachers to stay in one place and then the children in their care have a constant caregiver instead of different ones all the time.” (Stanly, teacher)

“I think it helps the child care community. Many educated people want to leave the field but stay because of the additional income. At the same time, they continue their education and understand the importance as they learn. This gives value to their hard work.” (Surry, teacher)

“It has definitely kept me with the same center. There have been opportunities for me to change but I haven’t.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“It has been very beneficial with staff for eleven years. It is the reason why they’ve stayed. Without it, they would not have the funds to pay teachers in Vance County. It will be sad if it goes away.” (Vance, director)

“It helps prevent higher rates of turnover and therefore provides more stability in the lives of the children.” (Watauga, teacher)

“This program gives an incentive to those who work hard and love the job of caring for and teaching young children. Without the extra money, really good teachers and caregivers would move on to better paying jobs, just so they can financially take care of their families.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Child care professionals are some of the lowest paid staff, but have one of the most important jobs in the country. I feel that WAGE\$ helps to supplement the staff’s income, which in turn helps the program by retaining the staff and giving continuity to the children.” (Wilkes, director)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has helped me to stay in my field instead of seeking other employment.”
(Wilson, teacher)

“It helps staff in low-wage jobs, that are very important, to continue to work in the job. It helps them also feel valued.” (Yancey, director)



Appendix B: Education Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY18

“The WAGE\$ Program* motivates me to stay in school and further my education in early childhood. It also introduced me to the T.E.A.C.H. Program.” (Alamance, director)

“I find it important for two reasons. One, it relieves financial stress and it helps the participants to have an incentive to continue their education, to help make us better qualified teachers for the kids. It also helps the big turnover in day care employment.” (Alexander, teacher)

“It helped pay for my college, to meet my goals, and improve and further my career! It lifted the burden of tuition and books.” (Avery, director)

“It has given me the incentive to further my education by offering an additional level between the associate degree and the BK!!!” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Staff feel valued for their hard work thru the additional supplements and want to continue to advance in the profession. We have a very high percentage pursuing a higher degree in the field.” (Caldwell, director)

“My four children have been encouraged to continue their education because I saw the benefits that having a degree made in my life.” (Clay, teacher)

“With WAGE\$, I am able to further my education and work towards my bachelor’s degree. Without WAGE\$, this would not be possible. Also, getting a little extra help twice a year really helps to relieve some of the financial burden that can accrue throughout the year. ... I love my children, my job and my classroom, and thanks to WAGE\$ I am learning more every day through my education to be better prepared to provide care for my children and their families.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“It helps me push myself to keep going to school. It’s hard to work full time with a large family and still go to school. It just gives me the encouragement I need.” (Columbus, director)

“It has helped me and my family. Being able to receive money has been a help to my finishing my Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. It has made my dreams of being a teacher reality.” (Craven, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is important to the staff in my program because it provides them with an added incentive to increase their level of education and provide better services to the children and families that they serve.” (Cumberland, director)

“The program helped me financially. It allowed me to go back to school and was a source of encouragement. It helped me to support my family.” (Davie, teacher)

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

“I want to go higher on the WAGE\$ scale, therefore I will continue until I get my Bachelor’s in Early Childhood Education.” (Durham, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ Program gives staff an incentive to continue education. I have everyone sign up as soon as they become an employee. I love seeing staff get excited when they are rewarded for their achievements.” (Forsyth, director)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has really made an impact on motivating me to stay in school until I received my Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood. This is important because it is also motivating others as well. It also makes me feel good when I walk into my classroom each morning and work with my students.” (Franklin, teacher)

“Without the WAGE\$ Program, I couldn’t have continued my education and my program couldn’t have grown. The WAGE\$ supplements I receive help me gain my education and be able to provide a better program for the children and families in my care.” (Gaston, family child care provider)

“It gives low income staff something to look forward to and encourages them to increase their education.” (Granville, director)

“The WAGE\$ Program has improved staff education and stability in my centers. It makes early childhood educators feel that they make a significant and important contribution to the education of our young children.” (Harnett, director)

“It’s important for many reasons, one being it has encouraged staff to further their education, which has helped my center have better educated teachers for the children and their families.” (Haywood, director)

“It provides encouragement for us to go to school and look for positive outcomes.” (Iredell, teacher)

“It makes myself and others want to further our education and to continue to learn more about caring for/teaching children. It has helped me provide better for my children.” (Johnston, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is a great motivator for staff to further their education.” (Lincoln, director)

“Child Care WAGE\$® helps ease some financial stress, helps me with coursework and to understand my job. I have learned more about how children function.” (Martin, teacher)

“It has helped the staff morale. It has also given the teachers a ‘want’ to continue their education.” (Mitchell, director)

“It makes my life easier. It encouraged me to go back to school.” (Nash, family child care provider)

“It allows me to pay for my classes and books. It also helps me feel as if I contribute to my family financially. Child care salaries are not what they should be, but the WAGE\$ Program makes it a little better.” (Randolph, teacher)

“This program has allowed me to continue my education and by doing so, has helped me be a better teacher. Without WAGE\$, I would NOT have gone back to school.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“Not only does it supplement salaries of teaching staff, but encourages them to seek a high level of education, making them more productive and up to date on learning trends. And once they realize that the higher the education one has, when achieved, can never be taken from them, their morale and self confidence increases. Educated staff equals children excited for learning.” (Rowan, director)

“I think the WAGE\$ Program gives staff a reason to go back to school and finish education.” (Rutherford, director)

“It is important because it motivates me to finish my degree and provides the income boost needed to make me feel more appreciated in my job. I feel the children have a better educational experience because WAGE\$ supplements lead the teachers to be more positive about their job and it is shown throughout their teaching.” (Stanly, teacher)

“Extra money is always helpful when attending school, which is a blow to families’ budgets. Staff is more likely to continue education if they know they will get some help.” (Surry, director)

“Our staff is not paid a wage that is high enough to reflect their education, skill level and amount of hard work done each day. This bonus from the WAGE\$ Program helps with their pay, encourages their education and gives them tremendous emotional support to know someone realizes their situation and is at least supporting them in some concrete, financial way.” (Transylvania, director)

“It encourages staff to increase their education, which gives them different ways to interact with kids.” (Vance, director)

“It has made me feel more professional by getting a higher education. ... It helps me feel more satisfied with my job and encourages me to get a higher education. I am more apt to stay in my field because of WAGE\$.” (Watauga, family child care provider)

“It is important because it gives my staff incentive to strive to get more education, and that benefits my program to have teachers furthering their education.” (Wayne, director)

“Overall, I feel the program has helped motivate me to go back to school. I graduate in May and I am extremely proud of myself. It is uplifting to know all the hard work I put into my job, being there for my children and families, is recognized by more than my employer.” (Wilkes, teacher)



Appendix C: Compensation Feedback Collected from WAGES Surveys FY18

“It eases financial tensions.” (Alamance, director)

“My staff is most concerned about the amount of money they make. I believe the low salary in early education in general, with little financial assistance to continue education and no benefits, forces early educators to focus on mere personal survival rather than being able to place their focus on quality and education.” (Alexander, director)

“It helps ease the stress with additional bills or unexpected things that happen in your life.” (Alleghany, teacher)

“It gives teachers that extra boost we sometimes need to get by.” (Avery, teacher)

“As child care providers, working with children isn’t a job but a calling, and this money helps take stress away and offers help with projects to enhance the learning experience of my students.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“Child care is already a low paying field and this allows us to give them a benefit that doesn’t affect the families by increasing tuition.” (Buncombe, director)

“I think the program is very important to teachers. Often in our profession we are overworked and underpaid. Our days don’t stop at three or whatever time you get off. We take work home with us and we are constantly looking for new ideas for our students. This program has helped me buy books and other items for my classroom, along with helping buy tires for my car. It has helped with bills and I even was able to go on a vacation, which I hadn’t been able to do for years.” (Clay, teacher)

“WAGES* provides a better quality of life for me and my family. I am encouraged to be a better teacher, parent and community leader.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“It has strengthened me physically, emotionally and financially. I say thank you all.” (Columbus, teacher)

“It financially elevates people in the child care field.” (Cumberland, director)

“It helps me pay my bills and put food on my table because child care providers do not get paid enough.” (Davidson, teacher)

“It really has helped me pay my bills. I really get amazed when people ask me what WAGES is - they can’t believe it.” (Davie, teacher)

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

“It provides a better quality of life for teachers. It’s good for the children because happy teachers teach happy.” (Durham, director)

“The WAGE\$ Program is important because of how it helps to supplement my income. It provides me with extra income that allows me to help pay my bills and get things for my classroom.” (Edgecombe, teacher)

“Let’s face it, early childhood education teachers are paid very little. I still do the best I can for each child every day. The extra supplement helps me to be a little less stressed financially and lifts me up more.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ Program offers an incentive for teachers to become more qualified. WAGE\$ helps bridge the gap in the wages centers are able to pay and what qualified staff should make. Children benefit when staff receive more education and staff are able to stay at a center due to the added monetary incentive available.” (Franklin, director)

“The WAGE\$ Program is important to me because doing what I love does not pay well. Getting the supplement helps meet my needs where I would otherwise be making decisions how to make ends meet without taking from the children’s needs.” (Gaston, family child care educator)

“I came to preschool teaching after being a certified special education teacher. For years I said, ‘If only they had gotten...when they were younger.’ Changing gears cut my pay in half and took away benefits. I have been able to use my knowledge to circumvent some of the issues children have later by helping to build a strong foundation. I would not be able to do that without the WAGE\$ Program.” (Granville, teacher)

“It has made a difference between my lights being shut off or not.” (Halifax, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is very important because the incentives that it gives to child care workers help to ease some of their problems, such as financial stress. It encourages workers to continue working in their program and it helps the workers to feel a little more appreciated. It has meant a lot in my life.” (Harnett, teacher)

“WAGE\$ means so much to both me and my family! As a mother of two myself, it has helped to take off some of the financial strains. It seems that I have always received my check at just the right time when I’ve needed it! I’m not sure what I would do without this program. It is such a blessing in my life and I thank God for all the people working behind the scenes to make it happen.” (Haywood, teacher)

“It’s important because child care teachers are some of the lowest paid workers. Having materials for the different age groups is very important. Parents are very grateful for all the resources they see that are available to their child.” (Hertford, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has helped me in all areas of my life and I truly appreciate these funds. ... “It helps me to engage and love children even more while they are in my care.” (Iredell, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ supplement offers a lump sum to teachers, which gives them something to consider if they are job hunting. It also gives encouragement to staff seeking higher education, even if they don’t receive a raise. The extra money allows staff to put into classroom resources what they might otherwise not have the budget for.” (Jackson, director)

“It helps aid my peace of mind.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“The importance of the project is to help those who qualify, and know their passion/calling is child care, to earn a competitive wage where our company can’t necessarily pay them that.” (Macon, director)

“It has helped me to provide educational things my children needed as well as for myself. It is important because sometimes we don’t make enough to pay for doctor visits and we don’t have health insurance.” (Martin, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is very important because it helps supplement what my program can’t pay. It has meant a lot to the children in my care because it helps me to purchase classroom materials that I wouldn’t otherwise be able to afford without this supplement.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“It gives staff the extra drive to do better. Child care workers already do not get paid all that they are worth and it helps with that a lot. It allows us to give better care to our kids because the teachers look forward to coming to work and it helps buy new things for our classrooms. It attracts parents when staff are happy and educated and your place of business looks great and inviting.” (Pitt, director)

“It helps compensate for hourly wages, keeping high quality child care more affordable for parents and helps to give educated teachers a worthy wage to maintain quality and best practices at a critical time in child development and education.” (Randolph, director)

“The supplement has helped me and my family financially. With the cost of living going up each year, but the amount I get paid staying the same, it makes it very difficult to provide for my family. This is another reason why I have to work two jobs. ... It means a lot, but it also makes me sad to know that we, as teachers, do not get paid what we really should to teach children every day -- which are our future doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc. But I could be a football player, having fun on the field, and become rich. It is sad that we get paid so little.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“It is important because it helps people like me to be a little more stress free and being stress free helps us to give better care and better education to the children.” (Rowan, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is very helpful, especially when in our county a raise in pay has been rare. My money does not go far and purchasing things for my classroom versus paying bills has become a tough

choice. The supplement helps because I usually purchase classroom items when I receive it.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“It has helped me put food on my table and gas in my car. ... It is important because it helps you provide for your family, your classroom. For the job we do, you don’t make a lot of money, but with WAGE\$, it can make a difference in having lights, food in your home and materials for your classroom.” (Stanly, teacher)

“I’m making less money than a fast food worker - it helps fill in the blanks.” (Swain, teacher)

“It offers an additional sense of security. I know that there are additional funds coming to help with either my personal or professional life. ... Articles I have read from organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children stress the importance of early childhood education. Early childhood education needs high quality early childhood educators to ensure today’s children receive the best environment to learn and grow. The Child Care WAGE\$® Program has allowed me to be home with my family more. I was going to have to get a second job, but with WAGE\$, I am able to use that money to help provide necessities for my family. It has also enabled me to be more creative in my classroom. I was able to subscribe to different organizations that I could research and bring ideas into the classroom.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program has helped me to further my goals and dreams.” (Vance, teacher)

“It is a financial help to me, which helps in relieving stress, which helps me in doing a great job.” (Warren, director)

“It allows you to supplement your income and relieves some financial stresses.” (Watauga, teacher)

“I feel it is an awesome program. It helps out in long due needed areas of your life. It has in mine. I needed my eyes tested and new glasses. I can see better, think better, and do what I do best, and that is smile again.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Often, it has carried me through those times when I was running a little short. It came at just the right time to help see me through.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“It has helped me with peace of mind. During the winter months, my heating bill is high. ... My water pipe line burst in my yard; the insurance company would not pay and my WAGE\$ came just in time.” (Wilson, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ Program has been such a blessing to me. I love teaching and each time I receive a check, I grab a catalog and find the newest and most exciting educational supplies to make learning new and exciting to my class.” (Yancey, director)



Appendix D: Appreciation/Recognition Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY18

“The WAGE\$ Program* is very important. The program helps us feel like our job is important and we need to take pride in it.” (Alamance, teacher)

“It recognizes and appreciates early child care workers. Public school teachers receive incentives and it is nice to get this to be encouraged. Parents can see early childhood is a profession worthy of respect. We have a voice and we are heard.” (Alexander, teacher)

“It’s important because it makes you feel like there’s someone out there knowing you’re making a difference in the lives of the children. It makes you realize you are important and a stable part of the children’s everyday lives.” (Alleghany, director)

“WAGE\$ is important because I know I am valued as an early child care educator.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“It makes it feel more like a valid career. ... It helps me feel valued for the work I do.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“It is important to feel appreciated for the hard work we do. It has made my life a little easier and I love my job more.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“The child care profession often does not receive the recognition or support it deserves. This project supports and encourages those teachers who are committed to give quality care to our children.” (Cherokee, director)

“In a professional area that is looked down on by society, the WAGE\$ Program gives me worth and makes me feel as if people do care about our children’s care and education. Our government has a long way to go, but WAGE\$ is a ray of sunshine!” (Cleveland, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is important because the early years of learning are critical to a child’s life. This program focuses on the importance of educating young children. This program provides resources for teachers and the community to further learning. This program not only values children, but it also recognizes the educators and all that they do for the children.” (Columbus, teacher)

“I think it’s important because, unfortunately, teacher salaries are overlooked even though teachers do so much. WAGE\$, to me, is a welcomed pat on the back.” (Craven, teacher)

“This program allows the teachers to see they matter and the children do too.” (Cumberland, director)

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

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program has been a blessing to me as well as my staff. The supplements awarded show us that what we are doing in early childhood education is important to the leaders of our county and state and go to show that we are appreciated. This in turn has led to a higher morale among my staff that is reflected in the high quality of care our children are receiving on a daily basis.” (Davidson, director)

“It helps teachers feel more appreciated and valued in such a low income field of occupation. It has helped me feel as if my community and state are behind me.” (Davie, teacher)

“It makes me feel my expertise is valuable and appreciated in this industry.” (Durham, family child care provider)

“It has given me the confidence and incentive to achieve my goals.” (Edgecombe, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ supplement gives me hope that legislators, parents and the community will one day recognize the value in what I do every day. That people will stop asking me when will I ‘become a real teacher.’” (Forsyth, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is important because it provides adults that work in child care with a sense of appreciation. This program tells me that there are people out there that advocate for me and understand the importance of the career that I have chosen.” (Franklin, teacher)

“It makes me feel like I am important not only to the children and parents that I serve, but to the community in which I live and work.” (Granville, teacher)

“It motivates staff to better themselves. It engages and uplifts them.” (Halifax, director)

“Child Care WAGE\$® is important to me because it has made me feel appreciated as an educator and validates what I do every day as well as all other early childhood educators.” (Harnett, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is important because it helps teachers feel better about themselves - somebody appreciates what we are doing.” (Haywood, teacher)

“I think that it is very important and well appreciated. It has made me feel so loved and important.” (Hertford, family child care provider)

“I feel valued as being a ‘teacher.’” (Macon, teacher)

“It makes me feel worthy.” (Nash, director)

“It helps me feel like what I do really matters. Public school teachers are paid more than child care staff, but we are the ones to establish the foundations of learning on which they build. I believe that child care workers are severely undervalued.” (Pitt, teacher)

“It makes me feel like my job is important and like I’m appreciated, at least by someone. Some don’t understand that this is not an easy job and it feels good that I’m being rewarded for this job. It has helped me financially greatly.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“I think it benefits everyone as a whole. It helps morale, which helps in the classroom for children, because too often our teachers are underpaid and underappreciated and this helps.” (Rowan, director)

“I think it’s important for staff to feel important and appreciated. This doesn’t always happen through your direct management staff. However, this program helps people to feel more appreciated, which has a domino effect, causing us as teachers to do a better job at what we do every day.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“It helps me to feel appreciated and assured that my education really means a lot.” (Stanly, teacher)

“WAGE\$ helps my staff to feel their worth! I try to communicate to them how important they are to the families and children in their care, but when they receive that appreciation in a tangible way that directly benefits them and their own family, it means so much more!” (Surry, director)

“It makes you feel that you do make a difference. ... It makes the person feel important.” (Swain, teacher)

“I’m thankful and grateful and look forward to getting my WAGE\$ check, especially now in this economy. Times are hard but it keeps me motivated and I feel appreciated for the work I do with the children and their families. It’s definitely not reflected in our pay.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“It helps me feel more important in the early childhood field and appreciated for my hard work and commitment.” (Vance, teacher)

“It helps with overall contentment and appreciation.” (Warren, director)

“It shows me that I am greatly appreciated in my job. ... It’s helped me to become a better teacher in my field.” (Watauga, teacher)

“The program helps me to realize that someone thinks my work is important.” (Wayne teacher)

“WAGE\$ is important because the pay is insufficient for the work these ladies do and it helps to validate their importance.” (Wilkes, director)

“I’m thankful that others think of me as a professional.” (Wilson, teacher)



Appendix E: Smart Start Messages Feedback Collected from WAGES[®] Surveys FY18

“I greatly appreciate the funding that has been allotted to myself and others. My gratitude can’t be put into words. I just try to be the best teacher I can be as a repayment. Thank you again.”
(Alamance, director)

“I am very thankful to my local Smart Start for being a part of this program. Many thanks.”
(Alexander, teacher)

“Thank you so much for the supplements you help us with. It really helps us financially. It eases the stress so we can work and care for children the right way.” (Alleghany, teacher)

“Thank you! These funds have helped me financially.” (Avery, teacher)

“I appreciate it. I don’t know how I would be able to do my job with the added stress of finances or trying to go back to college to further enhance my abilities.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“I really appreciate that they fund this program. It helps so many early childhood educators by adding to their income and giving incentive for higher levels of education.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Thank you, and it does help support us financially and in the classroom.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“Thank you so much for supplying the supplement for me so I can better help myself, my family and the children I care for.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“Thank you for all you do. Without you, Child Care WAGES[®]* would not be possible.” (Clay, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGES[®] supplement helps me financially, both in pursuing my Early Childhood Education Associate’s Degree, as well as providing for my family. It also shows me that the early childhood education field is valued.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“It has helped me as well as some of my staff be able to go back to school. Keeps us motivated to go back to school. It has cut down on my turnover.” (Columbus, director)

“I would like to thank them, but also to encourage them to reach out to other county partnerships and get more cities involved because there are a lot of people struggling that the WAGES[®] Program could help.” (Craven, teacher)

“I really appreciate the monies. Without it I would be in financial ruin.” (Cumberland, teacher)

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

“Thank you. The supplement keeps me in this field and helps me with my financial needs and helps purchase items I can use in my classroom.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Please continue this supplement. It works. It helps children as well as their providers. This supplement is truly a blessing and is truly being used for what was intended, to improve child care by educating its providers and workers.” (Durham, teacher)

“Thank you for believing in early educators and giving them a chance to have the education needed to teach young children.” (Edgecombe, teacher)

“Please continue to fund this program, the children deserve caregivers who otherwise would have pursued other better paying professions.” (Forsyth, family child care provider)

“I would like to say thank you for advocating for me and all the other adults that work with young children. Thank you for thinking about us and understanding that we are not babysitters. Thank you for providing for us throughout the year.” (Franklin, teacher)

“To many of us, it’s a chance to catch up on bills, to invest in our classes, and it goes a long way in saying thank you for hanging in there with our children.” (Gaston, teacher)

“I would like to thank all the funders for the supplement I receive. This is truly a blessing and it has helped me and my family so, so, so much.” (Granville, family child care provider)

“The pay rate for workers in the early childhood education field is utterly ridiculous. We still have to get food assistance from the state to feed our families and can’t afford child care costs ourselves, but this supplement helps fill in the gaps.” (Halifax, teacher)

“I just want to say THANK YOU so much for all that you do! From the bottom of my heart, I thank you! Thank you for believing in the importance of early child care and for caring enough about those of us who put our hearts and our time into it! You guys are truly difference makers!” (Haywood, teacher)

“I really appreciate Smart Start honoring teachers because we play a major part in children’s lives. It is so important they continue to participate because it gives us a great boost in working with children and families.” (Hertford, teacher)

“Without the support of WAGE\$, I wouldn’t be able to go to school and work. The program allows me to be worry free, in a way, about my bills. WAGE\$ provides a little bit of security. I buy my books for school, pay any unforeseen bills and if I have a little extra, I can buy things for my classroom!!” (Jackson, teacher)

“I am grateful for the people that fight for us and the WAGE\$ Program!” (Johnston, teacher)

“Thank you so much for your financial support for a profession that doesn’t pay well but has a very high responsibility with children.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“It makes a huge difference. It has caused me to stay in my field and be able to gain experience and training in child care, while I am able to support myself and my six-year-old as a single parent. I feel very grateful. I feel proud of my job and take it more seriously. I encourage co-workers to pursue education, letting them know the benefits WAGE\$ gives and how helpful it has been to me.” (Macon, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you!!! Knowledge is power and I am still learning and eager for more education.” (Martin, teacher)

“This supplement is very important. It helps child care teachers to afford to stay in this field when otherwise we wouldn’t be able to stay due to the lack of sufficient wages.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing what I do as valid and ‘bonus worthy.’ Every professional enjoys being appreciated for what they do. My preschoolers appreciate what I do and who I am.” (Nash, teacher)

“Thank you so much, it is a great help to educators like me that love what we do.” (Northampton, teacher)

“We thank you for the supplement. It’s a great incentive for the people who stay committed to the field of child care. The supplement does help bridge the gap for pay in child care.” (Pitt, teacher)

“I am grateful for the supplement. With out the supplement, I wouldn’t be able to catch up on my bills or have had a Christmas.” (Randolph, teacher)

“The supplement is a great incentive to stay in the field and to increase my education.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“It is immensely helpful to staff at my preschool. It supports them with money for bills, to provide their family with a Christmas and to help pay for school. It definitely helps prevent staff turnover and is an incentive for prospective new teachers in early childhood. It improves morale in a field where wages are not normally an incentive for becoming a preschool teacher. It is highly valued! It is a tremendous help in attracting quality teachers to early childhood, keeping them there and motivating them to seek further education!” (Rowan, director)

“I appreciate what each one of you does for the welfare of young children. Also, thank you for caring enough to recognize each employee with this extra wage check at each six-month period.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“Please continue to fight on our behalf because WAGE\$ really makes a difference for us. I don’t know what I would do without it. Thank you for helping us get WAGE\$. It means so much to us.” (Stanly, teacher)

“I appreciate these supplements and WAGE\$ has helped me financially to provide a better life for my family. It has also helped me want to stay in this profession. I love working with children.” (Surry, teacher)

“It helps us become stronger for the children and helps us stay in our program. Thank you.” (Swain, teacher)

“Just the incentive of the supplement helped me to earn my associate degree this past semester.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“It is very important for the children in our community to have professional and educated teachers and we need you to keep fighting to keep this life-changing program going year after year. Thanks for all your help.” (Vance, teacher)

“Thank you, it’s needed to help support our staff so that we can build a strong community of learners.” (Warren, director)

“Words cannot express how grateful I am for WAGE\$.” (Watauga, teacher)

“Thank you so very much. These funds are so important to families. They help take off financial stress when you know this supplement comes and it helps. Please keep it coming. Teachers can do their job better when under less financial stress at home. Thank you so much.” (Wayne, teacher)

“I am thankful that there are funds available for this program. It helps to encourage us to better educate ourselves so we may provide a higher quality care and learning experiences for the children in our programs.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“The supplement is greatly appreciated. Our profession is not highly respected and this is evident by our salaries. Teaching is not a profession for financial gain, but the impact we have on a child’s educational journey is priceless.” (Wilson, teacher)

“It is very helpful to me and my schooling.” (Yancey, teacher)