

I am WAGES[®]

Julie Delair

Julie Delair has operated her family child care home in Brunswick County since 2008. “I always remember thinking this was going to be my career. I always wanted to work with children,” she said. She joined the Child Care WAGE\$[®] Program at the entry level of education, which at the time was six semester hours of early childhood coursework, and she moved up the WAGE\$ scale, earning higher awards each time, and now has her Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education!



Getting her degree, though, was not easy, which is the case for many in the field who have the interest, but are faced with a variety of challenges.

“I think the Child Care WAGE\$[®] Program is very important, especially as an incentive to keep educators in the field. I have had my family child care home for over ten years and I credit the WAGE\$ Program with my eagerness and even the ability to continue operating. The supplemental income allows me to provide quality care to the children, and I’m so grateful for it.” —Julie Delair

Julie said that she had started college but life got in the way and she was unable to continue until she learned about the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] Scholarship Program. “I had the interest, just not the funding. I couldn’t have done it otherwise. WAGE\$ also prompted that educational movement because I saw what I could receive if I got my degree. The incentive was there.”

Getting her associate degree made her realize how much there was to learn. She loved learning and bringing that back to her class. It kept her fresh and she wanted to keep going. She saw how much her education had impacted her teaching: “Going to classes gave me so many more ideas of working with children, what was developmentally appropriate, how to work with families. It expanded my knowledge in all areas. It definitely made me more confident, more professional. WAGE\$ does that, too. It recognizes that early childhood is important to children, families and the community. We feel appreciated. People know it is important.”

Julie uses the WAGE\$ funds in many ways, including to support her business. She provides new materials, toys and even playground equipment for the children she teaches, which she says they really love. “I often have them when they are very young until they go to kindergarten, so having new things really matters.”

Child Care
WAGES[®]
Program