

Child Care WAGE\$[®] Program
Statewide Final Report
Fiscal Year 2019

REPORT CONTENTS

The Child Care WAGE\$[®] 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 WAGE\$[®] Program.

Program Overall Impact – Reviews the WAGE\$ 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 WAGE\$ 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 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 WAGE\$ impact on retention.

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

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

Appendix D – Presents sample survey feedback regarding the WAGE\$ 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 FY19, 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 2019, 3,295 child care professionals in 1,433 child care programs from 55 North Carolina counties were active participants in the statewide Child Care WAGE\$® Program. Of these individuals, 99% are women and 57% 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-nine percent (89%) of the participants work in four and five star licensed centers or homes.

As of June 2019, 414 of the active participants were reported by their employers as being NC Pre-K teachers and assistants. Of this group, 85 are teachers and 329 are assistant teachers in NC Pre-K classrooms. These individuals work in 289 different child care programs in 52 counties. Of these, 99% are women and 52% are people of color. Ninety-nine percent (99%) work in four and five star licensed centers.

Participation Overview

Smart Start partnerships 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. Though this is an improvement over FY18, still 58% of the counties funded one of the lowest two tiers in FY19. In addition to the use of lower tiers, 36% of the counties (a slight increase over FY18) selected the lowest income cap of \$14 per hour to establish eligibility.

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	15	13	3	31
Tier One HEO**	0	1	0	1
Tier One/Tier Two Split	0	2	0	2
Tier Two	5	6	8	19
Tier Two HEO**	0	1	0	1
Tier Three	0	1	0	1
Totals	20	24	11	55

*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 WAGES\$ 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 *or* fund only those working in sites with at least four 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 WAGES\$ scale (which includes, for example, 12 semester hours of birth to five focused coursework).
- Cut Tier One supplement awards by a percentage.

Twenty-eight (28) 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 FY19.

- Cut administrator time only – two counties
- Cut those working in sites with fewer than three stars only – 13 counties
- Cut administrator time and those working in sites with fewer than three stars – four counties

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

Seventeen (17) 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. In addition to regular monthly confirmation calls, each participating center was contacted to assess year-end employment. Information for FY19 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 FY19 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. The turnover rate among WAGE\$ NC Pre-K teachers and assistants was even lower at 10%.

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\$ FY19
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.

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, 17% 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 FY14 through FY18, public school teachers left the *profession* at approximately 11% per year (rates ranging from approximately 8% to 15% over this time period). The best educated WAGE\$ participants have turnover rates (leaving their *programs*) ranging from 11% - 14% (12.6% average) over this same time period, and the rate is only 14% for FY19.

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.

“Early childhood is a very low paying field. We have such a high turnover rate because most teachers can't afford to live off of their salary. We're losing good teachers to other fields for this reason. As someone who receives WAGE\$, I can attest to the fact that this supplement has kept me at my current job even when I was ready to quit. By staying at my current job, my employer doesn't have to hire someone else and, most importantly, my class has the stable environment that they need.” (Gaston, teacher)

Education

The WAGE\$ population is well educated, with the bulk of participants having at least a two-year degree. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the active FY19 WAGE\$ participants whose counties have participated at least two years (and 94% 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 268 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\$, 89% 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 across all participating counties, 77% of the participants of color have earned an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, its equivalent or higher on the WAGE\$ scale compared to 77% 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.

“Wages for child care staff, especially those with a degree, remain very low and many staff must use public assistance to support their families. WAGE\$ helps them with income, but is also a motivator to continue their education, which is great for staff, children, families and our community.” (Caldwell, director)

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. Forty-six percent (46%) of the active WAGE\$ participants earn less than \$12 per hour (43% of teachers, 81% of family child care providers or small facility operators and 27% of directors or those with partial administrative time earn less

than \$12). While this is a promising improvement from FY18 (58%), it reveals the ongoing compensation challenges in the field. This is particularly true when compared to the rate of \$23.89 that may be needed for one North Carolina employee with one child to meet basic, fundamental needs (Living Wage Calculator, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2019). Looking only at those participants working in NC Pre-K classrooms, 18% earn less than \$12 per hour. Nineteen percent (19%) of the NC Pre-K teacher assistants and 14% of the teachers earn less than \$12 per hour. While this is dramatically better than the field at large, it is still higher than expected.

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

The average six-month supplement payment issued statewide during FY19 was \$974. Due in part to having four newer counties, including one that has over 600 active participants, this amount is slightly less than FY18 (\$992). As these participants work to increase their education, this is expected to increase. 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 \$633 to \$1,843. The average six-month supplement at each tier level can be seen in Table C below. In the Tier One category, four counties are included that issued at least one payment at a percentage cut. Two counties started with a cut, but reimbursed participants to full payments during the year. Twelve (12) counties increased from Tier One to Tier Two for this fiscal year. All but two made this compensation available as of or retroactive to July. Seventeen (17) counties in both Tier One and Tier Two categories provided percentage increases. Over 800 participants benefited from increased compensation through these changes (not including those whose cuts were reimbursed).

Table C: Compensation by Tier

Tiers Funded FY19	Number of Participating Counties by Tier	Average Six-Month Supplement
All Tiers	55	\$974
Tier One	31	\$820
Tier One HEO	1	\$1,069
Tier One/Tier Two Split	2	\$950
Tier Two	19	\$1,167
Tier Two HEO	1	\$1,800
Tier Three	1	\$1,843

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:

- 77% 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
- 67% 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.

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program has helped me to provide resources for my classroom and to support my family. It is an incentive that makes me feel like I am valued as an educator and that my hard work to further my education in the early childhood education field is important and meaningful. I feel less stressed financially when I know that I can look forward to an award at specific periods of the year. I believe that this is a wonderful program.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

OUTPUTS

This section highlights the projected outputs of the Child Care WAGE\$® Program statewide for FY19 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 3,110 eligible participants will receive WAGE\$ payments as of June 30, 2019.	Output exceeded. As of June 2019, 4,144 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 40 outreach sessions.

WAGE\$ payments: Four thousand one hundred forty-four (4,144) participants were paid for completing at least one six-month period on the Child Care WAGE\$® Program during FY19. These participants worked in 1,577 facilities serving approximately 70,754 children. This number is an unduplicated count of supplement recipients. Of these, 414 were NC Pre-K teachers or assistants. Five hundred forty-four (544) applicants are currently on the waiting list, either waiting for funding and/or completing their initial or reactivated six-month commitment period in FY20.

Outreach and recruitment: Forty (40) outreach sessions were done upon request or as a result of WAGE\$ solicitation between June 15, 2018 and June 14, 2019. WAGE\$ representatives also discuss opportunities available through Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$. Many sessions were completed in conjunction with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, thus giving audience members an opportunity to learn about all three initiatives. These opportunities included multiple presentations and informational tables directed toward early care and education professionals, site visits and four outreach sessions for Smart Start partnerships and their boards. These boards typically include workforce representatives.

In addition to the field outreach, 8,042 recruitment emails or mailings were sent to 2,788 sites. WAGE\$ sent two different WAGE\$ flyers during the year, including one newly designed, to stimulate interest. 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.

OUTCOME

Table E below details the primary outcome of the Child Care WAGE\$® Program.

Table E: Outcome

Projected Outcome	Results
By June 30, 2019, 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%.

This outcome 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 percentage.

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, 76% of the sampled population completed surveys (1,786 of 2,345), which included the following:

- 73% of participating teachers/family child care providers (1,074 of 1,463)
- 85% of participating directors (160 of 188)
- 80% of directors with participating staff (552 of 694)

Sample responses

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

- WAGE\$ helps me feel more satisfied with my job. – 97%
- WAGE\$ is an incentive for me to seek additional education and/or it helps make pursuing coursework more financially feasible. – 89% (95% of those at temporary levels)
- The WAGE\$ supplement helps ease financial stress. – 98%
- WAGE\$ encourages me to stay with my current program. – 96%
- My WAGE\$ supplement helps me to provide more resources for my program or classroom. – 91%
- Receiving the WAGE\$ supplement makes me feel more appreciated and recognized for my work. – 97%

Ninety-five percent (95%) 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, 95% 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:

“Every time I have had a question, I get very kind, thoughtful and prompt service. Everyone seems to be working hard to make sure everything goes smoothly and is as simple for me as it can be.” (teacher)

“I have called WAGE\$ several times seeking clarification and each time I received great feedback and a sense of appreciation for the job I do.” (teacher)

“The WAGE\$ staff is very warm, caring, supportive and always available when I'm in need of an answer.” (family child care provider)

“Every time I call, I am always amazed at how friendly and helpful they are.” (family child care provider)

“WAGE\$ has absolutely the most caring and courteous staff.” (director)

• Ninety-seven percent (97%) 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.

“WAGE\$ has shown the value of giving incentives to teachers. Teachers need to feel appreciated and rewarded. All teachers deserve a chance to feel special and loved; that is how WAGE\$ makes me feel.” (Brunswick, teacher)

PROGRAM CHALLENGES

As in recent years, one of the challenges most frequently identified by participants and directors is the income cap. Individuals often need to earn more than even the highest income cap of \$18 per hour to meet family needs, go to school and/or stay in a profession that is not financially competitive, but this is particularly true in counties that choose one of the lower caps. Survey respondents shared a specific concern that those with higher education are often unable to participate and yet they bring the education children need to the classroom. As a result, one director said, “It seems the program is not reaching the correct population to me.” Those with extensive experience may also be unable to access this additional compensation. Another director shared, “I have a few degreed teachers with over 20 years of experience who make over the income cap and it feels as though they are being punished for staying in the field as long as they have.” Teachers expressed concern that a small raise might make them lose eligibility and yet the raise cannot compete with the impact of the supplement. WAGE\$ will be discussing the current income cap structure with its Education and Compensation Advisory Committee in FY20.

A significant change that occurred in FY19 was the welcome addition of Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$. Child Care Services Association has worked hard to make sure the two programs could work well together, and a challenge in this effort will hopefully become more of an opportunity for the workforce. Many full-time infant-toddler teachers who were participating on WAGE\$ elected to move to AWARD\$ in order to access the higher supplements. As a result, the projected spending for WAGE\$ partnerships decreased. The funds that may have become available in this transition could be used to pick up additional applicants and/or increase compensation by choosing a higher tier. While AWARD\$ does not officially have “tiers,” the amount provided is comparable to Tier Two. Since 31 WAGE\$ counties fund Tier One, they have the opportunity to consider an increase that would enable payments to be similar across programs. This may also be a motivator to choose a higher income cap. Not only does AWARD\$ use the \$18 cap and comparability would be ideal, but with the additional funds, perhaps counties could pick up new applicants that earn over the cap they have currently chosen.

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 FY19.

“I thank you for these funds. There was a time I had no money to help feed my kids and when I checked the mail I began to cry because this money came right on time.”

(Forsyth, teacher)



Table 1
Demographic Profile of the 3,295 Participants in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019



	# of Participants	% of Participants
Ethnicity		
American Indian	23	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	18	1%
Biracial	25	1%
Black/African American	1700	52%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	75	2%
White/European American	1379	42%
Not Given	57	2%
Other	18	1%
Gender		
Female	3263	99%
Male	32	1%
Age Range of Participants		
15-19 years	4	0%
20-24 years	128	4%
25-34 years	738	22%
35-44 years	801	24%
45-54 years	808	25%
55-59 years	369	11%
60-64 years	293	9%
65 and over	150	5%
Not Given	4	0%
Position		
Teacher	1909	58%
Teacher (In Home Educator)	4	0%
Teacher (Assistant Director)	43	1%
Teacher (Director)	43	1%
Teacher (Director Owner)	34	1%
Assistant Teacher	709	22%
Director	34	1%
Director (Owner)	5	0%
Assistant Director	28	1%
Small Home Provider	285	9%
Small Facility (<13) Operator	39	1%
Split Position	162	5%
Ages of Children Served*		
Birth up to Three	964	29%
Three to Five	1554	47%
Mixed Ages	777	24%
Education Level		
12 birth to five sem. hours	41	1%
18 general sem. hours including 4 birth to five sem. hours	60	2%
24 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	116	4%

**Table 1 (cont.)
Demographic Profile of the 3,295 Participants in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019**

	# of Participants	% of Participants
70 general sem. hours (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	6	0%
AAS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	23	1%
36 general sem. hours including 12 birth to five sem. hours	81	2%
70 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	10	0%
AAS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	16	0%
45 general sem. hours including 18 birth to five sem. hours	87	3%
AAS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	15	0%
57 general sem. hours including 24 birth to five sem. hours	167	5%
AAS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	25	1%
BA/BS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	99	3%
MA/MS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	15	0%
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	1528	46%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	80	2%
MA/MS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	9	0%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	189	6%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	72	2%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	574	17%
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	13	0%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	69	2%
Wage Rate**		
Below \$7.25 per hour	169	5%
\$7.25 - \$9.99 per hour	490	15%
\$10.00 - \$11.99 per hour	841	26%
\$12.00 - \$13.99 per hour	1012	31%
\$14.00 - \$15.99 per hour	600	18%
\$16.00 - \$18.00 per hour	183	6%
Years in Child Care Program: Participant's Start Date to Report End Date		
0 to .99 Years	131	4%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	374	11%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	371	11%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	339	10%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	255	8%
5.00 or More Years	1825	55%

* Combination classrooms including two and three year olds are included in the category "Mixed Ages."

** 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 2018 - June 2019



	Programs	Participants
Center	1,146	2,999
1 STAR	4	10
2 STAR	3	4
3 STAR	139	248
4 STAR	281	603
5 STAR	675	2,055
GS-110	23	33
PROB	4	7
PROV	8	18
Temporary	9	21
Family Provider	287	296
2 STAR	1	1
3 STAR	19	21
4 STAR	203	209
5 STAR	62	62
Temporary	2	3
TOTALS	<u>1,433</u>	<u>3,295</u>



Table 3
Educational Award Levels Profile of the 3,295 Participants
in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019



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.

88% 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	2742	100%	83%
Two	88	3%	3%
Three	105	4%	3%
Four	102	4%	3%
Five	23	1%	1%
Six	95	3%	3%
Seven	174	6%	5%
Eight	1384	50%	42%
Nine	78	3%	2%
Ten	211	8%	6%
Eleven	442	16%	13%
Twelve	40	1%	1%
Teacher/Home Provider Scale	324	100%	10%
Two	4	1%	0%
Three	7	2%	0%
Four	3	1%	0%
Five	1	0%	0%
Six	4	1%	0%
Seven	9	3%	0%
Eight	159	49%	5%
Nine	6	2%	0%
Ten	29	9%	1%
Eleven	86	27%	3%
Twelve	16	5%	0%
Director Scale	67	100%	2%
Two	2	3%	0%
Three	2	3%	0%
Six	1	1%	0%
Seven	2	3%	0%
Eight	29	43%	1%

Table 3 (cont.)
Educational Award Levels Profile of the 3,295 Participants
in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019

	# of Participants	% of Participants Out Of Scale	% of Participants Out Of Active
Nine	2	3%	0%
Ten	7	10%	0%
Eleven	14	21%	0%
Twelve	8	12%	0%
Teacher and Director Scales	162	100%	5%
Two	7	4%	0%
Three	2	1%	0%
Four	5	3%	0%
Five	2	1%	0%
Six	2	1%	0%
Seven	7	4%	0%
Eight	70	43%	2%
Nine	3	2%	0%
Ten	14	9%	0%
Eleven	45	28%	1%
Twelve	5	3%	0%



Table 4
Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019



4,144 unduplicated participants received a supplement for completing a six month period that ended during this reporting period; these participants worked in 1,577 different child care programs serving approximately 70,754 children.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 5
Center	3,829	1,268	69,382
Family Provider	317	309	1,372
<u>Total</u>	<u>4,146</u>	<u>1,577</u>	<u>70,754</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 3,814 Participants
in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019



The annual turnover percentage is based on an overall population of 3,814 participants. This population includes those individuals that were active during the reporting period of July 2018 - June 2019 (3,295) and those who left their centers during this time (519). 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 (July 2018 - June 2019)	
Total Participants	= 3,814
Active Participants	= 3,295
Left Center	= 519
Turnover Percentage	= 14%



Table 5
Profile of Participants who Left their Programs in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019



	# of Participants	% of Participants
Ethnicity		
American Indian	3	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	0%
Biracial	10	2%
Black/African American	225	43%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	18	3%
White/European American	249	48%
Not Given	10	2%
Other	2	0%
Gender		
Female	512	99%
Male	7	1%
Position		
Teacher	366	71%
Teacher (Assistant Director)	4	1%
Teacher (Director)	4	1%
Assistant Teacher	105	20%
Director	4	1%
Director (Owner)	2	0%
Assistant Director	4	1%
Small Home Provider	18	3%
Small Facility (<13) Operator	1	0%
Split Position	11	2%
Education Level		
12 birth to five sem. hours	5	1%
18 general sem. hours including 4 birth to five sem. hours	8	2%
24 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	11	2%
70 general sem. hours (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	3	1%
AAS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	8	2%
36 general sem. hours including 12 birth to five sem. hours	13	3%
70 general sem. hours including 6 birth to five sem. hours	4	1%
AAS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	4	1%
45 general sem. hours including 18 birth to five sem. hours	22	4%
AAS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	8	2%
57 general sem. hours including 24 birth to five sem. hours	33	6%
AAS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	4	1%
BA/BS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	23	4%
MA/MS (less than 6 birth to five sem. hours)	5	1%
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	217	42%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	21	4%
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	4%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	16	3%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	79	15%

**Table 5 (cont.)
Profile of Participants who Left their Programs in North Carolina
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019**

	# of Participants	% of Participants
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	3	1%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	8	2%
Wage Rate**		
Below \$7.25 per hour	11	2%
\$7.25 - \$9.99 per hour	101	19%
\$10.00 - \$11.99 per hour	149	29%
\$12.00 - \$13.99 per hour	161	31%
\$14.00 - \$15.99 per hour	82	16%
\$16.00 - \$18.00 per hour	15	3%
Years in Child Care Program: Participant's Start Date to Date Ineligible		
0 to .99 Years	54	10%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	111	21%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	101	19%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	53	10%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	50	10%
5.00 or More Years	150	29%
Regulation Type		
1 STAR	7	1%
3 STAR	57	11%
4 STAR	104	20%
5 STAR	339	65%
GS-110	4	1%
Temporary	2	0%
PROB	4	1%
PROV	2	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.



**41 Partner Organizations
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019**



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.
Lee County Partnership for Children
Martin-Pitt Partnership for Children, Inc.
Mecklenburg Partnership for Children
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 of Yadkin County, Inc.



**41 Partner Organizations
Child Care WAGES® Program
July 2018 - June 2019**



Smart Start Rowan, Inc.

Stanly County Partnership for Children

Surry County Early Childhood Partnership

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 FY19

“This program is awesome! At one point it truly did make me stay in my position for just a little longer as I waited for my supplement. Best decision ever. I gained a deeper appreciation for my career choice. I can honestly say I truly love what I do.” (Alamance teacher)

“It is the one thing that helps keep providers in child care.” (Alexander, director)

“The extra money I get makes me feel better about my salary. It has also influenced teachers to stay with us, which helps with the staff turnover. I enjoy the extra money and it helps me financially.” (Avery, director)

“I think the Child Care WAGES[®] 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 WAGES[®] 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.” (Brunswick, family child care provider)

“I feel more financially secure and feel that I can stay in my current position for a longer period of time due to WAGES[®] benefits.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Child Care WAGES[®] helps offer a competitive wage to teachers, which helps staff commit to staying in the child care field, furthering their education and continuing employment with their current center. All these things contribute to better quality care for children.” (Caldwell, director)

“I think WAGES[®] encourages people to stay in their program for an extended period of time and give stability to the children.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“Unfortunately, teacher assistants are not paid enough. I am very grateful for the supplements, which have allowed me to continue in the early education program.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“We have a low staff turnover rate and it helps to increase the staff morale.” (Columbus, director)

“I think the extra pay for early childhood educators is great. We can only attract people who are willing to work within the means of a child care center’s profit. More pay allows us to attract quality people that stay working with our children.” (Craven, director)

“This program encourages stability in employment as well as encourages continued education. It keeps highly qualified staff in our facilities.” (Cumberland, director)

^{*} 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.

“WAGE\$ is an added benefit that helps to attract and sustain staff members.” (Dare, director)

“It helps with the compensation to retain qualified staff.” (Davidson, director)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program has helped ease financial stress and allowed me to keep a job that I love. ... It helps to balance the pay scale of teachers and hopefully allow them to stay where they are needed and not go to a higher paying job. I have been able to stay at my job and not go to an occupation just for the money.” (Davie, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ Program is important because it helps retain great early childhood educators whose bonds with our children are invaluable.” (Durham, teacher)

“We need Pre-K staff in Edgecombe to stay and WAGE\$ helps them do so.” (Edgecombe, director)

“WAGE\$ keeps great people in the job!” (Forsyth, teacher)

“It is important because it supplements the staff salaries. On average, child care teachers are not paid what they are worth. Therefore, centers have a great deal of turnover. The majority of my staff have been with me for years and I am very proud of that. WAGE\$ helps them tremendously with that.” (Franklin, director)

“Early childhood is a very low paying field. We have such a high turnover rate because most teachers can't afford to live off of their salary. We're losing good teachers to other fields for this reason. As someone who receives WAGE\$, I can attest to the fact that this supplement has kept me at my current job even when I was ready to quit. By staying at my current job, my employer doesn't have to hire someone else and, most importantly, my class has the stable environment that they need.” (Gaston, teacher)

“Early childhood education is an underpaid career. This program allows me to stay at this job. I'm an infant teacher and still get to encourage my former students who are now turning five.” (Granville, teacher)

“I feel that the Child Care WAGE\$® Program is very important to early childhood professionals because it not only gives us additional resources that we can use to improve our classroom experiences, but also provides personal and family needs. It also makes us feel appreciated and encourages us to stay in our current positions. I have been working in my same position, center and community for fourteen years because of WAGE\$.” (Halifax, teacher)

“It is an incentive not to leave my job. Therefore, by staying at my present job, the children are very secure in seeing me every day and not a stranger.” (Harnett, teacher)

“This program is so important to me because it allows me to continue working in a field that I am passionate about.” (Haywood, teacher)

“Not only do I want to stay in my current job, but I want to stay working in this county because the county I live in does not participate in WAGE\$.” (Iredell, teacher)

“Unfortunately, early education is an underpaid field. WAGE\$ helps me continue to do what I love and still provide for my family.” (Jackson, teacher)

“Early educators do not get paid enough. This program is essential to keep educators in this field. Teachers that get WAGE\$ stay at our center much longer.” (Johnston, director)

“It helps me financially and it also helps me to stay working in child care and not seek other types of work for higher pay because this helps make up for low pay.” (Lee, teacher)

“It has made me stay in the center to have the bonus, and it has helped me to buy things for my class that the center doesn’t pay for.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“It helps underpaid staff receive better compensation for the important work they do. It helps them stay in the same workplace for longer periods of time.” (Macon, director)

“It helps staff be more content, stay longer.” (Martin, director)

“It is incentive to stay in the early childhood field. Even with a full degree, the average pay isn’t able to cover costs for a small family and the WAGE\$ Program encourages teachers to stay in the field.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It gives an incentive to keep on working in a child care setting.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“WAGE\$ does prolong your stay at any child care facility.” (Nash, teacher)

“It helps qualified teachers stay in the program they are currently in instead of searching for higher paying jobs elsewhere. It helps with less teacher turnover, therefore, it helps the children in their care have more stability.” (Pitt, director)

“It makes me feel valued as an early child care teacher. I honestly can say if I didn’t receive it, I would probably look for another job with higher pay with my degree.” (Randolph, teacher)

“It gives caregivers, that are underpaid, a chance to stay with their employer, continue their education and provide for their family.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“It has been a huge incentive to stay at my current child care center.” (Rowan, teacher)

“When you get the supplement, you are encouraged to stay in the field and this is an important field.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“WAGE\$ provides positive reinforcement to keep low paid staff who are passionate about children.” (Stanly, teacher)

“It makes me want to stay with my job for many years to come. ... I think it’s important because the children benefit. It makes me feel more valued.” (Surry, teacher)

“By offering the teachers additional wages, they stay longer.” (Watauga, director)

“WAGE\$ is important because it assists with my plans in my personal life and in my classroom. It keeps me motivated to continue to work in early childhood since we are not paid that much and have such an awesome responsibility.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Having this additional income makes it possible for me to continue caring for children. Without it, I may have to close up and seek a higher paying job.” (Wilkes, family child care provider)

“It helps me stay committed in the field I’m passionate about.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has financially helped me stay in the child care line of work.” (Yadkin, family child care provider)



Appendix B: Education

Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY19

“WAGE\$* is essential because it helps to boost teacher morale within the program. WAGE\$ both encourages and motivates staff to increase their education. Additionally, WAGE\$ provides a sense of healthy competition among team members as they see who can achieve the next level first.” (Alamance, director)

“WAGE\$ helps provide the means for my staff to fund school which, in turn, provides a better classroom experience for our children.” (Alexander, director)

“I think it is important by helping me get a better education to be the best teacher I can be for the students in my care.” (Alleghany, teacher)

“Teachers are always excited to receive their WAGE\$ checks. This extra money helps them with their educational goals and providing for their families. Teachers are happier and it shows in their classrooms.” (Brunswick, director)

“I think that this program is very important. I think that it helps when hiring to let people know about this program and its benefits. Staff are more likely to go back to school if they have an incentive.” (Buncombe, director)

“Wages for child care staff, especially those with a degree, remain very low and many staff must use public assistance to support their families. WAGE\$ helps them with income, but is also a motivator to continue their education, which is great for staff, children, families and our community.” (Caldwell, director)

“It has helped provide clothing, insurance, pay bills, helped with presents, college, and so much more for my family. It has encouraged me in my career and with obtaining my AAS degree, which has helped me pass knowledge on to the children I come in contact with.” (Clay, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is very important to our staff. It has motivated several of them to go back to school and helps with their satisfaction level, which has a positive impact on children.” (Cleveland, director)

“The program helps to support the teaching staff to obtain more education. In return, they can help the children and families with their school readiness skills.” (Columbus, director)

“WAGE\$ provides opportunities for coursework to obtain a degree. The support of WAGE\$ has a great impact on dedication in the teaching field and a commitment to the community. In my life, the support of WAGE\$ helped me to achieve my degree and continue coursework so that I could enhance my learning and teaching skills in the classroom and provide resources to better serve families and their needs.” (Craven, 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.

“It is encouraging me to get that degree. ... It means a lot knowing I have that extra support from WAGE\$.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“It has benefited me and my classroom and has helped me with gas and paying for classes. My students get the benefit that their teacher is less stressed.” (Dare, teacher)

“It is a great incentive for those struggling financially and helps those wanting to further their education but who can’t afford to. If it wasn’t for WAGE\$, I would not have been able to receive my early childhood degree.” (Davidson, teacher)

“I think the Child Care WAGE\$® Program is important because it encourages providers to continue their education and be rewarded for earning the next level of education.” (Durham, family child care provider)

“It shows appreciation for me attending school, getting a degree, staying in child care for nine years, and it helps my family.” (Edgecombe, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is important for staff morale and increased education for staff members. It provides a financial basis for staff to continue education debt free.” (Forsyth, director)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has really motivated me to continue with my education and continue to work in early childhood. WAGE\$ definitely eases financial stress. I can also purchase supplies for my classroom.” (Franklin, teacher)

“It was difficult in the beginning to start taking classes to work towards an Early Childhood Associate’s Degree. I was 50 at the time. It has taken me a long time, but I remained determined to see it through to completion. In May 2019, at the age of 62, I will finally graduate with a 4.0 and receive that degree. I would not have been able to have done this without the support of programs like T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$. Because of my education, I feel more confident as a teacher. My plans are to continue in this field of early childhood for as long as my health and physical ability allow me. I began working with children in 1974, and that desire to continue has remained strong.” (Gaston, teacher)

“I think any time that any staff can get an incentive to continue school is a plus. It gives the staff and me the motivation that is needed to pursue further education.” (Granville, director)

“It is very important because, without it, I would not be able to continue to take classes to improve myself and my family’s future.” (Halifax, teacher)

“It has been a blessing to be able to receive my bonus twice a year. It seems like they come at the right time and there is always a need for them. This pushed me to finish up my associate’s degree and, in time, I will be going back to get my bachelor’s.” (Harnett, teacher)

“It’s important because it helps centers get teachers that are more qualified and gives them an incentive for education.” (Iredell, director)

“It helped me in going back to school and I got a degree in early childhood.” (Johnston, family child care provider)

“I have enrolled in another course. It has built up my confidence.” (Lee, teacher)

“I think it's important because it will give teachers an incentive to further their education while also becoming eligible for the extra money WAGE\$ provides to us. Child care is a hard career choice and we need dedicated teachers in our field and this will help provide incentive, plus we are learning more as we further educate ourselves.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“It has helped me pay for school and books.” (Martin, teacher)

“The staff feel more valued and professional. Since the start of the program, I have seven of the eight teaching staff in school working toward higher education.” (Mecklenburg, director)

“The funds help offer more money for potential education. All staff are in school and parents love education.” (Nash, director)

“Keeping teachers seeking higher education and having the financial support to do so is best for the children who are our future.” (Pitt, director)

“It is a very important supplement for the teachers, and encourages them to continue their education, as well as stay with our program.” (Randolph, director)

“Sometimes life can hit hard. Going back to school can be stressful with a family and the need to work as well. Child Care WAGE\$® is a great encouragement that tells you to keep going on, early childhood is needed.” (Rockingham, family child care provider)

“Since receiving the supplement, I have completed my Bachelor's Degree, and during that completion I felt proud because, as a provider, I was completing a goal and the supplement helped me to push for my goal, as well as the encouragement from the staff at WAGE\$. ... I think the Child Care WAGE\$® Program is important because it motivates child care providers to aim for the top, to continue school, to be all you can be, and it makes you appreciate pushing and making that big step towards further education.” (Rowan, family child care provider)

“It helps teachers get education. I had the money to help go. I wouldn't have finished my education without WAGE\$.” (Rutherford, director)

“We want the best teachers, which requires knowledge and education that costs money. It's hard to offset those costs. This supplements what I make and helps for my student loans.” (Stanly, teacher)

“It encourages staff to get education. Anyone who receives it is happy. It brings good quality staff to the program.” (Surry, director)

“It helps me go to school and gives me peace of mind.” (Swain, teacher)

“It inspires teachers to get better education and makes our everyday lives better. We can then take that to the classroom to make our children’s lives better.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“This program has given me the drive to go back to school and pursue a higher degree and I am truly excited.” (Vance, teacher)

“It has been a huge incentive for me to continue my education!” (Watauga, teacher)

“WAGE\$ promotes learning, which increases knowledge for teachers and staff in the early childhood education field.” (Warren, director)

“The program has enabled and encouraged me to further my education.” (Wayne, teacher)

“We have two teachers currently enrolled to be able to get more money, so it does encourage education, which in return, is better for our children.” (Wilkes, director)

“This program encourages you to complete your degree in early childhood education.” (Wilson, teacher)



Appendix C: Compensation Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY19

“It is a relief when the check comes, either to pay for bills or food.” (Alamance, teacher)

“I think that WAGE\$* is important because it helps motivate teachers. Teachers are so important and there is a serious lack of incentives and funds out there for them. To me, WAGE\$ helps me not stress out as much about money, while being able to continue doing a job I love!”
(Alamance, teacher)

“It relieves stress by helping financially. The extra money has been a blessing to me and my family.” (Alexander, teacher)

“The program is very important as WAGE\$ helps to financially ease the burdens of today’s high cost of living.” (Alleghany, teacher)

“Teachers, especially preschool teachers, are not paid nearly enough for the work we do. Even though most of us are here because it is our hearts’ calling, it is nice to have supplemental pay when times are a little harder because the bills still need to be paid and this helps so much.”
(Avery, teacher)

“WAGE\$ isn’t just a financial benefit that helps me and helps me add resources to my classroom, it also makes me feel more appreciated for the work we do for which, across the board, we remain underpaid for otherwise.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“I think WAGE\$ eases the financial stress in your life so you don’t have to bring it to the kids.”
(Caldwell, teacher)

“I love working with children and watching them learn new things. WAGE\$ helps me supply my classroom with things to help my children learn. I teach the 4 and 5-year-olds and at that age you have to keep them interested in learning. Without WAGE\$, I wouldn’t have enough money to buy the things I need to get them involved and interested in learning. I would probably have to look for different employment if it wasn’t for the extra income that WAGE\$ supplies me with. I am very thankful for WAGE\$.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“It has meant survival in so many cases when it comes down to finances, caring for my children, and even continuing on to school.” (Cleveland, director)

“It's important to me because it gives me an incentive to work harder at my job and to appreciate my job a lot more because WAGE\$ is something we don't have to get. I thank everyone that thinks we as child care workers deserve WAGE\$.” (Columbus, 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.

“It helps me to be in a good financial place and that allows me to perform better at my job.”
(Craven, teacher)

“It helps me to feed my own children.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“It helps with household costs for an already low paying job with no benefits.” (Dare, teacher)

“There is so much power in receiving this help as I am not able to achieve success on my own. WAGE\$ has been the secret to my survival. It has been my support, breakthrough and financial peace. It has also helped my passion to serve children. Thank you.” (Durham, family child care provider)

“When the check comes, it’s like having an extra payday! It takes the stress out of worrying how bills will get paid.” (Edgecombe, teacher)

“I believe WAGE\$ is important, not only because it helps in everyday struggles of money, but it motivates me to be a better teacher.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“WAGE\$ helps ease the burdens of financial stress.” (Franklin, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® has been so beneficial to my home in many ways. There have been times when we have had no money and had to struggle even for meals. It has come at the right time. Thank you.” (Gaston, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program helps teachers. It helps teachers by letting us do what we want to do, but at the same time take care of our families.” (Graham, teacher)

“The supplement has been a blessing to provide for my own personal needs, such as groceries for my family.” (Granville, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is important to me because it not only helps with providing more resources for my program, but it also helps with professional development. We have been five-star since 2010, and I know WAGE\$ played a very big part in helping us achieve our goals. Thanks.” (Halifax, director)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is important to me because it helps with the household bills, allows me to concentrate on the needs of my class and gives me a desire to do my best job for the children.” (Harnett, teacher)

“WAGE\$ gives financial relief, which carries over from the classroom to the home.” (Haywood, teacher)

“WAGE\$ makes the teachers happy. Happy teachers make happy students.” (Herford, teacher)

“This has helped me with my finances when I am not able to fulfill all my obligations.” (Iredell, teacher)

“I am a very appreciative for the supplement because it does relieve me of some financial stress.” (Johnston, teacher)

“It helps teachers feel more financially secure.” (Lee, teacher)

“During unforeseen financial hardships, the supplemental check I receive from WAGE\$ has really been a Godsend to me and my family.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“Receiving the supplement has helped me financially in every aspect of my life.” (Martin, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program has helped me to provide resources for my classroom and to support my family. It is an incentive that makes me feel like I am valued as an educator and that my hard work to further my education in the early childhood education field is important and meaningful. I feel less stressed financially when I know that I can look forward to an award at specific periods of the year. I believe that this is a wonderful program.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“WAGE\$ helps you feel more appreciated. It helps with providing supplies for the classroom and with other needs for the children. It has meant we can be more creative in the classroom. Thanks for all you do to provide Child Care WAGE\$®.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program has helped me focus on my career more by taking away some financial burdens.” (Nash, teacher)

“Many times, when I received my check, I had a light bill that had to be paid. If lights are cut off, I would not be able to keep kids!” (Northampton, family child care provider)

“We have great teachers. A lot of time teachers are not paid what they are worth. We as teachers often take our own money to purchase supplies for the classroom. The WAGE\$ program gives the incentive to move forward and do more for the class.” (Pitt, teacher)

“I was able to make my classroom the best it’s ever been. I was less stressed out financially.” (Randolph, teacher)

“WAGE\$ is important because, without it, stress can arise and leaving home issues at home is hard when you're financially stressed.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“It has helped me pay bills in my home and put food in my house.” (Stanly, teacher)

“It helps me pay my bills and make it from day to day. ... It means the world to me.” (Surry, teacher)

“Pay for teacher assistants is very low, making it difficult to attract and keep qualified assistants, which are essential to our program. WAGE\$ provides a supplement, making their income more comparable with other jobs they could hold in the community.” (Swain, director)

“WAGE\$ is very important. It helps to enrich my life.” (Vance, teacher)

“It gives satisfaction and incentive to teachers to do a good job; that helps kids, which helps families and helps communities.” (Warren, director)

“It keeps food on my table.” (Watauga, teacher)

“If it wasn't for this program I would be in more debt and I would possibly have to find another job to help with the bills.” (Wayne, teacher)

“It has been a supplement in time of need, not want. ... As you know this job is not sought out because of the salary. I took this job because of the love for the children I encounter on a daily basis. The extra money provided by this program allows the woes of money strains to be a little more relaxed so that I can be all that I need to be mentally and physically for these children.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“Teachers have more time and energy to focus on the kids knowing they have better financial stability.” (Wilson, director)

“I love the program! It is very important to teacher assistants to receive this WAGE\$ money so they can supplement their low income. This money has allowed me to make ends meet.” (Yancey, teacher)



Appendix D: Appreciation/Recognition Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY19

“As early childhood educators, we must make the first step in advocating that what we do is important. The WAGE\$ Program* helps support this by supplementing staff wages to get them closer to what they should make.” (Alamance, director)

“WAGE\$ helps child care providers feel like they are more than babysitters.” (Alexander, teacher)

“WAGE\$ has shown the value of giving incentives to teachers. Teachers need to feel appreciated and rewarded. All teachers deserve a chance to feel special and loved; that is how WAGE\$ makes me feel.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“It provides educators with the resources to further themselves professionally! It creates more worth to the profession because people feel valued and recognized for their important work!” (Buncombe, director)

“The general public does not seem to understand how important good day care teachers are. This program helps make me feel important.” (Caldwell, director)

“WAGE\$ makes our field more professional and makes us feel appreciated.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“WAGE\$ helps me to feel more appreciated for doing what I love to do. It gives me the chance to do the job I have always wanted to do. Being with children as they grow is a great experience.” (Clay, teacher)

“WAGE\$ shows we’re appreciated and not just glorified babysitters.” (Columbus, teacher)

“It lets me know someone cares about my welfare. It takes a healthy body and stress-free mind to care for children eight hours a day. The WAGE\$ incentive helps keep me positive.” (Cumberland, director)

“It helps early childhood educators to feel as though their commitment has meaning.” (Dare, teacher)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is important because it recognizes and encourages child care professionals in our community. The WAGE\$ Program has allowed me to further my education and provide material for my child care.” (Durham, family child care provider)

“WAGE\$ makes teachers feel loved, noticed for their hard work and less stressed, which creates a happier environment for all.” (Forsyth, 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 lets me know that people care and understand the importance of what child care providers do. Thank you.” (Franklin, teacher)

“I just feel appreciated and recognized for my hard work. It’s good to know that someone else notices that too, enough to help me financially where my regular pay lacks – to help pay all of my bills. I just want to be able to pay all of my bills in ONE month.” (Gaston, teacher)

“The program makes me feel that I have worth and that I am really accomplishing something very important to my job.” (Halifax, teacher)

“It reassures child care teachers/educators that they too are professionals.” (Harnett, teacher)

“I feel there is great value in early childhood education and WAGE\$ directly supports my beliefs.” (Haywood, teacher)

“The compensation makes me feel valued as an early childhood educator and defines the important role I play in the children’s lives as well as the community.” (Iredell, teacher)

“Early childhood educators are underpaid. Child Care WAGE\$® makes me feel more like a professional. I feel as if my work is appreciated and I am being compensated for my hard work and dedication.” (Macon, teacher)

“It helps us feel validated in what we do. It makes staff happier.” (Martin, director)

“The program has helped me feel more valued as an early educator. ... I think the program is important because we are an undervalued market. This program gives early educators a way to help supplement our income. We are underpaid and undervalued. This says, ‘Hey, we see you and we need you.’” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It has helped keep the morale of the staff upbeat. Even though they know materials are short and incomes are not at the level they should be.” (Nash, director)

“It gives recognition that teachers do matter and they are not just babysitters.” (Pitt, director)

“It helps us not feel like babysitters. It makes us feel valued.” (Rowan, director)

“WAGE\$ makes me feel proud to be a teacher.” (Stanly, teacher)

“It is validation for those who work in a field that has little recognition.” (Surry, director)

“WAGE\$ is important because we do have the education and so the supplement is a recognition of the hard work we do and our value.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“It makes me feel appreciated and lets me know we are more than ‘babysitters,’ we are educators.” (Vance, teacher)

“It makes me feel very appreciated and valued at my job. ... I believe it is important for early childhood educators to feel valued and appreciated. This makes them want to try harder and do well. I have happier teachers overall which, in turn, makes for happier children and families.”
(Watauga, director)

“The Child Care WAGE\$® Program makes me feel important and devoted.” (Wayne, family child care provider)

“WAGE\$ has given me a sense of purpose working in the child care field.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Child Care WAGE\$® gives me a purpose and makes me feel like what I do counts.” (Yadkin, family child care provider)



Appendix E: Smart Start Messages Feedback Collected from WAGE\$ Surveys FY19

“Thank you. A million times thank you. Please keep this program.” (Alamance, teacher)

“We’re very thankful for the work you do so that we have the funding to do what we do.”
(Alexander, teacher)

“I really appreciate my local Smart Start Partnership for all they do to continue to provide supplements for the teachers in our county. This gave me an incentive to keep taking classes.”
(Alleghany, teacher)

“This incentive is very appreciated! It often comes at a time when bills are especially high and helps me to stay afloat!” (Brunswick, teacher)

“This is a very important supplement! It helps the staff to feel more appreciated for all their hard work.” (Buncombe, director)

“Thank you for participating in this program. I can see a benefit in our center, and with the impact our staff has on the children.” (Caldwell, director)

“Thank you so much for supporting us teachers. Often, I do not feel supported outside of my child care facility and this program has really helped in giving me more opportunities to gain classroom resources and supplement what I spend out of pocket. It also allows me the funds to go back to school and really stay where I am and teaching. I couldn’t see myself doing anything else and this program allows me the financial stability to continue doing what I love.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“Thank you! The program has helped my family tremendously!” (Clay, teacher)

“Thank you for the opportunity to provide for my family without switching jobs.” (Cleveland, director)

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you for thinking we are worthy of the Child Care WAGES[®]* supplement. It really helps out a lot in my life. It makes me value my job as a child care teacher more. You are the best.” (Columbus, teacher)

“Thank you so much! This program and the others like it make me feel like what I am doing actually matters and makes a difference. I’m more than just a ‘babysitter,’ I feel like a true educator.” (Craven, teacher)

“This program is a lifesaver.” (Cumberland, director)

* 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’s truly appreciated. I love working with young children, but it can be challenging. My job is low paying, so these supplements truly help me to feel like what I do is worth the effort.” (Dare, teacher)

“It is a great thing. It lets us know that somebody cares about us and what we do for the children.” (Davidson, teacher)

“I enjoy working with children and have continued for several years because I have the supplement to help my pay scale. Thank you!” (Davie, teacher)

“It has been invaluable. I struggled regularly to pay my bills, just keeping heat in the winter was a horrible cost, but with this program, it has helped provide a barrier that kept us warm every winter since. It did more than that though. I could never bring my daughters to even the movies. It was just too much, but with the buffers that you helped provide for my family, we have been able to save enough for little things to do with my daughters.” (Durham, teacher)

“Thank you for your extra support. We love our jobs, but you make it possible to do what we love and still have a little more of the income we need.” (Edgecombe, teacher)

“I thank you for these funds. There was a time I had no money to help feed my kids and when I checked the mail I began to cry because this money came right on time.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“It keeps me where I love to work. I’ve been here for 11 years and while I have a BA and am working on my Master’s, I can stay in the same program and watch the kids grow up here thanks to WAGE\$.” (Franklin, director)

“Unless there is a set, livable wage across the entire board for early childhood teachers, WAGE\$ is the only way most teachers can continue to work in the field they love while also surviving financially.” (Gaston, teacher)

“Thank you. It really helps me and my family a lot.” (Graham, teacher)

“Thanks a lot for caring and your support for low wage teachers.” (Granville, teacher)

“Thank you for your continued support of WAGE\$. It has improved my experiences as an early childhood caregiver tremendously.” (Halifax, teacher)

“Thank you for continuing to fund the Child Care WAGE\$® Program supplements. Without my supplement checks, I would never have been able to continue working in this field for as long as I have (20+ years).” (Harnett, teacher)

“Anyone who works in child care is not doing it for the money. We do it because we can make a difference in children's lives. However, the real world expects you to be able to pay your bills. This supplement helps to do that.” (Haywood, teacher)

“It’s a great resource for teachers who are underpaid.” (Hertford, teacher)

“Thank you so very much for this money. It is the difference between getting items for my classroom, helping with my educational goals or not being able to do any of them.” (Iredell, teacher)

“Thank you for making lives better.” (Jackson, teacher)

“It is a financial lifesaver and an incentive to keep working in my position.” (Johnston, teacher)

“Thank you so much, it is very helpful to my family and it is very much appreciated!” (Lee, teacher)

“I would just like to say thank you to everyone. The supplemental checks we receive are so helpful, and they also validate what we have chosen to do.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“I greatly appreciate the recognition that child care workers are generally underpaid for their services. This supplement helps.” (Macon, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing that we work hard in child care, despite being underpaid.” (Martin, teacher)

“The supplement was a tremendous help. I love what I do and the impact it has, but the lack of financial stability the field offers makes it difficult to have even a modest lifestyle. I often worry about being ill prepared for a major emergency like my car breaking down or a health scare, not to mention something like retirement. The WAGE\$ Program gave me a bit of peace of mind in that regard and I am so thankful for it.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I want to thank you for this life changing opportunity and experience!” (Mitchell, teacher)

“The WAGE\$ supplement is very appreciated and hopefully it will continue to be funded.” (Nash, teacher)

“Thanks for all that you do. Without it, I wouldn’t see my way through.” (Northampton, teacher)

“Without the supplement, I probably would have left the classroom and pursued another career path.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you for continuing to recognize early childhood educators as important and deserving of a higher wage.” (Randolph, teacher)

“I am absolutely grateful and appreciative for the supplement. I feel as most people do, that teachers in general do not get paid enough. It is no different for teachers in day care centers. We have low pay and no benefits from our center. Even parents are amazed at the low pay received. So thank you all for your support.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“I don’t take it for granted because this is something that Smart Start didn’t have to do, but they understand that when providers decide to further their education, they deserve to be compensated. And I am ever so thankful.” (Rowan, family child care provider)

“I always appreciate that someone cares enough to help relieve some of the financial burden of the people who care for young children.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“Thank you! We want quality teachers guiding and leading our children. This provides a stepping stone to building that quality teacher base.” (Stanly, teacher)

“It allows those who are in this field, with low recognition, a chance to get education and make their lives better.” (Surry, director)

“WAGES makes it possible for me to make ends meet and that’s very appreciated.” (Transylvania, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing us and the roles we play in young children’s lives.” (Vance, teacher)

“It is important to help teachers with this program because teachers’ jobs are always to help our future.” (Warren, teacher)

“Thank you so much for valuing early educators!” (Watauga, family child care provider)

“The program is very important to me. I hope and need it to continue. It helps me keep my life organized. It is included in my six-month financial plan. Therefore, I patiently look forward to and get excited to receive it. Thank you! I appreciate the Smart Start Partnership in my community. Thank you for being there for our professionals!” (Wayne, teacher)

“I appreciate it. It’s a reward and makes you want to stay in school and stay in your current program.” (Wayne, director)

“Most of all, thank you so much. You make me feel like my life matters to someone.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“I would like to tell you all thank you for making this available to us. Without it, we would be in financial stress.” (Wilson, teacher)

“If it wasn’t for you, more people would have left child care.” (Yadkin, family child care provider)

“I am so grateful for these funds and so thankful that Smart Start wants to invest in teachers and assistants in the early childhood classroom.” (Yancey, teacher)