

## **Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® FY22 Final Report**

### **REPORT CONTENTS**

The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® (AWARD\$) 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.

Program Eligibility – Highlights primary requirements to participate in AWARD\$.

Program Impact – Provides information on the program's impact overall (Table A: Median Hourly Rates by Education Level)

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

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

Program Evaluations – Highlights results from the AWARD\$ surveys.

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

Funding – Describes the notification procedures for recipients regarding 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 of employing child care facilities.

Table 3 – Identifies the number of participants funded at each education level.

Table 4 – States the number of individuals paid, their programs and the number of children impacted for the state and for each county with program participants. 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.

Appendix A – Presents sample survey feedback about the impact of AWARD\$.

Appendix B – Presents survey messages for AWARD\$ funder.

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers and family child care providers working full-time with children birth through two years of age in North Carolina. The program is designed to better compensate and retain well-educated teachers working with our youngest children. AWARD\$ is funded by the 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 at least 30 hours per week with infants, ones or twos.
- earn at or below \$19 per hour.
- work in a licensed child care program with at least three stars.
- have an Associate Degree with at least 24 birth to five focused semester hours or higher.

## PROGRAM OVERALL IMPACT

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® 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. Through graduated salary supplements, the program helps decrease turnover and encourages the continued educational pursuits of the child care workforce. The funding helps address financial stress that participants may experience, giving teachers a better opportunity to focus on the children in their classrooms rather than on the economic challenges they face. The compensation is critical, particularly now as North Carolina and the entire nation battle the “great resignation” and employees around the country demand higher pay, better working conditions and respect.

As of July 2022, 1,114 child care professionals in 690 child care programs were active AWARD\$ participants (those who have been paid and are still eligible based on their most recent employment confirmation). Of these individuals, nearly 100% are women and 92% work in four and five star licensed centers or homes. The fiscal year was extended through July 2022. The next program year will begin August 1, 2022.

### Turnover

Turnover numbers for Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® reflect active participants who left their child care programs, as identified in confirmations completed with employers during the fiscal year.

If participants leave their program and resume eligibility at a new site, they will not be factored into the report at all until they have completed a full six-month period at their new site. Once participants receive a supplement, they will again be recognized as an active participant. Only participants for whom AWARD\$ 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. change of position within the program, center closure) are not considered turnover.

Anecdotally, turnover has been a significant issue for early childhood programs in the past year. Employers are challenged to find teachers at all, let alone keep them for extended periods of time. This issue was apparent during the height of COVID-19 and became even more problematic as what has been called the “great resignation” began to impact most industries. The infant-toddler workforce, because of its extremely low pay, may have been particularly susceptible to these increased losses. The stabilization grants provided by the state to help child care programs survive can be used to provide compensation and benefits to try and curb turnover and make the field more attractive. AWARD\$ is another strategy that can help make it more

possible for committed teachers to stay despite the trend. Having compensation strategies like these will be an essential part of the solution to rebuild and stabilize the workforce going forward.

The turnover rate of AWARD\$ participants for FY22 was 16%, below the turnover rate of 25% established as the contract goal. It is also below the 21% of infant-toddler teachers who indicated in a 2015 survey that they anticipated leaving the field within three years (Child Care Services Association, 2017). Perhaps most importantly, this rate is well below what might have been expected during this time of flux.

The participant turnover rate compares favorably to the 21% turnover rate of full-time teachers and assistants in the state’s early childhood workforce overall, captured in 2019 pre-pandemic data (Child Care Services Association, 2020). Given the low, often poverty level, compensation for early educators, the rate of departure would likely have been much higher without the workforce supports available in North Carolina, including AWARD\$, the Child Care WAGES® Program and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program.

With directors reporting difficulty finding and keeping staff, particularly qualified staff, in the wake of the pandemic, it is clear that North Carolina’s \$11.50 per hour average rate of pay for infant-toddler teachers and \$10 per hour for assistants working with this age group are simply not enough. The AWARD\$ supplements address retention and make it more possible for educated professionals to afford to teach young children, particularly in this current landscape.

In addition to statistical data showing an impact on retention, AWARD\$ 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 the impact of these supplements.

*“AWARD\$ has help me stay with my current program. I probably would have left for other opportunities if not for AWARD\$. It benefits the children at the center because they see the same staff throughout the years and that helps them feel more secure and safe.” (Halifax, teacher)*

**Education**

Infant-toddler teachers tend to have less education than their preschool counterparts. In 2019 data, 73% of those teachers who taught preschoolers had at least an associate degree compared to only 58% of those teachers who taught children birth through two. Progress is occurring, though, with a 6% increase for infant-toddler teachers with degrees compared to 2015. AWARD\$ is an incentive to get education and it helps retain those teachers who do.

Especially given these levels of education, the population is woefully underpaid. Table A below examines the median hourly rate of participants within each education level on the scale.

Table A: Median Hourly Rates by Education Level

<b>Education scale level*</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Median hourly rate from employer</b>
8	685	\$13.87
9	44	\$13.88

10	84	\$14.00
11	267	\$15.00
12	34	\$15.00

Though participants already have higher levels of education, 89% of the survey respondents still indicated that Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® encourages or helps financially support additional coursework.

Seventy percent (70%) of the AWARD\$ active participants are people of color and/or Latinx. Given the diverse population of children attending child care in North Carolina, this educational equity is very important.

Through survey feedback, participants took the opportunity to express the importance of education and how AWARD\$ supports, recognizes or rewards their efforts.

*“The children in my care get more knowledge and greater exposure to creative and life changing learning activities because I am able to get higher learning myself to implement in the classroom. This award allows me to continue my education and buy materials for the classroom.” (Pender, family child care home provider)*

### Compensation

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® 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. In FY22, AWARD\$ responded to DCDEE’s request to protect the eligibility of participants who might have received increased compensation resulting from the time-limited stabilization grants. The pre-stabilization grant hourly rates of active participants were used to determine eligibility for the year. Based on income data using this temporary policy, 34% of the active AWARD\$ participants earn less than \$13 per hour. Fifty-seven percent (57%) earn less than \$15 per hour, which is the minimum starting rate for many employers, including Target. Target’s start rate for some employees can be as much as \$24 per hour.

The challenge of hiring new teachers highlights the ongoing compensation plight of the field. Even in the best of times, early educators are severely underpaid for the work they do, which is illustrated by a comparison to the rate of \$33.10 that may be needed for one North Carolina employee with one child to meet basic, fundamental needs (Living Wage Calculator, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2022).

The poor compensation across the board highlights the need for salary supplements in order to attract and retain qualified staff. Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® survey results support this. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the respondents stated that AWARD\$ encourages them to stay with their current child care programs.

The average six-month supplement payment issued during FY22 was \$1,288. The scale ranges from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per year. Nearly 100% of evaluation respondents indicated that receiving an AWARD\$ 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:

- 86% are better able to pay their bills
- 72% are more able to address the basic needs of their families (food/housing)
- 70% rely on the supplements to help address transportation costs
- 58% use the funds to provide additional resources for their classrooms or child care programs – in a separate question, a greater number of respondents (91%) stated that providing resources for their programs is a benefit of AWARD\$

Economic insecurity impacts teacher well-being, and can have consequences for the quality of interactions they have with the children in their care. 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. Especially now, 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.

*“There have been many instances where if it hadn’t been for the supplement, I don’t know what I would’ve done. It has meant the world to me. It has helped me stay afloat and be the best possible teacher I can be.” (Moore, teacher)*

## OUTPUTS

This section highlights the projected outputs of Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® for FY22 and the program’s effectiveness in reaching these goals. Primary results are shown in Table B below, followed by additional detail as applicable.

**Table B: Outputs**

	<b>Projected Output</b>	<b>Results</b>
1	Approximately 1,080 eligible infant-toddler educators will receive AWARD\$ payments in FY22.	<b>Output exceeded.</b> In FY22, 1,337 infant-toddler educators received AWARD\$ payments.
2	AWARD\$ will send 5,000 recruitment emails or mailings to the early childhood workforce.	<b>Output exceeded.</b> In FY22, AWARD\$ sent 10,412 recruitment mailings and/or emails.
3	Staff will conduct 20 outreach opportunities to offer information about the program and recruit eligible educators.	<b>Output exceeded.</b> Staff conducted 32 outreach sessions where information about the AWARD\$ opportunity was shared.

*Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® payments:* One thousand three hundred and thirty-seven (1,337) infant-toddler educators were paid for completing at least one six-month period in FY22. These participants worked in 792 child care centers and family child care homes in 88 counties serving approximately 19,261 children. This number is an unduplicated count of supplement recipients for AWARD\$. Please note that these individuals may or may not still be eligible at the end of the year, so this number is different than the number of active participants discussed elsewhere in this report.

*Outreach and recruitment:* Thirty-two (32) virtual outreach sessions sharing AWARD\$ information were completed in FY22. When appropriate, staff discussed opportunities available

through AWARD\$, WAGE\$, and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program. The goal is to give audience members an opportunity to learn about multiple resources supported by DCDEE.

In addition to the outreach listed above, 10,412 recruitment emails or mailings were sent to 3,265 facilities. AWARD\$ also sent information to key partners including Smart Start partnerships, resource and referral agencies, community colleges, and infant-toddler specialists. 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 also inquired about any possible eligible staff not yet accessing a supplement.

## OUTCOME

Table C below details the primary outcomes for Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®.

**Table C: Outcome**

	<b>Projected Outcome</b>	<b>Results</b>
1	The turnover rate of Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® participants for FY22 will be less than 25%.	<b>Outcome met.</b> The turnover rate for AWARD\$ participants was 16%, below the benchmark of 25%. This is particularly encouraging given the current reports of an overall teacher shortage.
2	Eighty-five percent (85%) of Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® survey respondents will state that the supplement helps ease financial stress.	<b>Outcome exceeded.</b> Nearly 100% of survey respondents said that the AWARD\$ supplement helps to ease financial stress.

Outcome #1 is measured through employment confirmations completed as each participant concludes a six-month commitment period on the program. The information regarding turnover is entered into a database that produces the percentage. Outcome #2 is based on survey responses collected and calculated by the research department at Child Care Services Association (CCSA).

## PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

The information below reflects the impact of Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® from the perspectives of participants and their employers. Salary supplement recipients and center directors who had recipients among their staff participated in an annual evaluation.

Survey samples were created based on the number of potential respondents: a 40% sample was drawn for both participants and directors who had staff on the program. Directors in most counties who potentially had staff members on AWARD\$ and/or WAGE\$ were sent a shared survey to assess the impact of salary supplements. Two counties had more than 50 but less than 100 directors who potentially had staff members on AWARD\$ and/or WAGE\$ and so a 40% sample was created. Finally, one county had more than 100 directors who potentially had staff members on AWARD\$ and/or WAGE\$ so a 25% sample was created to survey. These responses have been integrated into the director feedback.

All individuals in the sample who had email addresses on file with AWARD\$ 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. 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, 87% of the targeted population completed the survey (1,034 of 1,182), which included the following:

- 74% of participating teachers/family child care providers (332 of 448)
- 96% of non-participating directors with staff receiving salary supplements (702 of 734)<sup>1</sup>

Survey recipients were asked to examine a list of possible benefits resulting from AWARD\$ and indicate whether or not each benefit is true for the respondent. Responses to the individual options were as follows, listed in survey order:

- AWARD\$ helps me feel more satisfied with my job. – **97%**
- AWARD\$ is an incentive for me to seek additional education and/or it helps make pursuing coursework more financially feasible. – **89%** (participants must have at least an Associate Degree with 24 hours of birth to five focused coursework to be eligible)
- The AWARD\$ supplement helps ease financial stress. – **Nearly 100%**
- AWARD\$ encourages me to stay with my current program. – **97%**
- My AWARD\$ supplement helps me to provide more resources for my program or classroom. – **91%**
- Receiving the AWARD\$ supplement makes me feel more appreciated and recognized for my work. – **98%**

Additional survey results are listed below:

**Ninety-seven percent (97%) of all respondents stated that they are satisfied with the program and its administration.** The reasons a few directors indicated that they were not fully satisfied included the need for higher supplements and the belief that directors should also qualify. All actual participants reported that they were satisfied.

**For those respondents who had the opportunity to speak with the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® staff, 99% of those who have had interactions found the staff to be pleasant and helpful.** Many respondents took the opportunity to share additional comments about their interactions with AWARD\$ 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 AWARD\$ staff has been in terms of participation in the program and pursuit of education. A few examples of participant feedback are listed below:

*“AWARD\$ staff are special people who appreciate what I do.” (teacher)*

*“They are friendly and professional with all matters, big or small” (teacher)*

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<sup>1</sup> Non-participating directors in some cases may have responded about participants in AWARD\$ and/or WAGES.

*“From the very first interaction our program has had with the staff, they have gone out of their way to provide us with exceptional service. They are always prompt in addressing our needs and responding to our emails and phone calls. The staff always exhibits professionalism and courtesy.” (teacher)*

*“The staff are very friendly and eager to help you. They seem compassionate about child care workers and thanked me for my service.” (teacher)*

*“They are very helpful as well as encouraging to me.” (family child care home provider)*

*“Everyone has always been very attentive and listens to what I have to say.” (director)*

**Ninety-four percent (94%) of responding directors indicated that staff participation in AWARD\$ benefits the children in their centers in some way.** When asked to select from a list of options explaining how participation may be beneficial to the children in their programs, including an option stating that no benefits have been noticed, 94% of responding directors indicated that staff participation in AWARD\$ 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-eight percent (98%) of responding directors reported positive attitudes toward salary supplements in their child care programs.** A few directors who did not report positive attitudes specifically identified the waiting list in WAGE\$ as their concern. Directors may respond about either/both programs if they are in counties that have both options. A director also mentioned the need for those with lower education to be eligible.

**Ninety-eight percent (98%) of responding participants indicated that, as a result of AWARD\$, they feel more appreciated and recognized for their work.** Recipients emphasize the importance of the recognition and appreciation associated with the receipt of the AWARD\$ 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.

*“The supplement is important because it helps the staff feel more valuable and respected as professionals. It also offsets some of the cost to centers who cannot pass the cost on to struggling families.” (Burke, director)*

## **PROGRAM CHALLENGES**

The early childhood field is in turmoil with unprecedented teacher shortages. Directors share in calls that they are overwhelmed and are desperately seeking anyone to fill their vacancies so they can serve the children waiting for care. Managing this crisis has become the major focus for many directors, and increased compensation is key. Some directors indicated that all positions should qualify, including their own. Other directors called for increased supplements, the need to



offer supplements to those with lower education and to part-time teachers. Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® Plus, anticipated for FY23, will expand the education scale, helping new applicants qualify.

Stabilization grants offered by DCDEE gave child care programs the critical opportunity to increase staff compensation. Those raises had the potential to make participants go over the income cap, thus losing their eligibility. However, DCDEE approved flexibility for participants to stay eligible regardless of these increases since the grants are time limited. Policies were implemented to use the hourly rates earned prior to the stabilization grants to determine eligibility, giving the field an opportunity to receive more competitive compensation overall. In addition, the income cap will increase with AWARD\$ Plus.

## **FUNDING**

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® implements several strategies to publicize that its funding comes from DCDEE. This is highlighted in letters sent in conjunction with payments and labels are affixed to the outside of each envelope to identify the funder. Emails are sent to recipients to inform them when payments have been mailed or deposited, crediting the funders. The AWARD\$ fact sheets and application-based program agreements identify DCDEE as the funder and AWARD\$ representatives explain the funding for the program in outreach across the state. Finally, the program evaluations give respondents the opportunity to share messages with the funder of their supplements. See Appendix B for a sample of those messages for FY22. Please note that, in addition to the sample comments included, a large number of recipients shared their gratitude through “thank you” messages that are not listed.

*“Thank you so much. You have helped me out of some situations that I really needed help getting out of. Due to COVID, my husband was laid off and we missed his income and things got rough. I prayed and paid what I could. Just when I thought I was going to lose my car, my payment came. It saved my life. God bless you. It was enough to catch my car payment up and to buy some water play items for my classroom.” (Union, teacher)*



**Table 1**  
**Demographic Profile of the 1,114 Participants in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**



	# of Participants	% of Participants
<b>Race*</b>		
White	348	31%
Black or African American	663	60%
American Indian or Alaska Native	17	2%
Asian	16	1%
Two or more races	15	1%
Other	18	2%
Not Given	37	3%
<b>Ethnicity*</b>		
Not Given	21	2%
Latinx	50	4%
Not Latinx	1043	94%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	4	0%
Female	1110	100%
<b>Age Range of Participants</b>		
20-24 years	26	2%
25-34 years	241	22%
35-44 years	278	25%
45-54 years	261	23%
55-59 years	117	11%
60-64 years	117	11%
65 and over	72	6%
Not Given	2	0%
<b>Position</b>		
Teacher	911	82%
Teacher (Head Start In Home Educator)	14	1%
Teacher (in Small Home)	3	0%
Assistant Teacher	23	2%
Director	7	1%
Director (Owner)	12	1%
Assistant Director	10	1%
Small Home Provider	134	12%
<b>Education Level</b>		
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	684	61%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	40	4%
MA/MS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	4	0%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	58	5%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	26	2%

\*768 participants identify as Latinx or as a person of color, which is 70% of the active population that provided data (1102 participants).

Participants are identified by their primary position. Directors or assistant directors are only funded when working 30 hours or more with infants and toddlers.

**Table 1 (cont.)**  
**Demographic Profile of the 1,114 Participants in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**

	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>% of Participants</b>
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	264	24%
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	4	0%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	34	3%
<b>Wage Rate**</b>		
Below \$7.25 per hour	85	8%
\$7.25 - \$9.99 per hour	62	6%
\$10.00 - \$12.99 per hour	230	21%
\$13.00 - \$14.99 per hour	254	23%
\$15.00 - \$16.99 per hour	321	29%
\$17.00 - \$19.00 per hour	162	15%
<b>Years in Child Care Program: Participant's Start Date to Report End Date</b>		
0 to .99 Years	74	7%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	95	9%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	113	10%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	107	10%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	100	9%
5.00 or More Years	625	56%

\*\*The first category under Wage Rate may reflect 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**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**



	Programs	Participants
<b>Center</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>977</b>
3 STAR	56	74
4 STAR	130	209
5 STAR	361	682
PROV	1	3
SPPROV	2	2
Temporary	6	7
<b>Family Provider</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>137</b>
3 STAR	7	7
4 STAR	100	103
5 STAR	27	27
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b><u>690</u></b>	<b><u>1,114</u></b>

Participants in sites that become ineligible due to star rating changes may be eligible for time worked prior to this change if they complete successful six-month commitment periods.



**Table 3**  
**Educational Award Levels Profile of the 1,114 Participants**  
**in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**



	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>% of Participants Out Of Active</b>
Eight	685	61%
Nine	44	4%
Ten	84	8%
Eleven	267	24%
Twelve	34	3%



**Table 4**  
**Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**



1,337 unduplicated participants received a supplement for completing a six month period that ended during this reporting period; these participants worked in 792 different child care programs in 88 counties, serving approximately 19,261 children. 1191 participants worked in centers and 147 participants worked in family child care homes.

\*Note that the sum of participants by county could be greater than the total participants paid. The total participants listed above is an unduplicated number. Participants can be paid by more than one county in any given year. Those working in centers or homes may also be greater than the unduplicated number since the facility status could change within the year.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 2
	<b>1,339</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>19,261</b>
Alamance	3	4	110
Alexander	6	3	71
Anson	9	9	55
Ashe	9	5	130
Avery	1	1	31
Beaufort	14	9	200
Bertie	11	6	58
Bladen	14	8	127
Brunswick	3	3	116
Buncombe	20	12	414
Burke	26	9	208
Cabarrus	21	14	521
Caldwell	9	6	158
Camden	3	3	17
Carteret	4	3	53
Caswell	6	2	19
Catawba	14	10	247
Chatham	19	12	191
Cherokee	3	2	46
Chowan	9	5	46
Clay	1	1	15
Cleveland	5	5	69
Columbus	8	5	78

**Table 4**  
**Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**

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	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 2
	<b>1,339</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>19,261</b>
Craven	5	3	58
Cumberland	48	23	535
Dare	6	5	26
Davidson	19	16	436
Davie	2	2	64
Duplin	12	7	63
Durham	21	15	559
Forsyth	19	9	482
Franklin	3	3	58
Gaston	10	7	97
Gates	3	3	18
Granville	5	4	95
Greene	3	3	4
Guilford	190	89	2,056
Halifax	7	4	57
Harnett	2	1	17
Haywood	8	7	137
Henderson	4	4	55
Hertford	6	4	27
Hoke	2	2	30
Hyde	1	1	0
Iredell	12	10	309
Jackson	4	2	28

**Table 4**  
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**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
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	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 2
	<b>1,339</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>19,261</b>
Johnston	15	10	392
Lee	1	1	22
Lenoir	12	8	159
Lincoln	4	4	94
Macon	16	2	75
Madison	1	1	11
McDowell	14	6	80
Mecklenburg	77	54	1,781
Montgomery	8	2	47
Moore	30	12	249
Nash	1	1	13
New Hanover	27	17	602
Northampton	2	2	17
Onslow	13	11	284
Orange	37	22	508
Pamlico	3	2	19
Pasquotank	5	5	110
Pender	14	12	205
Perquimans	4	4	42
Person	5	4	13
Pitt	35	18	463
Randolph	2	2	59
Richmond	7	3	46



**Table 4**  
**Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**

1,337 unduplicated participants received a supplement for completing a six month period that ended during this reporting period; these participants worked in 792 different child care programs in 88 counties, serving approximately 19,261 children. 1191 participants worked in centers and 147 participants worked in family child care homes.

\*Note that the sum of participants by county could be greater than the total participants paid. The total participants listed above is an unduplicated number. Participants can be paid by more than one county in any given year. Those working in centers or homes may also be greater than the unduplicated number since the facility status could change within the year.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 2
	<b>1,339</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>19,261</b>
Robeson	34	23	518
Rockingham	5	3	92
Rowan	13	9	150
Rutherford	1	1	6
Sampson	18	7	75
Scotland	17	5	87
Stanly	10	4	180
Stokes	6	3	75
Transylvania	1	1	21
Union	21	13	333
Vance	8	7	76
Wake	198	119	3,539
Washington	4	4	33
Watauga	10	7	110
Wayne	21	12	206
Wilkes	4	2	39
Wilson	21	6	222
Yadkin	1	1	5
Yancey	3	1	12



**Table 5**  
**Annual Turnover Summary of the 215 Participants**  
**in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**



The annual turnover percentage is based on an overall population of 215 participants. This population includes those individuals that were active during the reporting period of July 2021 - July 2022 (1114) and those whose turnover was reported during this time (215). 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 Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ 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 AWARD\$ and thus earned active status prior to becoming ineligible.

<b>Annual Turnover (July 2021 - July 2022)</b>	
<b>North Carolina</b>	
Total Participants	= 1,329
Active Participants	= 1,114
Left Center	= 215
Turnover Percentage	= 16%



**Table 5**  
**Profile of Participants who Left their Programs in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**



	# of Participants	% of Participants
<b>Race</b>		
White	72	33%
Black or African American	111	52%
American Indian or Alaska Native	6	3%
Asian	5	2%
Other	4	2%
Not Given	17	8%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Not Given	3	1%
Latinx	19	9%
Not Latinx	193	90%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	215	100%
<b>Position</b>		
Teacher	196	91%
Teacher (Head Start In Home Educator)	3	1%
Assistant Teacher	6	3%
Director	1	0%
Assistant Director	1	0%
Small Home Provider	8	4%
<b>Education Level</b>		
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	122	57%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	14	7%
MA/MS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	2	1%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	10	5%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	3	1%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	57	27%
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	4	2%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	3	1%
<b>Wage Rate*</b>		
Below \$7.25 per hour	6	3%
\$7.25 - \$9.99 per hour	6	3%
\$10.00 - \$12.99 per hour	55	26%
\$13.00 - \$14.99 per hour	60	28%
\$15.00 - \$16.99 per hour	64	30%
\$17.00 - \$19.00 per hour	24	11%
<b>Years in Child Care Program: Participant's Start Date to Date Ineligible</b>		
0 to .99 Years	184	86%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	7	3%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	3	1%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	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. Pay rates will also reflect bonus compensation if awarded by the employer.

**Table 5 (cont.)**  
**Profile of Participants who Left their Programs in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**July 2021 - July 2022**

	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>% of Participants</b>
4.00 to 4.99 Years	1	0%
5.00 or More Years	19	9%
<b>Regulation Type</b>		
3 STAR	13	6%
4 STAR	48	22%
5 STAR	151	70%
Temporary	2	1%
PROV	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. Pay rates will also reflect bonus compensation if awarded by the employer.



## Appendix A: AWARD\$ Impact Sample Feedback Collected from AWARD\$ Surveys FY22

“It’s an incentive for them to stay working with kids and to stay in the field they’re in.”  
(Alamance, director)

“The supplements are important because they help support staff salaries, encourage them to increase education and remain employed in child care.” (Alamance, director)

“As an older worker, AWARD\$<sup>1</sup> helps me feel more alive...just like my littles do!” (Alexander, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has allowed me to save money and has given me some peace of mind.” (Alexander, teacher)

“It helps to maintain staff and that helps the center in every way.” (Alexander, director)

“I used my last AWARD\$ payment to have much needed car repairs done.” (Ashe, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me in many ways. There were times when the funds came at the perfect time, when I was broke with no money for gas and food.” (Ashe, teacher)

“Makes me feel more appreciated and valued as a teacher and as an individual! It helps keep teachers in a program and this helps with the stability of the program! Children need this stability!!! ♥” (Beaufort, teacher)

“It lessens the amount of turnover and attracts qualified staff.” (Beaufort, director)

“It’s important because it gives the staff a sense of appreciation for the work, and it retains good staff. It helps the children because the staff will be eager to work and remain a faithful employee.” (Bertie, teacher)

“I am seen and not just a number.” (Bertie, teacher)

“It helps teachers stay in the field and gives them more of an incentive to stay with the center. If the teachers are happy, the families are going to be happy as well.” (Brunswick, director)

“AWARD\$ has saved my family the last few times I’ve gotten it. It has meant being able to get gas/food/minutes for my phone when there was no money in the bank and payday was still a week away.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“It assists the teachers to reach the salary they need to financially assist their family.”  
(Buncombe, director)

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents referred to Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> in a variety of ways. Throughout the quotes, the name has been corrected when necessary. Abbreviated references have been retained.

“Making more money decreases stress when it comes to folks making below or right at the living wage. Financial compensation is incredibly important for people to be able to do this job.” (Buncombe, director)

“AWARDS\$ brings us closer to a living wage, which is good.” (Buncombe, director)

“It is a wonderful supplement that helps with my family’s financial needs.” (Burke, teacher)

“The supplement is important because it helps the staff feel more valuable and respected as professionals. It also offsets some of the cost to centers who cannot pass the cost on to struggling families.” (Burke, director)

“AWARDS\$ helps to retain the staff at the center. They enjoy receiving the supplement.” (Cabarrus, director)

“I think AWARDS\$ is important because we don’t get paid enough and it helps me feel less stressed about paying bills on time. It also helps get some books for my classroom and sometimes art supplies. It demonstrates that people care about our work and feel challenged to do more.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“It encourages staff to stay with same center and helps staff feel valued as professionals. One staff was going to resign due to COVID mandates but decided to stay based on the pay she would receive from AWARDS\$.” (Caldwell, director)

“For our program it has been a huge incentive in a number of ways. One of the biggest is that it encourages staff to continue with education. This, in turn, has notable impacts on teaching and interactions with students and parents.” (Caldwell, director)

“AWARDS\$ has empowered me to better provide for my family, which enables me to continue doing what I love, which is teaching children.” (Carteret, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ allows the teachers to not only get recognition from outside but also gives them the opportunity/incentive to seek more education. It gives an extra push for teachers who already wanted more education but weren’t sure they could go back to school.” (Carteret, director)

“It makes me feel appreciated and valued for the hard work I’ve done because sometimes you are overlooked at work. This just helps you know that you are making a difference and it helps you to stay with your facility as well.” (Caswell, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ is important because it helps child care providers feel valued, it helps to provide additional resources for our facility, and lessens a lot of financial stress.” (Catawba, teacher)

“I think AWARDS\$ is important to educators because it helps with education, trainings, school supplies and much more. It keeps the teachers’ hopes going that people are really fighting to hear and understand their needs.” (Catawba, director)

“AWARDS\$ fills in the gap financially and takes stress off so that you can enjoy your job.”  
(Chatham, family child care home provider)

“Staff are often not recognized for continuing education. This supplement does that.” (Cherokee, director)

“It helps relieve some financial stress for child care workers.” (Chowan, teacher)

“It has helped me keep gas in my car and pay my bills.” (Chowan, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ gives you something to look forward to. It makes me excited to know my time is coming to receive funds. It helps me greatly being a single parent with paying bills and buying my children different things.” (Columbus, teacher)

“Finances are difficult, and our workers are not paid professional salaries so any incentive we can add is good for our morale and self-esteem. It helps retain staff.” (Columbus, director)

“AWARDS\$ has helped improve teachers’ education when working with children in child care and has helped to better our lives as teachers.” (Craven, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ keeps the staff educated. It helps them to go to school and get more education.” (Cumberland, director)

“It makes it easier to attract a more qualified staff, and it’s a great incentive for our staff to continue their education.” (Cumberland, director)

“I think it’s great for infant and toddler educators to be recognized. The supplement helped me to catch up on payments during the uncertainty of the pandemic.” (Dare, teacher)

“This program is important because it shows us that we are appreciated. It shows that we have been noticed and valued as educators within the community. We are teaching children one student at a time. It helps us build skills in learning more about what drives us to teach. We learn what we are passionate about, when we teach our students, as we learn more about ourselves.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Teachers need these supplements to survive. It is not sustainable for centers to raise the cost of child care beyond what parents can pay in order to pay teachers a reasonable wage.” (Davidson, director)

“I think it’s important because the salary for child care workers is really low and it is hard to keep people to work in the field.” (Davidson, director)

“It helps to improve the quality of life for teachers in our program, and it helps to keep educated teachers in our program.” (Davidson, director)

“The supplements are a positive way to appreciate the hard work and consistency of teachers, and an incentive for further education.” (Davie, director)

“It helps me keep staff and it makes them want to increase their education. The kids get better care and education.” (Davie, director)

“The education my teachers get is important to the center and they get incentives for doing that.” (Davie, director)

“Teachers are underpaid and undervalued, so this makes teachers feel that someone cares for them and their needs.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“The money comes just in time for my bills, supplies, and food for my family.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“It allows some child care workers to put a goal in place to work toward higher education. It also is a great balance to have extra income coming in twice a year to help offset personal finances or just allow employees to pamper themselves from the hustle and bustle of everyday child care. The pandemic has put a lot of strain on everyone. We are overworked and underpaid. We have lost so many staff that are no longer returning to the child care field. We need to look at what we can do to bring back dedicated teachers that love teaching young children. The foundation starts with children from infancy to five years of age. We want all children to experience quality child care.” (Forsyth, director)

“My staff work hard to maintain or increase their education and longevity at my center. They look forward to the bonuses they receive.” (Forsyth, director)

“AWARDS\$ makes the teacher feel valued and helps us retain them.” (Forsyth, director)

“AWARDS\$ help the teachers stay stable and not hop around. Teachers look forward to receiving it every six months.” (Franklin, director)

“I feel like, overall, early childhood educators are not respected as ‘teachers.’ The AWARD\$ program is the opposite. It gives us the opportunity to work towards something despite all of the negativity towards our profession.” (Gaston, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ helps with less financial stress at home and I’m able to do more things with my family. ... It gives more constant care for children with less turnover due to having to give up your supplement if you should leave your center.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It helps relieve some financial stress from being a teacher. ... It is important because it’s an incentive for all your hard work and dedication to the field. Being a teacher is a very important profession because you positively impact so many lives on a daily basis.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It has given us a sense of appreciation for our profession and has provided incentive for us to go further in our educational endeavors. ... It provides a very much needed boost financially, as well as provides incentive for child care professionals to keep pushing for excellence in their programs.” (Guilford, teacher)



“It helped me take care of myself and family more. The awards help those teachers that are not making much money to survive.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It is important to me because it takes away some of the financial stress and allows me to continue working with children and families. It’s important for the children I work with because it allows me to see the things they need in the classroom or sometimes even things they need at home. I am able to get those classroom materials or help them get the things they need in their homes.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It makes me feel valued and shows me that I am necessary. I feel like someone is recognizing the hard work I do and giving me the financial assistance to build my future.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I found it to be very important to me, because just that extra help with my bills feels wonderful to know they are getting paid. If there is an activity I want to do with the children, I don’t have to wait for the supplies to do the activity. I can pick them up myself.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It’s important because it helps teachers get what they need for the classrooms and helps push teachers to want to further their education.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It brought relief when I needed it. I am looking for a raise at my job and this pandemic has brought on a lot that I cannot control.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It helps out my staff tremendously. It’s making more teachers want to work with younger children and further their education.” (Guilford, director)

“Many teachers are living paycheck to paycheck. Receiving AWARD\$ has helped them have more income to support their families.” (Guilford, director)

“I feel that the AWARD\$ program helps the teachers feel that their job working with infants and toddlers is valued. It is important to have educated staff members attracted to working with this age group. I often find that teachers are more attracted to working with the older age groups.” (Guilford, director)

“Early child care workers desperately need the money. Directors feel very strongly that early child care has gotten the short end of the stick with the pandemic and it’s extremely difficult to pay people what they deserve. I am grateful for programs like AWARD\$ attempting to bridge that gap.” (Guilford, director)

“AWARD\$ helps the staff meet their financial needs, engages them to seek higher education – something the center really appreciates.” (Guilford, director)

“The center can’t pay the staff as much as they’re worth. It shows the staff they’re important and valued.” (Guilford, director)

“Early childhood education teachers feel stress, burnout, and are undervalued many days. This supplement brings attention to them and greatly assists with their sense of value as an early childhood education person.” (Guilford, director)

“It is a wonderful incentive that has helped me by providing much needed extra income and encouraged me to continue working in early child care.” (Halifax, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ has help me stay with my current program. I probably would have left for other opportunities if not for AWARD\$. It benefits the children at the center because they see the same staff throughout the years and that helps them feel more secure and safe.” (Halifax, teacher)

“It increases morale, supports lower turnover, and helps people function better with less stress because of more income.” (Halifax, director)

“AWARDS\$ might be the determining factor in drawing people in or keeping them on staff.” (Harnett, director)

“AWARDS\$ has helped me provide for my family and children.” (Haywood, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ helps retain teachers and increases stability for the families.” (Haywood, director)

“These supplements are desperately needed as so many teachers are the head of household and not making enough to support their families.” (Henderson, director)

“AWARDS\$ helps me to be more of a loving educator.” (Hoke, family child care home provider)

“AWARDS\$ motivates me to continue in the field.” (Iredell, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ builds morale amongst staff by them knowing they can get better education. They implement what they’re learning in the classroom and how that benefits the children in their care really shows.” (Iredell, director)

“It’s important because it provides additional income to staff based on their education. It also keeps staff motivated about completing their education.” (Iredell, director)

“It encourages teachers who might not have seen the importance of a degree to get one, which benefits the children in their care.” (Johnston, director)

“It helps the kids when the teachers are more educated. When you make more money, you’re less stressed, and more able to concentrate on your job.” (Johnston, director)

“AWARDS\$ helps with overall retention, dedication, longevity, overall happiness and well-being of staff, and increases happiness of families as well.” (Johnston, director)

“The staff feels more appreciated, the increased pay encourages staff to continue their education, and the children benefit.” (Lee, director)

“It’s really nice to be rewarded for my hard work and dedication to my work babies! It has definitely helped me financially. I’ve paid bills, bought groceries, bought stuff for my classroom, and it helped buy Christmas for my own kids.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ is going to help me pay for my bachelor’s degree classes.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“When you’re a private organization or child care center, you don’t receive state funding. This makes it tough to have fair pricing for families while also paying teachers what they’re worth. These programs help bridge that gap somewhat. I’m an employer who recognizes the value of her employees and wants to pay wages that reflect their value.” (Lincoln, director)

“AWARDS\$ provides incentive for staff who may not have a degree, to want to further their education and helps attract teachers with education as a benefit. Education isn’t everything but it lays the foundation for the classroom.” (Lincoln, director)

“It makes me feel appreciated as a teacher for my work throughout the year.” (Macon, teacher)

“It has helped financially. I am not as stressed with the children in my care.” (Macon, teacher)

“Early child care is an underserved area. It’s a hard job with many more training requirements/expectations, and the monetary incentive to hang around is priceless! The incentive benefits the teachers, families, and children.” (Macon, director)

“The pay rates in child care are low, and the AWARDS\$ program helps reconcile that difference and pay staff closer to what they're worth.” (Madison, director)

“AWARDS\$ keeps the staff on board, the children need consistency.” (Martin, director)

“Due to low pay, AWARDS\$ helps us from finding other employment. Early Head Start does not offer enough pay for employees to stay so AWARDS\$ has kept me employed there.” (McDowell, teacher)

“It’s important to the staff because teachers do not make what they’re worth; it gives them an extra bonus/boost of confidence and reason to stay. The parents are happier if the staff have more education.” (McDowell, director)

“I feel like my college degree in early childhood development was worth it! For years my family has begged me to leave the profession to earn more money elsewhere. Now, I feel appreciated and respected for what I do! I have ALWAYS loved the kids!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I think it is important because most teachers are underpaid and our job is already stressful, so it helps take away one stressful thing.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It makes me feel important and appreciated. It lets me know that someone cares about the teachers. I am grateful.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ has helped me to stay in school and get a better understanding of my field.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I think it’s important to boost the morale of hard working teachers in a thankless profession. The children and early childhood community benefit when teachers feel worthwhile.”  
(Mecklenburg, teacher)

“As we know, out of any profession, teachers are not given the most money. I think AWARD\$ really helps and it gives them an incentive to stay in the education field. If teachers want to buy something for their classroom, it helps them to be able to do that.” (Mecklenburg, director)

“It allows staff to remain in the business without the financial struggle.” (Mecklenburg, director)

“AWARD\$ helps give the staff more pay, which is important. When it comes down to the kids and their learning, staff are implementing what they have learned. I see that as being a positive for the center.” (Mecklenburg, director)

“AWARD\$ helps me to focus more on being the best teacher our children need, so I’m not distracted by pressure of finances.” (Montgomery, teacher)

“There have been many instances where if it hadn’t been for the supplement, I don’t know what I would’ve done. It has meant the world to me. It has helped me stay afloat and be the best possible teacher I can be.” (Moore, teacher)

“AWARD\$ makes us feel valued and gives us a base to stand on so we can teach as best we can.” (Moore, teacher)

“As you know, working in a daycare center your income is not great. This program is God sent. Meaning without it a lot of daycare workers could not keep their heads above water. You have to have a love for children in order to work in a daycare setting. I have a BA in Early Childhood Education and I am a teacher in a daycare. With the degree, I have I should be making a good income. However, if you go into teaching for the money, you will be disappointed. So thank you so much for the supplement.” (Moore, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it helps me feel appreciated for the level of education I have achieved, my dedication to the field of early childhood education, the children in my care, their families, and my child care program.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“As for me who earns below the poverty line, your money came in right when my lights and water were about to get cut off. I wanted to do something special for the kids in my class and the center didn’t have funds left. When it rains it pours, the car broke down. So yes, it has truly been a benefit for me and my family. I was able to give \$100.00 payment to my college foundation that I am behind on.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is a stress reliever.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“The extra money and resources are very beneficial. I feel more financially secure and motivated to grow in this field.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Please continue to support NC early childhood professionals in this way. ... This program is important because it helps to supplement teachers’ income, increase stability in centers by increasing retention, encourages hiring higher quality staff, and encourages staff to obtain higher education. All of these can increase quality.” (New Hanover, director)

“AWARDS\$ is important because teachers are underpaid in this field and the money makes a big difference. When teachers are supplemented, it boosts their morale, and that increases the quality of care.” (New Hanover, director)

“It helped me to get a degree in early childhood.” (Onslow, family child care home provider)

“The support helps me continue doing what I love and still be able to make ends meet.” (Orange, teacher)

“It helps teachers to be more adequately compensated without placing a greater burden on families with higher tuition.” (Orange, director)

“I think this award is important because it recognizes our hard work, while both working full time and attending school to increase our knowledge to help our families.” (Pender, family child care home provider)

“The children in my care get more knowledge and greater exposure to creative and life changing learning activities because I am able to get higher learning myself to implement in the classroom. This award allows me to continue my education and buy materials for the classroom.” (Pender, family child care home provider)

“It is important to help keep child care workers in the business and to help them out financially.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Most child care workers are underpaid. This program helps us make ends meet and makes us feel much more appreciated.” (Pitt, teacher)

“This program is important to teachers. Personally, I feel like teachers do not get paid as much as we should. I work at a child development center and people think we play all day, but we do so much more. We create lesson plans, build relationships with children, make time for family involvement, etc. The program has meant more funds for me and my daughter. Buying everything we need and taking care of bills is a lot, so having extra money to look forward to is a blessing.” (Pitt, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ gives me a peace of mind and is helpful with paying bills. ... It is a great service to help meet the needs of early childhood teachers and I am very thankful for it.” (Pitt, teacher)

“It’s important because the child care industry and workers have been undervalued. This program values teachers, encourages education, and the children get trained teachers who really understand and are passionate, not just getting a paycheck.” (Pitt, director)

“AWARDS help keep staff on, boosts morale, and we can’t pay them what they’re worth, so the extra supplement really helps.” (Pitt, director)

“AWARDS is another tool we can use to bring staff into the center and benefit them. Teacher wages aren’t great, and that supplement is an incentive to attract qualified teachers.” (Pitt, director)

“Teachers don’t make a lot of money in child care, so knowing there’s a program that will supplement income definitely helps make this field livable. It helps my center out by paying teachers more. The center would love to pay more if they could. Families are happy/comfortable knowing the teachers are continuing education. Teachers are not babysitters.” (Pitt, director)

“AWARDS helps with accountability. Staff understand that they need to meet certain requirements and it gives them something to look forward to.” (Richmond, director)

“It has helped me in a variety of ways, financially. I am pursuing my BA in Early Education, it has helped me purchase a new desktop computer, other school supplies, and make repairs needed for the car to help provide dependable transportation to and from my job.” (Robeson, teacher)

“It gives me less stress at home financially and less worrying on the job to take care of my students.” (Robeson, teacher)

“It helps me to compensate my staff and keep them.” (Robeson, director)

“It’s made me a better person on my job and at home.” (Rowan, teacher)

“It helps teachers to get more comfortable with being educated. More teachers want to learn if there is an incentive for them.” (Rowan, director)

“It is important for us to be able to provide education to little minds without worrying about financial difficulties or have to seek other types of employment.” (Stanly, teacher)

“AWARDS is important because it motivates teachers. Centers are being rewarded after they go back to school.” (Stanly, director)

“It helps maintain staff in the classroom with less turnover because they look forward to this incentive.” (Scotland, director)

“AWARDS is an incentive to further education and to stay at that center.” (Surry, director)

“AWARDS has made me more confident in myself and proud of my educational accomplishments. It has definitely made me want to continue my education so I can enjoy my passion for teaching. ... I think the AWARD\$ program is important because it gives hope to educators who work for centers that do not have much funding. These centers still need teachers to provide quality care to infants, toddlers, and twos. Studies show that 90 percent of the brain is developed by age three. It’s important to start learning early and AWARD\$ gives stability to teachers by giving an incentive. This incentive helps teachers to stay at centers that are

understaffed and underpaid. I don't do this job for the money, but because it gives me joy to create bonds and to hear my two year olds say their numbers in Spanish, which is something I taught them. Children are like a blank canvas and as we pour into them, they become a masterpiece full of color and knowledge." (Union, teacher)

"It's important because it shows that you matter and that your hard work, dedication, and effort are not unnoticed." (Wake, teacher)

"AWARDS\$ has encouraged me to stay at my job and seek more info on how I can be a better toddler teacher." (Wake, teacher)

"It really shows me that I am valued in my community. It also shows the importance of early years in childhood." (Wake, teacher)

"I have found that when a teacher's efforts for achieving higher education are rewarded, we feel better about doing our jobs. Happier teachers mean more meaningful and successful classrooms. Students get more from teachers that are knowledgeable and if there is a way to supplement our income, we are more likely to stay in our field." (Wake, teacher)

"It is important to help with finances. Teachers realize they are important in helping children to grow and learn." (Wake, teacher)

"AWARDS\$ helps me feel that there are people who value what I do. It helps me to stay where I'm at instead of making a career change. It reduces my financial stress." (Wake, teacher)

"Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has given me reason to stay at my current program when their rate of pay was not meeting my needs. It's given me more financial security, decreased stress from financial strain and helped me to be a more present teacher for my children in the classroom." (Wake, teacher)

"It makes me want to stay at my current job, which means stability for my kids in the classroom." (Wake, teacher)

"It has helped me to continue my education in early childhood. I'm three semesters away from receiving my bachelor's degree and AWARD\$ has helped me to pay for that." (Wake, teacher)

"It helps me with my financial need to keep the child care open and getting supplies to continue to teach and nurture the children in my care." (Wake, family child care home provider)

"It is a great incentive for child care workers to motivate us to continue doing what we love - serving children." (Wake, family child care home provider)

"It helps staff access education and gives them an incentive for the work that they do, considering the pay scale of early child care. When you have happy teachers, you have a happy classroom and positive morale all the way around." (Wake, director)

“Teachers are never paid enough for their valuable role in our community. Programs can be limited in their abilities to provide higher wages. Teachers are excited every time they get this reward as a bonus to their regular wage.” (Wake, director)

“AWARDS\$ is important because it helps me to buy new resources for my classroom and helps out with my own child’s needs. The kids love when there are new toys, which foster their imagination and development.” (Watauga, teacher)

“It has helped me mentally because it reinforces my belief that people actually do care about child care providers!” (Wayne, teacher)

“I think the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS\$® is important because it helps retain highly qualified teachers in early childhood classrooms.” (Wayne, teacher)

“I have always wanted to work with children. It is my passion, but once I started working in the field, I realized that it is a challenge to find a place willing to pay what is needed to live off of. The AWARDS\$ program has helped ease some of the financial burden of doing what I love as a career choice.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“I feel this program is important for a number of reasons, such as the following:

- This program is helpful financially. You do not go into this field thinking you are going to make an exceptionally large salary, you do it because you have a passion for the work.
- This program is an acknowledgment of the time and education so many of us put into what we do.
- This program gives us incentive to continue along the educational pathway so that we may better serve the children and families we work with each day.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“Our staff feel more valued by receiving this supplement. It’s like a bonus that we cannot afford to give them. It makes their bottom line better, it makes them happy and more productive, which is passed on positively to our children! We are very thankful for the continued supplements.” (Wilkes, director)

“It is important that early educators feel appreciated. The first years of a child’s life are extremely important. It is great when they have teachers that are happy and enjoy their jobs.” (Yadkin, teacher)





**Appendix B: DCDEE Messages**  
**Sample Feedback Collected from AWARD\$ Surveys FY22**

“I love the AWARD\$<sup>1</sup> program. Thank you so much!” (Alexander, teacher)

“These additional funds are much appreciated and are a big help to my family.” (Alexander, teacher)

“It has been somewhat helpful.” (Alexander, family child care home provider)

“Thank you. Thank you. You must know what it is like working in child care.” (Anson, teacher)

“Thank you for helping me pay my bills and be able to get things for my classroom.” (Ashe, teacher)

“I am very grateful and blessed that I get to receive these funds.” (Ashe, teacher)

“Thank you for thinking of us.” (Beaufort, teacher)

“Thank you so much for listening to our concerns as teachers and support staff. Thanks for all your support, concern, and understanding! Together we can provide a wholesome and well-rounded program for our kids that allows them to grow appropriately!!! ❤️” (Beaufort, teacher)

“Thank you for your support.” (Beaufort, teacher)

“The supplement is very helpful when you owe someone money back, need supplies for your classroom, or need to pay other expenses like bills.” (Bertie, teacher)

“Thank you so much for thinking about the teachers and children.” (Bladen, teacher)

“Thank-you it helps out a lot in the daycare and at home.” (Bladen, teacher)

“Thank you so much for this opportunity to reward us for our hard work and dedication to the education field.” (Brunswick, teacher)

“Thank you! The only thing I can think of to change is making payments every three months instead of every six. It’s saved my family a few times.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Thank you for the financial support and recognition for my work.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“It is greatly appreciated and thank you. 😊” (Burke, teacher)

“It helps!” (Burke, teacher)

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents referred to Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> in a variety of ways. Throughout the quotes, the name has been corrected when necessary. Abbreviated references have been retained.

“Helps me with extras for my classroom.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“This supplement makes a difference.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“Thank you! Thank you so much! It helps so much to have this help!” (Caldwell, teacher)

“Continue with providing dedicated staff with this.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“It has been a needed resource. It shows that teachers are appreciated. It acknowledges that our sacrifice has not gone unnoticed. Our work not only matters, but teachers and their families matter. That’s how we live and thrive.” (Carteret, teacher)

“I appreciate you all and this supplement really has helped me to provide for my family and friends throughout the years. It especially helped during COVID-19. I just hope I will continue to get it.” (Caswell, teacher)

“It is a great program for teachers.” (Caswell, teacher)

“The AWARDS\$ supplement is greatly appreciated! It really helps child care providers feel valued, alleviates some financial burdens, purchases supplies for the facility, and pays certain expenses that have recently seemed to increase, such as food and utilities.” (Catawba, family child care home provider)

“Thank you. It is truly a great help to me, my family, and the daycare.” (Chatham, family child care home provider)

“I appreciate the program because it has helped out a lot, considering I am the only one working.” (Chatham, teacher)

“I appreciate the supplement.” (Chowan, teacher)

“Thank you and I hope you continue it in the future.” (Chowan, teacher)

“Thank you. I’m grateful.” (Chowan, teacher)

“The supplement is a great asset. No child is left behind.” (Chowan, teacher)

“Thank you so much for the supplements.” (Columbus, teacher)

“Thank you for even thinking of us all.” (Columbus, teacher)

“I’m an Early Head Start teacher and this supplement helps me when I’m at my lowest, like when I needed my car repaired, the supplement came right on time.” (Craven, teacher)

“Thank you for the supplement.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“It’s a great program. Thank you for caring for us the way I care for my children.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you all so much for thinking about us!” (Cumberland, family child care home provider)

“I appreciate the program. My only regret is that other teachers on my staff who have experience and coursework didn’t qualify without a degree.” (Dare, teacher)

“Thank you for all that you do and for helping me when I need it most. It would be a great idea to do monthly payments verses lump sum because it would be continuous installments and if the money is still available then give out more.” (Davidson, teacher)

“I would just like to say thank you for looking out for me and giving me a little something that I can share with the children in my classroom. A lot of the children in the Early Head Start program can’t get or don’t have the resources that I may take for granted every day like shoes, coats, or a blanket. With my supplement, I help some of the children that I know need help.” (Davidson, teacher)

“I appreciate it more than you could ever know.” (Davidson, teacher)

“It is wonderful, thank you.” (Duplin, teacher)

“It is a tremendous help, especially if you are a single parent household.” (Durham, teacher)

“Thank you so much for what y’all do to show appreciation to teachers in the early childhood field. We sometimes feel forgotten.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“Thank you for the chance to go into education. Thank you for giving all the teachers in this program a change to enhance their learning.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“Thank you! Many of us barely make enough to keep things afloat and the extra supplement definitely helps!” (Gaston, teacher)

“Thank you, AWARD\$ has helped me in many different ways.” (Gaston, teacher)

“It is a great program and I hope it continues.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It’s VERY helpful and appreciated!” (Guilford, teacher)

“This is a great award for teachers and very helpful. It is greatly appreciated but more is needed for certain agencies.” (Guilford, teacher)

“This is a great award for teachers and very helpful for us.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you so much for helping us out!” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you and I greatly appreciate being a participant of the AWARDS\$ program. It makes a difference!” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you so much for the help.” (Guilford, teacher)

“You are helping make someone a better teacher and family member.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I am grateful for the kind act that is shown twice a year, it is greatly appreciated.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I would like to take this time to thank DCDEE.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It is important for me because this is a job of passion. Payments are not always equal to the amount of effort put in, and without it I would need either a second job or a different job altogether. This allows me to do what I love and not feel as much pressure to do something else that would be more financially rewarding.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thanks for making this program possible.” (Guilford, teacher)

“This supplement is a huge help to me. It has helped me to start a substantial savings and still meet my monthly bills. I can’t tell you how grateful I am for this program.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you so much for helping with my financial stress.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It has helped me provide things for my class.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I’m very thankful to receive the extra cash.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you so much for thinking of the early childhood teachers. I love watching the children grow and teaching them new things, thanks again. (Guilford, teacher)

“I appreciate what you all do to help the child care community.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I want to say thank you for this opportunity. It definitely helps with bills and makes me want to continue working with children.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I wish it could be taxed for us.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you so much!!! I really needed it. I am trying to get another apartment, but with the income I have, I do not make 3x the rent and it is hard to find a place. Prices have gone up, but my pay hasn’t.” (Guilford, teacher)

“As an early childhood educator I feel that this kind of supplement helped to do my job with more passion. It is a reward for my hard job with my students and families.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you! Thank you to everyone involved in helping to keep the funds available for the recognition of the great work that teachers do on a daily basis. Teachers are in it for the love not

the money. Teachers have the lowest paid career so this supplement is so helpful.” (Guilford, teacher)

“My appreciation is sincere. AWARD\$ supplements have been a huge help to our in home family child care center.” (Guilford, family child care home provider)

“Thanks so much! It is greatly appreciated!” (Halifax, teacher)

“Thank you for the supplement, it is a great help and financial relief for my children and me.” (Halifax, teacher)

“I thank you so much for allowing me to become a part of this. I am so grateful for the opportunity.” (Hoke, family child care home provider)

“Thank you so much. The awards are very helpful and I hope the program will continue to help others. God bless you and keep up the great work.” (Hyde, teacher)

“Thank you so much for standing up for the teachers to give them something to look forward to.” (Iredell, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps pay my bills.” (Iredell, teacher)

“I wish they would take taxes out.” (Johnston, teacher)

“Great help.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“It’s amazing and very much appreciated!!! ” (Lenoir, teacher)

“Thank you for considering the work we provide worthy to receive this award.” (Lenoir, family child care home provider)

“I am very thankful for this money, it means a lot to me.” (Macon, teacher)

“Thank you for the AWARD\$ supplements! It has been a blessing in providing for myself and my household.” (Macon, teacher)

“Thank you for everything.” (Macon, teacher)

“It’s great.” (Macon, teacher)

“The supplement is a blessing and very appreciated.” (McDowell, teacher)

“Thank you so much for providing the AWARD\$ supplement. It has helped in many tremendous ways.” ((McDowell, teacher)

“I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart and let them know that this is so very appreciated.” (McDowell, director)

“I really appreciate the supplement and it has lifted a stressful burden off of me. It also makes me feel appreciated and know that I’m making a positive impact in children’s lives.” (McDowell, teacher)

“Thank you!!!! I may not still be in this profession without this award. I feel appreciated and respected as a professional!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Keep it going.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“The supplement has encouraged me to continue my education. Since I am getting a better education, the children in my care are getting a teacher that understands more about them.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I hope they will continue to provide the AWARD\$ supplements. It really helps me with basic family needs, and it always comes when I really need it.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I really appreciate all you do!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thanks for the incentive.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I would like to thank them for helping to ease some of my financial challenges.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you soooo much!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you for allowing people who have gone to school and may not receive bonuses through their job to have something to look forward to for going to school.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you for acknowledging child care providers.” (Mecklenburg, family child care home provider)

“I am truly appreciative of you for doing this for all of us. It is always a great help. It inspires/encourages me to continue because somebody does see us, values us and what we do with/for our children. This also helps us to purchase extra things for children that may be needed. Thank you, thank you.” (Montgomery, teacher)

“I appreciate you for thinking about the early educators, it means a lot to us!” (Montgomery, teacher)

“Thanks for giving it out. Could it be given less than six months?” (Montgomery, teacher)

“Thank you for the funds and I hope they will continue as we are not paid as we should be. I have been in child care since 1994 and I could go get a job at a fast food restaurant right now and make a dollar more than I currently make.” (Moore, teacher)

“First, I would say thank you, thank you, thank you. Then, I would tell them how much of a help it has been to keep me afloat in life and to be the best possible teacher I can be.” (Moore, teacher)

“Due to the economy, I think the supplement should be doubled. It’s such a hardship to work with these kids every day with what they pay teachers. This program has helped me tremendously and is the only thing that’s keeping me to sticking with this age group as long as I have so far.” (Moore, teacher)

“This supplement is a great incentive to stay with my current job, stay motivated, and continue my education.” (Moore, teacher)

“Thank you. Thank you for all you do in the lives you touch.” (Moore, teacher)

“It helps me and others that love children and love teaching them.” (Moore, teacher)

“This is a way of letting educators know that you care and they are much needed in the system.” (Moore, teacher)

“Please keep the supplement coming, we need it as child care providers.” (Moore, teacher)

“I would like to say thank you for everything you do to help childcare educators who don’t make a lot of money.” (Moore, teacher)

“It is very much appreciated!!! My salary alone is not adequate to meet the financial needs of my family. If it weren’t for AWARD\$ supplements, we’d have to make some hard choices.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing the early years of children.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you. Thank you. God bless you all for helping us. Thank you from the kids. For without you, where would we be? Thank you.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“I just want to say how appreciative I am for this valuable resource. It’s so important in the lives of early childhood teachers who love their job and deserve these incentives.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you so very much for the AWARD\$ program and thinking about the teachers. We sometimes get overlooked. We invest a lot of time and our own resources.” (Northampton, teacher)

“It is well needed.” (Onslow, family child care home provider)

“Thank you so much, the stress I once had was taken away with your support.” (Orange, teacher)

“Thank you for the much needed incentive to keep moving forward.” (Orange, family child care home provider)

“Thank you so much for allowing me to have been a part of this program. It has been very beneficial.” (Pamlico, teacher)

“Thanks, it helps a lot.” (Pamlico, teacher)

“This supplement helps to counteract the low wages that child care providers are paid. We are the essential workers, yet in order to be paid more, we have to charge our parents more. I wish there was a way to permanently offset this because our parents are paying too much as it is. This supplement helps to offset that.” (Pender, teacher)

“Thank you for all you do. The supplement is greatly appreciated.” (Pender, family child care home provider)

“Keep up the great work! We appreciate you as well! Thank you.” (Pender, family child care home provider)

“Thank you for supporting me in my quest to continue pursuing higher education.” (Pender, family child care home provider)

“I appreciate you.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you. You make us feel appreciated.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you so much. I am forever grateful, for the supplement that was sent to me. Continue to help others and myself, by making teachers feel loved and appreciated for all of the hard work we do.” (Pitt, teacher)

“I would like to thank the Division of Child Development and Early Education. It means a lot to me that you provide this supplement. I appreciate the program and I hope it doesn't go anywhere. I didn't know about the program until I started my second job. Being able to receive additional funds is like a breath of fresh air.” (Pitt, teacher)

“It is very helpful.” (Richmond, teacher)

“Thanks for continuing this supplement.” (Robeson, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ really helps me and my students so much.” (Robeson, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ is great and it recognizes the hard work of those employed in the early childhood field. It encourages us to keep working harder to provide high quality care for young children.” (Robeson, teacher)

“A job well done. Thank you.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thanks and continue to find ways to help teachers.” (Robeson, teacher)

“It has helped me a lot, motivated me, and encouraged me to keep working.” (Robeson, teacher)



“The supplement is very helpful and useful.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thanks so much for caring!” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thanks for recognizing our hard work.” (Rowan, teacher)

“I’m appreciative for this program. Thanks for being there for us.” (Rowan, family child care home provider)

“It is very helpful.” (Rutherford, teacher)

“Please continue this because it is very helpful in many ways.” (Sampson, teacher)

“Thank you so much! It has been a blessing!” (Sampson, teacher)

“Thank you for all you do to help the child care providers.” (Sampson, family child care home provider)

“Thank you so much for the help.” (Union, teacher)

“I truly appreciate this program. It has helped my family and the children I work with.” (Union, teacher)

“Thank you so much. You have helped me out of some situations that I really needed help getting out of. Due to COVID, my husband was laid off and we missed his income and things got rough. I prayed and paid what I could. Just when I thought I was going to lose my car, my payment came. It saved my life. God bless you. It was enough to catch my car payment up and to buy some water play items for my classroom.” (Union, teacher)

“Thank you for supporting teachers.” (Union, teacher)

“The AWARDS\$ program was very helpful.” (Vance, teacher)

“Thank you for taking the time to address your appreciation for those that are in the child care career.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you very much for helping the child care industry and providing supplemental income.” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ is a big help!” (Wake, teacher)

“This program has helped us enlarge things we wish we could do and buy better quality of food. I see staff eating better and not missing eating lunch. Moods have changed for the better. Staff are doing more for themselves and not making so many sacrifices, which causes a downward spiral. Thank you, everyone benefits. It’s like sunshine, it spreads and is beneficial far and near.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you so much for offering this award and for all your services to the early education field. Please keep AWARDS\$ going. It is a great motivation, especially in this challenging time.”  
(Wake, teacher)

“I hope the Division of Child Development continues to have the AWARDS\$ program for 2022.”  
(Wake, teacher)

“This supplement takes some of our financial stress away, therefore allowing us to do better jobs and stay longer in this much needed profession. This program also encourages young teachers to enter higher education so they can participate in it. Thank you for continued recognition for our hard work in educating young children.” (Wake, teacher)

“These funds are helping to improve the lives of teachers in this field, who may not get a raise or not see a raise for years. It helps them to take care of bills and to use that money for any unexpected expenditures.” (Wake, teacher)

“It has helped me be able to have extra money for my living expenses.” (Wake, teacher)

“Keep up the great work and I pray that the funding continues because it’s great for teachers mentally.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you so much for supporting and valuing early childhood educators.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you so much for providing these funds to help us. We would not be able to stay in our jobs without them and it helps us tremendously.” (Wake, teacher)

“First, I would like to say thank you and secondly, I would like to say that it is an incentive to stay in the early childhood education field.” (Wake, teacher)

“So happy that you came up with this program and I’ve also been able to keep funds in the program.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thanks you. Keep this program for all the great people that teach children.” (Wake, teacher)

“I would like to say thank you very much. While helping me continue my education, you guys were a big help to me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.” (Wake, teacher)

“I really appreciate it.” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARDS\$ helps me out financially and encourages me to continue working in the field of child care.” (Wake, teacher)

“I am thankful for your support.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thanks for recognizing the work I do for young children and their families.” (Wake, family child care home provider)

“I am very thankful for this program!” (Wake, family child care home provider)

“Thank you so much for Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS®. When Wake County was not receiving WAGES, it was greatly missed. I’m so glad they have supplements here in Wake County again.” (Wake, family child care home provider)

“This award is greatly appreciated.” (Wake, family child care home provider)

“Thank you for the additional support! This grant has truly supported me in continuing to provide a 5 star quality child care facility and education to my kids.” (Wake, family child care home provider)

“Thank you. I really appreciate the help that these programs have given us in helping with our education and in our centers.” (Washington, teacher)

“Keep on. We need you thinking about the children and all the activities they are able to do, better outside play areas, sturdy toys to play on, new swings, and new mulch. It is great. Thank you!” (Washington, teacher)

“Thank you for your help and support.” (Washington, teacher)

“Thank you so much for the extra income! I am so grateful for you guys!” (Watauga, teacher)

“Thank you very much for valuing child care providers and investing in them in this way.” (Watauga, family child care home provider)

“I would just like to thank you for your hard work and for being able to do this for us.” (Watauga, teacher)

“Thank you so much. You just don’t know what it means to me to be able to get my car fixed, buy groceries, buy supplies for my classroom, etc. I’m very grateful.” (Wayne, teacher)

“It is a great supplement that I’m appreciative of.” (Wayne, teacher)

“It really helps, and I thank DCDEE for offering the supplements to teachers.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thanks so much! Please continue the supplements.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you so much for recognizing that we are overworked and underpaid with the supplement.” (Wayne, teacher)

“The supplement has allowed me to stay in early childhood classroom as well as buy needed materials.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you for showing your support and for understanding what everyone in this field of work does for the future of the world. We care for these children like they are our own, and the

supplement shows that people do want good, quality, consistent care for the future generations.”  
(Wilkes, teacher)

“It’s a great idea, but with everything going on right now in the economy, it needs to be offered more often or a greater amount with all the prices of everything going up.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“Thank you for showing us how appreciated we all are and how important the work we do each day truly is.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“Thank you and I’m hoping that the program will continue to be a success.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Child care providers do not get a lot of praise or recognition for their work. Thank you for the supplement. It is nice to feel appreciated for my hard work.” (Yadkin, teacher)