

## **Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® FY20 Final Report**

### **COVID-19**

During FY20, North Carolina has suffered the repercussions and threats of a global pandemic. Early care and education has been deemed the essential service that it is, but the impact to the field from COVID-19 has been and will be significant. Many have expressed concerns about the ability of the field to rebound at all, and others have speculated that a large percentage of child care programs will be forced to close. While the long-term impact is not yet known, what is clear is that many programs have stepped up to the plate to provide services to other essential personnel and their families, putting their own lives at risk in the process. They are always the *workforce behind the workforce*, but that has never been more true than it is today. The frontline professionals that have worked to help people through this crisis, including doctors and emergency personnel, could not have done so without early educators. The growing awareness of the critical needs met by this workforce has resulted in calls for much-deserved increases in compensation. Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is one available option for getting these increases into the hands of those working with our youngest children.

The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) provided temporary monthly financial bonuses to support the early care and education workforce during this time of crisis. In addition, as the contractor and sole funder for AWARD\$, they approved temporary procedural and policy changes to ensure that AWARD\$ participants could receive their salary supplements. The key changes included:

- Employment confirmations for participants were suspended for the final quarter of the year. Payments were issued based on the most recent confirmation AWARD\$ had on file. New applicants received an early confirmation to verify the application information.
- Participants were held harmless due to impact from COVID-19 from March through June. For example, a participant working in a site that closed still received her/his salary supplement. AWARD\$ did not actively seek employment information, but if learned, the participant was not negatively impacted.

Child Care Services Association was honored to serve the field through the consistent implementation of AWARD\$ and appreciates DCDEE's flexibility. The AWARD\$ staff were able to successfully and effectively ensure the program's continuation remotely with laptops funded and approved by DCDEE.

Due to the policy and procedural changes listed here, as well as the uncertain and fluctuating status of child care employment, the AWARD\$ report includes some temporary adjustments. Most tables reflect the "active" participants from October through June in order to include all new applicants that were picked up and paid, even during the special "COVID" period. It also allows the program to accurately reflect the education increases that were submitted throughout the full nine-month contract. It is important to note, however, that AWARD\$ did not conduct confirmations in the last quarter. The active number for these tables includes all of those that were still eligible prior to the suspension of confirmations, and new applicants that were paid.

The turnover table, however, is generated differently. The data from this table will reflect only the period of time from October through March. This enables AWARD\$ to show turnover prior to the largest impact of COVID-19 on sites and will reflect confirmed employment. Pulling the data through June would not provide an accurate reflection with our COVID-period adjustment.

## **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. For the FY20 report, participants are considered active if they were still eligible as of their most recent employment verification prior to the suspension of these confirmations.

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. Information for FY20 is based on October to March, prior to the significant impact of COVID-19. Employment confirmations were suspended for the final quarter of the year.

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

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

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

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

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

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers working full-time in infant-toddler classrooms 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 35 hours per week with infants, ones or twos.
- earn at or below \$18 per hour.
- work in a licensed child care program with at least three stars.
- have an Associate Degree plus or including 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 wants to rebuild its economy, but can only do so if early educators can afford to return to and stay in the field. As of June 2020, 1,287 child care professionals in 745 child care programs were active AWARD\$ participants (those who have been paid and are still eligible based on their most recent employment confirmation).

### Turnover

Turnover numbers for Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® in FY20 reflect active participants who left their child care programs between October and March. Confirmations were suspended for the final quarter of the year due to the impact of COVID-19.

If a participant leaves her/his program and resumes eligibility at a new site, s/he will not be factored into the report 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 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. over the income cap due to raise, change of position within the program, elected Child Care WAGE\$® instead) are not considered turnover.

The turnover rate of AWARD\$ participants for the stated time period in FY20 was 3%, well 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).

So much remains unknown regarding how many centers will open and remain open, how many teachers they can employ as families struggle with the decision and/or ability to place their children in child care and how many teachers feel safe returning to the field. What is clear, however, is that with infant-toddler teachers earning on average only \$10.00 per hour in North Carolina, the ability to return to and stay in their positions is much more challenging. 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 retention.

*“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is very important to me, it helps to ease my financial situation. Child care centers benefit because it helps them to retain staff for longer periods of time. The children benefit because they continue to have the same teachers, which helps them to feel comfortable, to bond with them, and feel secure, happy and safe. I love knowing that I can count on extra financial support.” (Buncombe, teacher)*

Education

In order to participate, teachers must have at least an Associate Degree with 24 birth to five focused semester hours, so this population, although poorly compensated, represents a well-educated segment of the early childhood workforce.

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

Education scale level*	Number of participants	Median hourly rate from employer
8	845	\$12.50
9	44	\$12.69
10	95	\$13.00
11	272	\$14.25
12	31	\$14.50

\*See attached scale for additional information on education.

Though participants already have higher levels of education, 87% of the survey respondents still indicated that Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® encourages or helps financially support additional coursework. The workforce study expected later this year should provide information regarding how the AWARD\$ population compares to the infant-toddler workforce at large.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of the AWARD\$ active participants are people of color. 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. See Appendix B for samples.

*“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important in that it recognizes the child care professional. It means that resources can help me continue education, and help make ends meet while I continue to reach my goal in education. I’m getting the education I need to become a force in the community and children’s lives.” (Stokes, teacher)*

### 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. The ongoing compensation plight of the field has been highlighted by the expectation that early educators continue to work through the pandemic despite dismal salaries. The state acknowledged this issue by providing \$950 in bonus pay for two months to those teachers who were making it possible for other essential personnel to work. Even in the best of times, early educators simply do not earn enough, which is illustrated by a comparison to the rate of \$24.73 that may be needed for one North Carolina employee with one child to meet basic, fundamental needs (Living Wage Calculator, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2020). With employers like Target paying entry level wages of \$15 per hour as of July 2020, it increases the challenge of keeping early childhood teachers in the field. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the active AWARD\$ participants earn less than \$12 per hour and 77% earn less than \$15 per hour. 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 FY20 was \$1,271. The scale ranges from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per year. Ninety-nine percent (99%) 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:

- 83% are better able to pay their bills
- 70% are more able to address the basic needs of their families (food/housing)
- 63% rely on the supplements to help address transportation costs
- 61% use the funds to provide additional resources for their classrooms or child care programs – in a separate question, a greater number of respondents (93%) 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.<sup>1</sup> 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. 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. Please see Appendix C for sample comments.

*“I think AWARD\$ is important because it helps single mothers as myself make ends meet. Most child care providers are living paycheck to paycheck. Just one check from being homeless because of the little pay that we make. Even having degrees, we are not making what we should and sometimes it makes you want to give up. This program has really been a blessing to me. I thank God for it.” (Cumberland, teacher)*

## OUTPUTS

This section highlights the projected outputs of Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® for FY20 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 980 eligible infant-toddler teachers will receive Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® payments as of June 2020.	<b>Output exceeded.</b> As of June 2020, 1,220 teachers working in centers had received AWARD\$ payments.
2	Approximately 150 eligible family child care providers will receive Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® payments as of June 2020.	<b>Output partially met.</b> As of June 2020, 133 educators working in family child care homes had received AWARD\$ payments.
3	Staff will conduct 25 outreach opportunities to offer information about the program and recruit eligible educators.	<b>Output partially met.</b> Staff conducted 23 outreach sessions where information about the AWARD\$ opportunity was shared. Due to COVID-19, field outreach was suspended in March.
4	Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® will send 3,500 recruitment/informational emails or mailings to the workforce.	<b>Output exceeded.</b> Staff sent 9,979 AWARD\$ recruitment mailings and/or emails.

*Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® payments:* One thousand two hundred twenty (1,220) teachers working in child care centers and 133 educators working in family child care homes were paid for completing at least one six-month period on Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® between October 2019 and June 2020. These participants worked in 770 facilities in 92 counties

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education). 2015. *High-Quality Early Learning Settings Depend on a High-Quality Workforce: Low Compensation Undermines Quality*. Washington, DC.

servicing approximately 20,335 children. This number is an unduplicated count of supplement recipients for AWARD\$. A variety of outreach efforts were targeted to family child care homes throughout the year, including mailed and emailed information, newly designed postcards, calls, recruitment from EEC and previous Child Care WAGE\$® participants, collaboration with child care resource and referral representatives and a deadline extension to allow for two payments in the shortened fiscal year.

*Outreach and recruitment:* Twenty-three (23) outreach sessions sharing Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® information were completed in FY20. When appropriate, staff discussed opportunities available through AWARD\$ and WAGE\$, and many sessions were completed in conjunction with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program as well. The goal is to give audience members an opportunity to learn about multiple resources supported by DCDEE. These opportunities included presentations and informational tables directed toward early care and education professionals, site visits, trainings for technical assistants and presentations for DCDEE consultants. Field-based outreach was suspended in March due to COVID-19. As we had already conducted 23 outreach sessions by March, we fully expected to meet or exceed expectations had we not had the COVID-19 shutdown.

In addition to the outreach listed above, 9,979 recruitment emails or mailings were sent to 3,667 facilities. Newly designed postcards were utilized to increase interest. 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 FY20 will be less than 25%.	Outcome met for the period prior to confirmation suspension. The turnover rate for AWARD\$ participants was only 3%. This rate represents data from October to March to assess routine turnover <b>prior to</b> the most significant impacts of COVID-19.
2	Eighty-five percent (85%) of Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® survey respondents will state that the supplement helps ease financial stress.	Outcome exceeded. Ninety-nine percent (99%) 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. In this report, the period covered is October through March. 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. The survey process began prior to the COVID-19 crisis in North Carolina, but individual participants may have responded after this became a reality.

The information below reflects the impact from the participant perspective. While a sample may be used in the future, for FY20, all respondents who had received a payment as of March were invited to participate in the evaluation process. Additional family child care providers were added at a later date to accommodate new applicants. Directors in counties funding the Child Care WAGE\$® Program who were not personally participating but who had staff members on AWARD\$ and/or WAGE\$ were sent a shared survey to assess the impact of salary supplements. Directors in other counties who had staff members on AWARD\$ also received a survey.

Potential respondents 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. All respondents were given the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for professional resources.

Overall, 72% of the targeted population completed the survey (1,470 of 2,049), which included the following:

- 75% of participating teachers/family child care providers (784 of 1,050)
- 69% of non-participating directors with staff receiving salary supplements (686 of 999)<sup>2</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, with many providing additional examples of assistance:

- 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. – 87% (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. – 99%
- AWARD\$ encourages me to stay with my current program. – 97%
- My AWARD\$ supplement helps me to provide more resources for my program or classroom. – 93%
- Receiving the AWARD\$ supplement makes me feel more appreciated and recognized for my work. – 98%

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<sup>2</sup> Non-participating directors in some cases may have responded about participants in AWARD\$ and/or WAGE\$.

Additional survey results are listed below:

**Nearly 100% of all respondents stated that they are satisfied with the program and its administration.**

**For those respondents who had the opportunity to speak with the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® staff, nearly 100% of those who have had interactions found the staff to be pleasant and helpful.** The bulk of the respondents were AWARD\$ recipients, and non-participating directors responded about the staff from both programs based on the participation in their sites. 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:

*“They're totally awesome, very helpful, pleasant and truly professional.” (family child care provider)*

*“The advisors/counselors have always been courteous and helpful. They answer questions and keep me informed about the AWARD\$ program. If I miss a document, they call to remind me of what's needed. They have been great in explaining what they do and why.” (teacher)*

*“The staff I have talked with were very helpful and took the time to help me with whatever I needed. They were indeed awesome and helpful.” (teacher)*

*“I enjoyed speaking with the staff member. She was very helpful and clear in explaining what I needed to do to apply for the award. I also received my results from the application in a timely manner.” (teacher)*

*“The staff are always helpful, courteous and professional.” (director)*

**Ninety-five percent (95%) 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, 95% 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-nine percent (99%) of responding directors reported positive attitudes toward AWARD\$ in their child care programs.** One of the directors who stated that attitudes were somewhat negative said, “Overall, we LOVE Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® & believe that it is WONDERFUL!!!! Our county does not offer WAGES\$. Our ‘educated’ Threes, Fours and Pre-K teachers feel that they should also be eligible for an added bonus/incentive.” Several

respondents indicated the need for a supplement program for teachers working with all age groups.

• **Ninety-eight percent (98%) of responding participants indicated that, as a result of Infant-Toddler Educator 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. See Appendix D for a sample of their feedback.

*“AWARD\$ helps to validate the vital work we do as early childhood educators. It gives additional compensation that brings with it gratitude and value.” (New Hanover, family child care provider)*

### **PROGRAM CHALLENGES**

COVID-19 has had a global impact, with long-term consequences. As stated above, the future of the early childhood field is largely unknown as employers, teachers and families struggle with complex decisions about health and finances. Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® was challenged to determine the best ways to assist participants during this crisis and implement appropriate procedures and policies. With DCDEE support and guidance, AWARD\$ held participants harmless due to COVID-19 impact from March to June. AWARD\$ will continue to hold participants harmless for March to June in commitment periods that end in FY21, but will otherwise be resuming standard procedures.

As confirmations resume, it is expected that many participants will either not currently be working or may be working a reduced schedule. Either of these scenarios could impact their eligibility. AWARD\$ will revisit plans as needed with DCDEE should the state fail to make progress with the coronavirus and close child care for families other than emergency personnel. What remains clear is that early childhood professionals need compensation support now more than ever. Despite a suffering economy, it is important to sustain and increase this support as much as possible.

While COVID-19 certainly became the focal point of FY20, this was also the first year for family child care provider eligibility on AWARD\$. Despite different and ongoing recruitment strategies to encourage family child care provider participation, the AWARD\$ output for family child care homes was set high. This output was generated in conjunction with DCDEE who provided the information on those home-based programs with seven education points, and AWARD\$ anticipated that 25% of that number would potentially apply. The number of applicants grew slowly throughout the year, with a total of 133 educators working in family child care homes ultimately being paid. Recruitment calls and ineligible applications suggest that the main reason more family child care providers did not participate is the requirement to have a minimum of an Associate Degree with 24 birth to five focused semester hours.

## **FUNDING**

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® implements several strategies to publicize that its funding comes from DCDEE. This is highlighted in every check letter and labels are now affixed to the outside of each check envelope to identify the funder. 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 E for a sample of those messages for FY20.

*“Thank you so much! I was near resigning and the AWARD\$ supplement made me decide to continue teaching and further pursue a bachelor's degree in education.”  
(Chatham, teacher)*



**Table 1**  
**Demographic Profile of the 1,287 Participants in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS®**  
**October 2019 - June 2020**



	# of Participants	% of Participants
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian	27	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	17	1%
Biracial	11	1%
Black/African American	710	55%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	56	4%
White/European American	437	34%
Not Given	19	1%
Other	10	1%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	1283	100%
Male	4	0%
<b>Age Range of Participants</b>		
20-24 years	56	4%
25-34 years	288	22%
35-44 years	336	26%
45-54 years	310	24%
55-59 years	132	10%
60-64 years	97	8%
65 and over	66	5%
Not Given	2	0%
<b>Position</b>		
Teacher	1068	83%
Teacher (Head Start In Home Educator)	15	1%
Teacher (Assistant Director)	11	1%
Teacher (Director)	8	1%
Teacher (Director Owner)	16	1%
Assistant Teacher	36	3%
Small Home Provider	133	10%
<b>Education Level</b>		
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	845	66%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	40	3%
MA/MS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	4	0%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	67	5%
BA/BS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	28	2%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	266	21%
MA/MS including 12 birth to five sem. hours	6	0%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	31	2%
<b>Wage Rate*</b>		
Below \$7.25 per hour	56	4%
\$7.25 - \$8.99 per hour	63	5%

*Due to COVID-19, employment status was not verified for the last quarter of the fiscal year. The active number includes all of those that were still eligible prior to the suspension of confirmations and new applicants that were paid. Please note that if unsolicited confirmations were provided, information was updated on this table.*

**Table 1 (cont.)  
Demographic Profile of the 1,287 Participants in North Carolina  
Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®  
October 2019 - June 2020**

	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>% of Participants</b>
\$9.00 - \$11.99 per hour	343	27%
\$12.00 - \$14.99 per hour	532	41%
\$15.00 - \$18.00 per hour	293	23%
<b>Years in Child Care Program: Participant's Start Date to Report End Date</b>		
0 to .99 Years	76	6%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	173	13%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	169	13%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	117	9%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	89	7%
5.00 or More Years	663	52%

\* 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 AWARDS®**  
**October 2019 - June 2020**



	Programs	Participants
<b>Center</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>1,154</b>
3 STAR	68	89
4 STAR	144	225
5 STAR	396	834
GS-110*	1	1
PROV*	1	2
Temporary	3	3
<b>Family Provider</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>133</b>
3 STAR	6	6
4 STAR	98	99
5 STAR	28	28
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<b>TOTALS</b>	<b><u>745</u></b>	<b><u>1,287</u></b>

\*Individuals working in these site will receive a partial payment for eligible time worked prior to the center's change to an ineligible status.

*Due to COVID-19, employment status was not verified for the last quarter of the fiscal year. The active number includes all of those that were still eligible prior to the suspension of confirmations and new applicants that were paid. Please note that if unsolicited confirmations were provided, information was updated on this table.*



**Table 3**  
**Educational Award Levels Profile of the 1,287 Participants**  
**in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**October 2019 - June 2020**



	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>% of Participants Out Of Active</b>
Eight	845	66%
Nine	44	3%
Ten	95	7%
Eleven	272	21%
Twelve	31	2%

*Due to COVID-19, employment status was not verified for the last quarter of the fiscal year. The active number includes all of those that were still eligible prior to the suspension of confirmations and new applicants that were paid. Please note that if unsolicited confirmations were provided, information was updated on this table.*



**Table 4**  
**Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS®**  
**October 2019 - June 2020**



1,353 unduplicated participants received a supplement for completing a six month period that ended during this reporting period; these participants worked in 770 different child care programs in 92 counties, serving approximately 20,335 children. 1220 participants worked in centers and 133 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.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 2
	<b>1,353</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>20,335</b>
Alamance	5	3	107
Alexander	3	2	46
Anson	10	9	90
Ashe	15	4	98
Avery	1	1	37
Beaufort	21	11	212
Bertie	10	7	60
Bladen	9	5	78
Brunswick	2	2	75
Buncombe	25	15	484
Burke	28	9	247
Cabarrus	19	14	515
Caldwell	10	4	106
Camden	2	2	5
Carteret	5	3	79
Caswell	2	1	16
Catawba	21	14	380
Chatham	18	11	150
Cherokee	5	3	56
Chowan	5	3	44
Clay	1	1	12
Cleveland	11	8	117
Columbus	6	5	99
Craven	7	2	42
Cumberland	71	27	703

*Data for paid participants reflects the full fiscal year; payments were issued using more flexible procedures in response to COVID-19.*

**Table 4**  
**Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS®**  
**October 2019 - June 2020**

1,353 unduplicated participants received a supplement for completing a six month period that ended during this reporting period; these participants worked in 770 different child care programs in 92 counties, serving approximately 20,335 children. 1220 participants worked in centers and 133 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.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 2
	<b>1,353</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>20,335</b>
Currituck	2	2	8
Dare	2	2	40
Davidson	22	12	311
Davie	8	5	122
Duplin	15	8	135
Durham	20	14	479
Edgecombe	1	1	3
Forsyth	18	10	483
Franklin	2	2	38
Gaston	9	7	154
Gates	3	3	20
Graham	1	1	6
Granville	6	5	150
Greene	2	2	32
Guilford	149	69	1,553
Halifax	5	3	55
Harnett	4	4	69
Haywood	8	6	111
Henderson	4	3	72
Hertford	4	2	14
Hoke	4	4	102
Iredell	14	10	305
Jackson	4	2	31
Johnston	18	10	285
Lee	1	1	18

*Data for paid participants reflects the full fiscal year; payments were issued using more flexible procedures in response to COVID-19.*

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\*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.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 2
	<b>1,353</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>20,335</b>
Lenoir	13	6	146
Lincoln	6	6	138
Macon	14	3	165
Madison	1	1	9
McDowell	17	6	107
Mecklenburg	89	59	2,179
Mitchell	2	1	8
Montgomery	8	2	65
Moore	28	13	271
Nash	3	3	43
New Hanover	34	19	733
Northampton	5	2	23
Onslow	9	8	167
Orange	38	18	526
Pamlico	3	3	34
Pasquotank	4	4	73
Pender	8	6	71
Perquimans	3	3	28
Person	4	3	24
Pitt	29	15	392
Polk	2	1	20
Randolph	7	5	119
Richmond	8	5	54
Robeson	42	23	584
Rockingham	6	5	101

*Data for paid participants reflects the full fiscal year; payments were issued using more flexible procedures in response to COVID-19.*

**Table 4**  
**Total Participants that Received a Supplement in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS®**  
**October 2019 - June 2020**

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\*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.

	Total Paid*	Total Programs	# Of Children 0 to 2
	<b>1,353</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>20,335</b>
Rowan	15	8	163
Rutherford	1	1	28
Sampson	13	4	36
Scotland	12	5	94
Stanly	9	4	159
Stokes	3	2	39
Surry	1	1	44
Transylvania	1	1	21
Union	22	11	282
Vance	5	5	72
Wake	190	122	4,087
Washington	6	4	42
Watauga	7	4	134
Wayne	20	13	267
Wilkes	5	3	66
Wilson	19	7	253
Yancey	3	1	14

*Data for paid participants reflects the full fiscal year; payments were issued using more flexible procedures in response to COVID-19.*



**Table 5**  
**Annual Turnover Summary of the 1,250 Participants**  
**in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®**  
**October 2019 - March 2020**



The annual turnover percentage is based on an overall population of 1250 participants. This population includes those individuals that were active during the reporting period of October 2019 - March 2020 (1209) and those who left their centers during this time (41). 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 (October 2019 - March 2020)</b>	
Total Participants	= 1,250
Active Participants	= 1,209
Left Center	= 41
Turnover Percentage	= 3%

*Data is shown from October to March to reflect the program's turnover status prior to COVID-19 impact and the suspension of confirmations. Please note that this six-month rate reflects lower turnover than would be identified for a full year.*



**Table 5**  
**Profile of Participants who Left their Programs in North Carolina**  
**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARDS®**  
**October 2019 - March 2020**



	# of Participants	% of Participants
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian	1	2%
Biracial	1	2%
Black/African American	20	49%
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	1	2%
White/European American	16	39%
Not Given	2	5%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	41	100%
<b>Position</b>		
Teacher	40	98%
Assistant Teacher	1	2%
<b>Education Level</b>		
AAS including 24 birth to five sem. hours	20	49%
BA/BS including 6 birth to five sem. hours	5	12%
90 sem. hours toward BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	2	5%
BA/BS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	13	32%
MA/MS including 18 birth to five sem. hours	1	2%
<b>Wage Rate*</b>		
\$7.25 - \$8.99 per hour	1	2%
\$9.00 - \$11.99 per hour	15	37%
\$12.00 - \$14.99 per hour	12	29%
\$15.00 - \$18.00 per hour	13	32%
<b>Years in Child Care Program: Participant's Start Date to Date Ineligible</b>		
0 to .99 Years	35	85%
1.00 to 1.99 Years	1	2%
2.00 to 2.99 Years	1	2%
3.00 to 3.99 Years	1	2%
4.00 to 4.99 Years	2	5%
5.00 or More Years	1	2%
<b>Regulation Type</b>		
3 STAR	2	5%
4 STAR	11	27%
5 STAR	28	68%

\* 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: Retention Sample Feedback Collected from AWARD\$ Surveys FY20

“These supplements increase teachers’ salaries, which as we know are too low overall. This gives them some incentive to remain employed providing consistency and continuity of care, which can be hard to find in many child care settings. It also encourages them to further their education. Overall, these programs positively affect the individual, children, families, and center as a whole.” (Alamance, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> is important to me because it helps me financially pay my bills with the extra income coming in. It has encouraged me to stay in my child care job. I am a sole provider for myself and do not make much money, the award gives me a sense of encouragement and security.” (Ashe, teacher)

“I think Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> helps to keep teachers in their centers.” (Beaufort, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> gives an extra incentive to stay with your present place of employment. Keeping the same teachers or staff at a child care center helps with the stability of the children and workforce! It makes you feel more appreciated and that you are being noticed for all the things that you do for the children and their parents! Thank you for providing this for us early educators!” (Beaufort, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> has made teachers more positive. Instead of going to pre-k or elementary school, the teachers are staying because the supplement helps them. Some teachers are going back to school. Beaufort County has a low market rate and parents can't afford day care. It is hard to pay what I think teachers are worth.” (Beaufort, director)

“The supplement allows the staff to purchase items for their classrooms and personal use. I haven't seen turnover in the infant-toddler class.” (Bertie, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> has encouraged me to stay in child care.” (Bladen, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> helps retain quality teachers. Teachers look forward to the supplement.” (Bladen, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> is very important to me, it helps to ease my financial situation. Child care centers benefit because it helps them to retain staff for longer periods of time. The children benefit because they continue to have the same teachers, which helps them to feel comfortable, to bond with them, and feel secure, happy and safe. I love knowing that I can count on extra financial support.” (Buncombe, teacher)

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

“AWARD\$ encourages me to stay at the same place of employment and helps bridge the gap between child care pay and daily expenses.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® greatly helps financially and definitely helps with staff retention. Continuous care is an important part of infant-toddler development.” (Burke, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement provides teachers with extra income and gives incentive for teachers to continue in early child care or further their education. We are very grateful for this program. I wish there was a program available for pre-k as well.” (Burke, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has increased overall income and we aren't the highest paying field. It also encourages them to stay in the program longer and not jump age groups.” (Burke, director)

“In a field where there is not a lot of money to be made, these programs help keep genuinely good teachers from seeking other employment.” (Caldwell, director)

“We are a small center and can't always offer salaries that some of the larger centers can, so it gives me a way to compensate the staff. I feel AWARD\$ enhances the program to be able to keep educated and qualified teachers. It enhances the quality of care for the children.” (Catawba, director)

“The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® supplement is important because it promotes less turnover and increased education.” (Chowan, director)

“As a supplement to my income, AWARD\$ has helped me to be financially more secure. For that reason, I am more likely to stay in my current employment.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me be a better teacher to my students in the classroom. It also brings joy to me going into the classroom knowing that AWARD\$ has helped me want to stay in the classroom and teach.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement helps to ensure that I continue to stay with my career in child care.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps motivate me to stay with the same company. The award provides continuity of care, which creates a safe and consistent learning environment for the children and families.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ Supplement gives staff an extra incentive to remain at our center as well as to continue their education” (Cumberland, director)

“I believe AWARD\$ is important to encourage staff to stay in their current program and it is great encouragement to seek higher education. I believe the two of these help children have a better experience in the early child care setting.” (Davidson, teacher)

“It gives teachers one more incentive to continue in their current position.” (Davidson, teacher)

“The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® program kept me from looking for a new job.”  
(Duplin, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® encourages people to not job hop.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps keep teacher turnover rates low and makes the teachers feel appreciated.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I feel the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® does boost morale for those teachers who are working with the younger age groups. Having staff longevity is important. It also encourages educated staff to stay, which in turn means better care for our children.” (Guilford, director)

“The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® supplement has certainly helped with staff retention. The extra money that my teachers are receiving sometimes makes the difference between them staying at our center or leaving the early childhood education field all together.” (Guilford, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a wonderful incentive that encourages infant-toddler caregivers to continue working in their positions and to contribute to more meaningful relationships with the children and families they care for.” (Halifax, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a great help for my family and me. I am a single mother and even though I love working with children, the pay is not enough. AWARD\$ has helped me to stay in the field and take care of my family.” (Halifax, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has made it easier to remain at a school that pays less but I strongly believe in.” (Harnett, teacher)

“AWARD\$ makes it more worthwhile for staying in the profession I love.” (Haywood, teacher)

“It does help me or encourage me to stay with my current program and to further my education.” (Hertford, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is very important to me in many ways. It has helped with bills and groceries. AWARD\$ makes employees of the early childhood field want to stay in this field and helps with staff turnover. AWARD\$ makes me feel proud to be in this field.”  
(Johnston, teacher)

“I think Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a good incentive to keep good teachers in the classroom.” (Johnston, teacher)

“This supplement not only benefits me and my family, and the children and families I serve, it enables me to remain in the program I'm in without searching for other employment.” (Johnston, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important because it helps us to be able to stay in child care. What it has meant is that I’m able to buy things for the children and for myself to stay focused on taking care of them.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps promote continuity in child care programs.” (McDowell, teacher)

“Teachers are more motivated to stay in the infant-toddler field as well as remaining in the same center.” (McDowell, director)

“I welcome any additional way to honor the commitment and passion of my staff.” (McDowell, director)

“As a teacher, we are underpaid in regards to our education and experience. It has given me an incentive to keep teaching.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps keep teachers at their current jobs, which is better for the children to have a stable teacher.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is such a big help that encourages me to keep the profession I truly love.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® encourages me to stay in this field.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“The award is very helpful because it is helping in retaining good teachers in the classrooms.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has definitely kept me in the field! I feel validated as a professional. My in-laws are shocked when I tell them about this amazing program! It is helping me pay off bills from making less than my peers in other professions! Thank you!!!!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I feel this award helps attract quality workers to the field, which are so desperately needed. Having good teachers in a classroom makes a huge difference in the quality of care children are receiving and any added benefits help people stay in a field of work where compensation is absolutely terrible for the work being performed.” (Moore, teacher)

“It’s a financial incentive that encourages me to stay with my current employment.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it shows appreciation to teachers of young children. It helps keep better educated teachers in their jobs, making better learning environments for children.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement helps to maintain staff with infants and toddlers and adds a bonus to educated staff.” (New Hanover, director)

“This supplement increases teacher pay, which of course helps to retain qualified early educators. This addition to their salary helps teachers earn more, because they deserve more! The children benefit from a higher paid teacher in too many ways to count. Happy teachers equal happy kids!” (Onslow, director)

“It has helped with my financial stresses, and provided incentive to stay at my current place of employment.” (Orange, teacher)

“It makes me feel like a valuable asset to the program and makes me want to keep working.” (Orange, teacher)

“I think it is important to help bridge the pay gap. By obtaining a supplement, teachers will stay with your center longer instead of looking for the highest paying jobs. It also helps us retain more qualified teachers.” (Orange, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps provide people the incentive to continue in the center/classroom they are in, providing continuity for the children.” (Pitt, teacher)

“I think Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a very important program for educators because it helps them to feel appreciated and feel more encouraged to stay at the center they are in or the field in general.” (Randolph, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important because it makes the teachers want to stay working in day care longer.” (Robeson, teacher)

“This award allows me to provide more for myself and the children I serve. I can use this financial resource to add to my classroom and provide some things that my center can't afford and that I feel would be an asset to the children. This award is a great incentive to STAY in early childhood!” (Robeson, teacher)

“I believe getting the AWARD\$ supplement has had an impact on child care workers not having high turnover rates and wanting to stay with their employer.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is an incentive to make quality teachers stay in the field and it makes teachers feel appreciated, which is very much lacking.” (Rowan, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important because as you know teachers don't make much money as is, so AWARD\$ is a great initiative to keep good quality teachers in child care.” (Rowan, teacher)

“It is wonderful to have programs that encourage staff to stay in the field and continue education.” (Scotland, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps when your children start to drop off, funds get low, and you don't know if you will be able to continue to stay open.” (Scotland, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is an incentive to continue in the field till retirement.”  
(Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me to make ends meet. It has helped me to stay in this field longer instead of looking for a higher paying job.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a great monetary supplement to the salary of early child care providers. It helps by giving us an extra financial supplement to allow you to stay in the field that you love.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important to me because I can continue to do what I love even though the pay is not great. AWARD\$ gives me a boost of appreciation and helps me financially.” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARD\$ had a great impact on my children I care for. It gave me motivation to stay at my current job and not seek new employment because of more salary.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® always seems to come right on time. It helps me to stay in infant-toddler care. It motivates me to keep going, helps me to realize that somebody cares, and shows that infant and toddler teachers are not forgotten.” (Wake, teacher)

“I believe Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® accomplishes what you are setting out to achieve. It provides child care educators with extra supplements to offer financial help, they feel more appreciated for their work, and it encourages them to stay with their program to promote loyalty to the school and keep receiving supplements. Thank you!” (Wake, teacher)

“Being an early childhood educator is very demanding. This AWARD\$ supplement has given me a boost of encouragement to continue in this field.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is financially very supportive and motivates us to keep our jobs.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“There is an unspoken hierarchy in child care that seems to view older classrooms as more prestigious. The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® program helps reverse that and keep teachers willing to work with the younger age groups. Thank you!” (Wake, director)

“It helps financially and with education, keeping teachers in centers.” (Wake, director)

“The AWARD\$ supplement helps with retention of staff. Although I would like to give frequent bonuses and raises, our program cannot afford it at this time. The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® program has allowed our experienced staff members to feel supported financially.”  
(Wake, director)

“Teachers in this field are incredibly underpaid. This supplement helps teachers have some stability. It also helps attract employees to infant-toddler positions.” (Wake, director)

“AWARD\$ is important because it gives teachers the incentive to stay at their center and helps provide consistency for the children at their center. It also helps relieve some of the financial stress for teachers, who are often underpaid.” (Watauga, teacher)

“I feel like The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has shown me that my work is appreciated and I have a very important role in the lives of young children. It has given me more financial resources that I am able to care for myself, my family and my work family. Having the same teachers at the same center over six months is great for the learning environment.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“AWARD\$ gives me another reason to stay at the same center, and I feel that the stability of the teacher is important for the toddlers.” (Wilson, teacher)



## Appendix B: Education

### Sample Feedback Collected from AWARD\$ Surveys FY20

“Honestly, this program is simply the best! I am more motivated to be the best teacher I can be and I encourage others to continue working towards their goals of receiving their degree. ... Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has made me feel as if I do make a difference in my place of work and in the lives of the children and families I give care to. It means a lot, knowing someone appreciates what I have a heart's desire to do and is supportive of me through this program.” (Ashe, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me with my expensive student loans.” (Burke, teacher)

“My staff who have education are very appreciative of this award. It is a nice supplement to their salary. I am hoping this will encourage more of my infant-toddler teachers to go back to school.” (Burke, director)

“I believe Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is critical for those eligible persons because the money given is enough motivation to encourage a child care provider to pursue higher education or remain in the field.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® boosts morale. I have quite a number of staff that have gone back to school after seeing others do it and receive it. I would like to see it expanded to other age groups.” (Cabarrus, director)

“The AWARD\$ supplement is truly awesome and appreciated! We have seen such a boost in morale, interest in going back to school, etc. However, it is a bit disheartening to not be able to offer the same incentive/benefit for those working with our older children as well.” (Cabarrus, director)

“I feel Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® gives them more of an option to seek further professional development. Child care salaries are low and this increases them.” (Carteret, director)

“I think the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® program is important because it not only helps us financially but it enables us to go back to school and finish our degree. Also, it gives some teachers the incentive to stay at the center they're at instead of trying to go somewhere else. It is definitely a blessing!!!!” (Catawba, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes me feel more financially secure. It helps me want to gain more benefits by going back to school and by knowing that I will be financially ok.” (Catawba, teacher)

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

“AWARD\$ has helped me to want to further my education. It also encourages me to tell other people about the program and the perks from continuing education in the early childhood field.” (Catawba, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has encouraged me to want to go back to school to further my education.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped the children with high quality teacher-child interactions. The teachers make more money, which encourages further education so everybody benefits.” (Catawba, director)

“This has provided me with opportunities to further my education and pay bills.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“As a single mother, Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ helps me move forward in my education so that I can set an example for my children. ... It has helped me not only financially, but mentally. I am more at ease knowing that I have these extra funds to take care of bills, education, and my children.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps to motivate teachers to get more education. It also helps to provide some things for the classroom that the teachers want to get for their children.” (Durham, teacher)

“I found the program to be encouraging as well as foster an opportunity for higher education.” (Guilford, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me with furthering my education.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Any time a monetary thing is involved, it motivates the teachers to take classes, remain in child care, and promotes more stability.” (Guilford, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps encourage teachers to increase their education and want to work with younger children.” (Guilford, director)

“AWARD\$ is important because as providers we don’t get paid a lot. Having an additional supplement helps teachers go to school, take different training not offered by the center, and helps supplement their daily living.” (Guilford, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is an added benefit to help staff pay for classes.” (Guilford, director)

“It shows those in the profession that they are valued above and beyond what we as employers are able to offer them for pay, as well as encouraging further education and longevity in employment positions.” (Lenoir, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped encourage me to continue with my education, be able to buy materials and extra things for my classroom, be able to do extra things with my family, and to have more family time when not at work.” (Macon, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me pay for college classes, gas in my car, and groceries.” (Macon, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has encouraged my staff to continue furthering their education.” (McDowell, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® gives us help when we are not making a lot of money at our job. It encourages us to continue our education.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I think the award is important because it makes me feel more appreciated in my field, gives me an opportunity to increase my education, and buy more needed supplies for my classroom.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important to me because I was able to take a much needed class and help one of the other teachers return to class. I was also able to purchase materials for the classroom.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® encourages me to continue my education. It helps me gain the knowledge I need to be a better teacher.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I think AWARD\$ helps to support your educational goals and achievement.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“WAGE\$ and AWARD\$ are important because they help teachers financially. However, they also motivate them to continue their education, which ultimately benefits the children, families and community.” (Mecklenburg, director)

“IT’S FREE MONEY!!! My staff have reaped the benefits of receiving WAGE\$ and AWARD\$ by supplementing their income, which in turn, eases the cost of getting a degree in ECE.” (Mitchell, director)

“The program has encouraged staff to pursue more education. The children will have more educated teachers and they will be less likely to seek other employment. Children will have more continuity of care.” (Onslow, director)

“These educators deserve so much more than I can afford. Receiving AWARD\$ means that the education level is being acknowledged and appreciated.” (Onslow, director)

“It means a lot to me and helps me to pay for some of my education and books.” (Orange, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is very important because those who can’t always help themselves with school or purchasing the necessary materials now get the help they desperately need. I am thankful for AWARD\$. It has been a blessing to me.” (Pamlico, teacher)

“This supplement has increased the morale of the teachers and assisted them in furthering their education. Better morale and education cause the teachers to be better for the children in my program. I am well pleased with the results of this supplement.” (Person, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps with day care classes, food, better education, and toys for the children.” (Person, family child care provider)

“AWARD\$ helps me to learn more by going to extra classes and workshops. I am able to prepare my learning environment for success with my infants and toddlers.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has motivated me to work and has encouraged me to do additional education.” (Pitt, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps teachers financially and helps them go back to school.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me be able to provide for my child and school.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important in that it recognizes the child care professional. It means that resources can help me continue education, and help make ends meet while I continue to reach my goal in education. I’m getting the education I need to become a force in the community and children's lives.” (Stokes, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps to encourage job stability and educational development.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® allows me to pay off my school debt so that I can eventually go back to school and get higher education in this field.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a great benefit to supplement income and recognize my hard work and dedication to my education and the children in my care.” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important because it helps you further your education, helps you strive to be a more knowledgeable teacher, and supplies your class with all the necessary items that are needed on a day-to-day basis.” (Wake, teacher)

“This program is similar to WAGE\$, which is the only way I was able to complete my degree as an adult working full-time. I made many sacrifices during that time and especially towards the end. Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes all of that work and effort feel worthwhile and showed that my time was and still is valued. The program provides incentives for me to keep going, even on the most challenging days. It also has helped me to consider new goals in furthering my education. Feeling valued has many positive effects, including motivating me to be a better teacher and find new ways to give back to the early childhood community.” (Wake, teacher)

“I think the program is important because it encourages and rewards continuing education, while building professionalism. For me, it has been a financial bridge promoting a happier and stable work environment. The children and early childhood community also benefit by having better educated teachers/professionals, less teacher turnover, and classroom stability.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a great incentive for us to continue higher education.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® does motivate teachers. Teachers who are just shy of receiving it due to education are interested in taking one or two more classes.” (Wake, director)

“It helps staff to attend classes and I feel that early education courses are a benefit to teachers in implementing activities in the classroom.” (Wake, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is motivation to staff to keep improving education and to keep teaching younger children.” (Wake, director)

“Supplements help compensate the teachers for their education and work ethics. It also motivates teachers who aren’t qualified to work towards pursuing their degree.” (Wake, director)

“The teachers feel more professional for receiving the award and other teachers want to work towards being able to receive it.” (Wake, director)

“AWARD\$ has encouraged me to pursue further education in my early childhood field.” (Wilson, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has financially increased my morale, helping me get interested in classes.” (Wilson, teacher)



## Appendix C: Compensation Sample Feedback Collected from AWARD\$ Surveys FY20

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> helps to relieve some of my financial stress.” (Alexander, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has helped me with supplying my classroom with the latest material for infants and toddlers to aid in their learning.” (Anson, family child care provider)

“The AWARD\$ supplement eases a financial burden and allows me to focus on teaching.” (Ashe, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has allowed me to buy materials for the classroom, it has eased my burden to pay bills, and as a teacher in the early childhood community, I am less worried about money. This allows me to focus on what I love most about my career, the children.” (Ashe, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> is important to me so I can purchase items I need to help my infant-toddler area be more educational and children friendly.” (Beaufort, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> has helped with new book and art material and outdoor toys.” (Beaufort, family child care provider)

“It bridges the gap. Child care workers are paid low wages. They deserve the AWARD\$ program. The other staff wishes that WAGE\$ would come back!” (Beaufort, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> helps the staff feel more appreciated. It helps them to bridge the gap of what we are able to pay and what they deserve. It is unfortunate that it is only for infant and toddler teachers. You need to bring back the WAGE\$ program. If there is anything that you can do to bring that back to our county, it would be appreciated.” (Beaufort, director)

“AWARD\$ has taken the pressure off my shoulders to catch up with what I owe.” (Bertie, teacher)

“I feel the supplement is very important to staff. They work very hard. I feel like they deserve to be compensated and any benefit out there, they should be the first to get because they work very hard to keep kids and children first on their list. Teachers are doing magnificent jobs, especially since COVID-19 took effect. They are phenomenal.” (Bertie, director)

“Pay is SO low in child care and my company does not consider my education or experience for raises. I basically have to beg them for any extra money, so AWARD\$ helps to supplement at least a little bit for that.” (Buncombe, teacher)

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

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® always comes in the nick of time to help pay rent, put gas in the car, or keep the electricity on.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement gives me financial security.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important because it shows that someone has realized how low the pay is for teachers and the supplement encourages those teachers to keep fighting through the low pay.” (Burke, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is beneficial by allowing you to be able to supplement your finances, which benefits your household and takes away the stress.” (Burke, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped take a lot of stress financially away.” (Burke, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important to us because it helps lighten the financial burden we all face, which in turn helps us to feel less stressed and more appreciated.” (Burke, teacher)

“I used my check to pay for a needed dental procedure. What a blessing.” (Burke, teacher)

“Being a single mother, AWARD\$ has really helped me to provide for my family better. It is a huge blessing, allowing me to do more for my children at home and the children in my classroom.” (Burke, teacher)

“I feel appreciated for the work I do. Financially, the money comes at a good time. There’s always something I need. Like this time, I’m getting a set of tires. Thank you very much.” (Burke, teacher)

“It is nice to continue to get the AWARD\$ supplement during the trying times of coronavirus and cutbacks.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement helps people take care of their financial needs, it makes the person feel valued, and it helps to be able to purchase things for your classroom.” (Caswell, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has helped ease financial stress.” (Catawba, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has enabled my child to go to college and I am still able to pay my bills without struggling.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because I have been able to get supplies, such as toys, books, and art supplies. I can pay some bills because our paycheck sometimes is not enough. I also have bought food, and cleaning supplies too.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“Money is tight and it helps relieve some of the stress. In return, lower stress puts me in a better mood for my family and class.” (Chatham, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a supplement for providers when life surprises happen.” (Chatham, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important to me as it has allowed me to feel financially secure in my job. I am a single woman and hope to own my own home someday. My child care center can only afford to pay me a little more than minimum wage, so the added supplement from AWARD\$ helps me add to my savings and gives me peace of mind about continuing in the job I love without worrying about money.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“I think it is important because the supplement helps pay our bills. Where I work I get paid once a month and you have to save from one paycheck to another. The award does help when I don’t have the money at the time.” (Chowan, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped by allowing me to get caught up on my bills. ... It is important because I feel child care teachers are overlooked as teachers. Making less money can be challenging, so this extra income really is helpful.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps me buy more materials to enhance my classroom.” (Columbus, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped with financial stress, purchasing clothing for children in need, supplies for my classroom and more.” (Cumberland, teacher)

"I think AWARD\$ is important because it helps single mothers as myself make ends meet. Most child care providers are living paycheck to paycheck. Just one check from being homeless because of the little pay that we make. Even having degrees, we are not making what we should and sometimes it makes you want to give up. This program has really been a blessing to me. I thank God for it." (Cumberland, teacher)

“I think Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it makes me more comfortable and stress free, so that I’m able to do my job and make sure the children are safe.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps ease the stress. When you’re not stressed, you focus and that always benefits your class.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“The extra funds have helped me with expenses. Without it, I would probably have to get a second job.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“We do not get paid well, even though we have college degrees. This award helps offset bills and other expenses.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is very important because it helps me to be less stressed.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“The award helped me give some gifts to the children in my toddler class. I gave one child a little extra for Christmas because his mom missed the Salvation Army’s Giving Tree.” (Davidson, teacher)

“I’m able to take care of my daughter and her medical needs, as well as bills.” (Davidson, teacher)

“AWARD\$ always comes at a time when I have fallen short on my income. I thank God, it has really been a blessing. Thank y’all for the financial increase.” (Duplin, teacher)

“AWARD\$ definitely eases financial stress. It helps educators feel supported and gives us breathing room for financial worries, as this field doesn’t pay as much as others.” (Durham, teacher)

“It paid my electric bill and helped put food on the table.” (Gaston, teacher)

“The extra money has and will help my family with bills that are hard to pay with just my regular income.” (Gaston, teacher)

“I had an outstanding day care tax bill. It has really helped me.” (Gates, family child care provider)

“AWARD\$ has helped lessen my financial burden and stress.” (Granville, teacher)

“It is a great way to relieve financial stress for our teachers in this field.” (Greene, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it is an additional needed source of income. Many early child care teachers are being paid the hourly minimum wage and have a family of their own to support, and health needs to be taken care of.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Having some extra income to count on helps me feel good about providing supplies for the children in my care. Making this program a success is so helpful to all my co-teachers, who otherwise feel unsupported with the career choice we have made.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It has given me more help with purchasing things for my classroom, as well as helping my life at home be a little easier financially.” (Guilford, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me on the decision to one day open my own child care center.” (Guilford, teacher)

“With the help of Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®, I’m able to pay bills that I’ve had to put aside. AWARD\$ has been important to me because I’m able to meet needs and wants financially that I never could before. Because of AWARD\$, I’m able to buy extra supplies for my class that enhance the children’s education.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I love that early educators are being recognized financially because we work hard for little to nothing.” (Guilford, teacher)

“The pay that we receive each year for this profession makes it hard to take care of most bills each month. This award helps me to pay off debt and to save money.” (Guilford, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helped to buy things for the enhancement of my classroom learning environment.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps to ease my mind about taking care of my son and paying my bills.” (Guilford, teacher)

“The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® program helps me mentally and emotionally not to stress about money.” (Guilford, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped financially in so many ways. It relieves the stress of not having enough money to pay bills. It helps me to pay bills that I struggle with and allows me to save money for buying a home.” (Guilford, teacher)

“AWARD\$ takes some of the stress off of me when I have a repair or big bill to pay.” (Guilford, teacher)

“The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® supplement helps feed and clothe my daughter and grandson.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me to continue to provide materials for my class and help children who are less fortunate with basic necessities.” (Guilford, teacher)

“This program helps me to be able to continue working with children at the pay rate my center offers because it supplements my paycheck. It has helped me pay rent and buy groceries for myself and two children. I am very thankful for this additional income.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Working as an early childhood educator, I make very little money. I give my all to the children in my care. Yet, I can barely pay my mortgage and keep the lights on in my house. For dinner most nights, I eat popcorn or ramen noodles because I literally can’t afford anything else. AWARD\$ does give me a small financial boost and I really appreciate it.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me pay off some debts to free up money in my budget. It eases the stress of purchasing items for the class.” (Guilford, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has helped me to pay my bills on time. Thank you! God’s blessing upon you.” (Guilford, family child care provider)

“I think the supplement is important because it helps ease financial stress. It helped me to provide for a family who was suffering financially. Child care providers don’t make a lot of money, but when we receive the award it makes us feel more appreciated.” (Guilford, family child care provider)

“This award is important because it helps us to continue with offering our families quality child care by providing the best materials and overall engagement to the families and children we serve.” (Guilford, family child care provider)

“As an industry, early childhood educators are grossly underpaid. Being able to provide them with supplements is both a morale booster and a necessity.” (Guilford, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® gets staff closer to a worthy wage to be self-sufficient. In early childhood, staff have to rely on subsidies to make family budgets. It is critical. Families can only afford to pay so much so it is critical to provide staff with a worthy wage they deserve.” (Guilford, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is helping me be more financially stable.” (Haywood, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has made me able to buy Christmas for my children.” (Haywood, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because teachers are underpaid for the important work they do every day to support young children’s healthy development and early learning. To my life, it has meant that I want to be a great teacher to help the children learn in a positive way. I also want to help the community succeed in everything they do.” (Hertford, teacher)

“I have been able to buy extra supplies. I have bought outside play toys, such as a jungle gym for the children to play on. AWARD\$ has helped me with other areas dealing with the day care I would not have been able to supply my children with. It has made a big difference in my day care children's lives as well as mine. Thank you for helping me to put a bigger smile on their little faces.” (Hoke, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® encourages other highly qualified teachers to work with infants and toddlers, creating a stronger team. It has allowed me to reduce hours in a second job and put more focus on my classroom.” (Iredell, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me to get caught up on bills and to be able to get things for my classroom if needed.” (Jackson, teacher)

“I am a single mom. Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me in so many different ways. It has helped me to provide for my son.” (Johnston, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped meet my family needs and has helped with supplies in the classroom that will help with the children developing.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“I believe that the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it helps the teacher be less stressed out because with the supplement they can provide new resources for their classroom and for their family. Also, it allows the teacher to work better knowing that if they need something they can use their supplement to get it.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me and my family make bills on time, afford to buy extra food and supplies for the house, buy gas, and make repairs for our car. Paying for phone service and TV is easier too. We always have to go to the doctor then we end up having to buy medicine. Thanks so much.” (Macon, teacher)

“AWARD\$ provides a much needed resource to help with finances and during this time of COVID-19, it sure will help with school closings.” (McDowell, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has helped me with my living expenses.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I am able to buy books and materials for my classroom.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“The award helps me maintain a stable living environment. I think it is important because it allows me to continue to perfect the early childhood classroom and purchase essential materials that my center may not be able to afford.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has eased some burdens in my life that the child care pay scale has been unable to.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me feel completely at ease.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes me feel like I want to work with my little humans. I use the extra funds for my classroom. I enjoy going out and spending on my students. They love when I bring in new materials to the class. It brings excitement to them and myself.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important because the money helps teachers fund materials for their classroom. It also helps with teachers’ families when they fall short on a paycheck. It recognizes that teachers work really hard to shape children’s minds in learning for the future.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I believe that AWARD\$ is very important because it helps with expenses that are needed to provide the highest quality of care for children. The award has allowed me to purchase additional items for my students and the program.” (Mecklenburg, family child care provider)

“I was able to help feed my child care families who had no money for food. So thank you for that.” (Mecklenburg, family child care provider)

“I think Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it has helped me do things that I never would’ve been able to do with just my salary alone. It has meant the world because it eases my stress and helps me provide the best possible care that I can for the children.” (Moore, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® really relieves a lot of stress on bills, transportation problems, and stuff needed for my class.” (Moore, teacher)

“AWARD\$® helps relieve the stress of everyday life.” (Moore, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps the teachers not worry so much about bills and money issues when they get the check, and then they are less stressed and happier.” (Moore, teacher)

“It is important because most child care programs can’t afford to pay their teachers what they are worth. Getting a supplement allows the teachers to seek employment in a skill that they enjoy. More qualified teachers attract parents.” (Nash, director)

“It is an inspiration for me to continue being good or better in my field and it eases my financial burdens tremendously!” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is very important. I feel early childhood teachers are underpaid, underappreciated, and many don’t stay or even choose a career in the field for this reason. Personally, AWARD\$ has helped ease a lot of financial stress in my life. Since my first supplement, not having that stress has allowed me to do what I love and come to work every day with a positive attitude. AWARD\$ make me feel that I am valued and my hard work is not going unrecognized. I am sure this is true for other teachers receiving AWARD\$ as well.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is very important to early childhood educators. The majority of us are underpaid and have few major benefits. Yet, we continue on a daily basis to educate our future leaders of this society with no regrets. It has assisted me with paying for medical expenses for myself and maintenance expenses for my home.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me make ends meet. The award makes me feel appreciated and respected.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“I have recently had a baby girl, and this helped very much through a very stressful time. (New Hanover, teacher)

“Supplements are the only way that we can lift these teachers up in the profession. The industry does not generate the funds to pay a living wage.” (New Hanover, director)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has helped reduce personal stress for staff who received it.” (New Hanover, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® eases financial burdens and makes for a happier teacher.” (New Hanover, director)

“It has reduced financial stress, also it has helped me pay off medical bills and helped me with the closing cost on purchasing my home.” (Onslow, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is a very important supplement to my program. It has helped me purchase supplies and curriculum for my program that I wouldn’t have been able to purchase without the supplement!” (Onslow, family child care provider)

“It has helped ease some of the financial hardship we face as teachers, and the cost of living increases, but our salary does not.” (Orange, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps motivate teachers in coming to work, enjoying working with the children, and not having to worry about paying bills or knowing how they will get their bills paid. They can just focus on the children when they are at work and enjoy their day with the children in their care.” (Orange, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is very important to me and my day care. The funds help me with my bills and help me with purchasing supplies for my day care.” (Pasquotank, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has given me the ability to provide for my family and my classroom. I was able to purchase things for my family that we needed but did not have the funds. I was also able to purchase some new toys for my classroom that my children have loved playing with. Without this reward, those purchases would not have been possible.” (Pender, teacher)

“I think AWARD\$ is important because it helps enhance my classroom and the quality of care I can provide the children. I was also able to provide the families with a small care package to let them know they are appreciated. It has given the children in my care more materials and toys to work with. It’s also important because it encourages me to enroll more infants and toddlers.” (Pender, family child care provider)

“AWARD\$ helps with day care classes, food, better education, and toys for the children.” (Person, family child care provider)

“Seeing young children be prepared for the new step to public schools and seeing them integrated into the community is our dream, and helping teachers to have financial peace makes all this happen. That is why this incentive is so important for me.” (Pitt, teacher)

“I think it is important to help meet a child care teacher’s basic needs, where a normal paycheck cannot cover all needs. This leads to struggling financially and not making ends meet, inside and outside of the classroom/home.” (Pitt, teacher)

“As an early child care teacher, I don't make a whole lot of money, but I still want/need things for my classroom and this makes it easier to purchase whatever I may need/want for my children.” (Pitt, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is helpful because it has helped me minimize my debt.” (Randolph, teacher)

“I can take the money and buy art supplies and it helps me with transportation. That is a great advance in my life. I love to be creative. I can make my students grow by being creative too, which makes them feel important and have fun.” (Richmond, teacher)

“I have been able to spend extra money on materials, books, and supplies for my classroom. I love to see the enjoyment in the kids’ faces using these things I have purchased.” (Richmond, teacher)

“This award has eased stress on providing quality care for my children at work, as well as my family.” (Richmond, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important to me because I was able to purchase infant and toddler toys and carpets for my family child care home.” (Richmond, family child care provider)

“AWARD\$ has helped with resources in my class. It helped me feel more at ease about bills in my life.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me out a lot. I live from paycheck to paycheck and the AWARD\$ program has helped me catch up with my bills.” (Robeson, teacher)

“This award is important to teachers because we need that extra money to help out with home needs. It has also helped me with buying books for my class and things I need to teach my children.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has made a huge difference in my finances and encouragement level in life.” (Robeson, teacher)

“I am a single mother, so it helps with bills I’m struggling with.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps relieve stress money-wise, because everything is going up but what day care pays for degreed employees.” (Robeson, teacher)

“It has helped me pay doctor bills and other bills. I am very thankful for the award.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Child care centers are unable to pay top salaries teachers are seeking and deserve. By having the supplement in place, it helps to offset what they are not making/receiving. The staff are happy and appreciative.” (Robeson, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me to be able to save and prepare for unexpected financial hardships.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement helps provide for me and my family, helps get supplies I need for my students and for my classroom, helps pay my bills when my check does not cover them, and helps provide for my daughter while she is in college.” (Sampson, teacher)

“Teachers have had better attendance and been more invested in their classroom.” (Sampson, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® really helps me out with my financial needs. If I need any art supplies for my children I can go out and buy whatever they need and I can also buy them little gifts.” (Scotland, teacher)

“The supplement has helped staff with having more money in their pockets. Staff are less stressed about paying their bills and other needs in their families.” (Stokes, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me financially. I have been able to purchase materials that the agency would not get but I knew would benefit my children. I love to see them learning and growing.” (Union, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has lightened my burdens.” (Union, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important to have a peace of mind knowing that someone understands and cares enough to help you by funding this supplement to help with purchasing the materials you need for your class and also helping make ends meet.” (Union, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps teachers who are struggling financially and it is a big help.” (Wake, teacher)

“I believe the AWARD\$ program is important because it helps infant-toddler teachers financially due to our pay being rather low. There are those who consider us glorified ‘babysitters’, which is far from the truth. Having AWARD\$ has helped me so much, especially financially, which makes me less stressed about being able to pay bills.” (Wake, teacher)

“I think it is important because it helps give teachers an extra boost in paying their bills and not stressing as much about finances. Teachers feel they are more appreciated and loved and that they are doing a great job in their careers.” (Wake, teacher)

“I’m able to do more educational activities with my class and not have to worry about how I’ll receive the supplies needed.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has financially helped me to not struggle with daily living and it makes me feel more appreciated.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps ease the financial stresses I feel day to day and allows me to be more present with my children in my class.” (Wake, teacher)

“I was able to open a savings account!” (Wake, teacher)

“It helps us be able to go the extra mile without stress.” (Wake, teacher)

“This blessing helps fill in for obligations that my pay doesn’t meet.” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helped with the cost of living expenses such as buying groceries, paying rent, and buying clothing for work. It lifted some financial burdens, and made going to work more pleasant.” (Wake, teacher)

“My mind is more at ease.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me pay for past due bills and add supplies to my classroom.” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me stay financially afloat.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helped me find a house closer to my job, expand my knowledge and education, it helped me with finances, gave me better self-esteem, a better emotional state and less stress.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has truly blessed my classroom and my household!! I have been able to purchase items to do special projects with the children in my classroom. It has also helped assist with my car problems and helped me catch up on utility bills. I feel so thankful and grateful for the AWARD\$ program!❤️” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has been helping me as a single mother to meet many needs.” (Wake, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ program has tremendously helped with my family’s financial needs. Unfortunately, child care teachers do not earn a significant amount of money. The program has really helped with compensating with the cost of living.” (Wake, teacher)

“I think it is important because I don’t have to pay out of my own pocket, even though I do. I get books, paper, and any other supplies for my classroom. I know that I have that extra AWARD\$ money coming.” (Wake, teacher)

“As an early childhood educator, I feel as though the bonus we receive from Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is extremely beneficial. Since we don’t make enough throughout the year, sometimes it can become difficult to pay bills on time and have money to live. The money from AWARD\$ helps me to catch up on bills.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has brought me out of a bind, when I have thought about giving up. It makes me feel like someone knows that to give your best, you have got to get your best.” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps with my household expenses and paying bills etc. I make just enough to cover my rent and pay a few bills without outside help. This supplement is a godsend. This supplement has benefited me in having a little extra money to put gas in my car for work and buy two tires for my car.” (Wake, teacher)

“I used the AWARD\$ supplement for unexpected but necessary house repairs.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has been a gigantic help to me and my family. I have been able to buy more things for my classroom, while also helping out by paying bills.” (Wake, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ program has been a blessing for my family because I am encouraged to save for my first born as well as continue to help the children in my care to provide them with new learning resources in the classroom.” (Wake, teacher)

“I care for and educate children because I have a passion for making a difference in children and their families’ lives. I work between 50-60 hours a week for about \$3 an hour. This additional money helps to supplement the low wages I receive. Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has

helped me tremendously by allowing me to pay my bills on time and provide additional teaching resources to my children and their families.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“The award has allowed me to update my playground.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“AWARD\$ helps me provide resources for my families like extra diapers and wipes if they run out.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“AWARD\$ has helped me to enhance and give my home day care some new materials and improvements.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“This is an important incentive. It allows us to provide additional items for our classroom, additional material for the children, supplements, etc. In general, it helps with items that we may want but cannot afford, this supplement allows us to provide those items. It also helped me pay for a college course to further my education on infant-toddlers with disabilities.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“This program helps make my infant and toddler program better, making sure the kids in my care have good quality books and toys to help enhance their learning development.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Receiving the award helped me purchase two costly pieces of gently used outdoor playground equipment, which the children love. I have been looking for this playground equipment for at least two years. Receipt of the award allowed me to purchase it without using my bill money. I love the ability to purchase new and/or replace equipment with extra money.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps with the financial burdens I’m facing.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps teachers feel more confident and at ease. Our pay isn’t much so this AWARD\$ program helps so much in so many ways. It’s a blessing in my life, and for the center I work at.” (Washington, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has helped me build a savings plan to hopefully use as retirement someday.” (Watauga, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped with household bills, utilities, and buying items for my day care class.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps me to be able to buy tires or whatever I need so I can go to work. It helps relieve stress and helps to provide for my family.” (Wayne, teacher)

“To me, Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® lets me know that there are people out there who understand we are not paid our worth.” (Wayne, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps me with extra income and takes extra stress off of me financially.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement helps pay bills, child care, gas, etc. It also helps ease financial burdens.” (Yancey, teacher)



## **Appendix D: Appreciation/Recognition Sample Feedback Collected from AWARD\$ Surveys FY20**

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> can be a motivator for educators who feel they aren’t recognized for what they do daily.” (Alexander, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> is important to show teachers they are appreciated and that what they do is important. Most teachers are not paid salaries that reflect this. This supplement may also encourage teachers to further their education.” (Anson, director)

“I believe that AWARD\$ is important to give the educator hope. No matter what age or grade the teacher teaches, they teach and raise children just to be overlooked. I feel defeated and unappreciated a lot of the time. With the AWARD\$ program being offered, teachers’ self-esteem is boosted and they feel that there is HOPE to press on.” (Ashe, teacher)

“As an infant-toddler educator, I feel that we get very little recognition and do one of the most important jobs that there is. We shape the lives of little people for very little pay or benefits. This supplement really helps me to feel like we are important and gives me an incentive to keep on keeping on.” (Ashe, teacher)

“This award shows that I am important in what I am doing. This check will help me out with many of my financial needs.” (Ashe, teacher)

“I think the AWARD\$ supplement is important because it will help to support our educators and highlight the importance of early childhood education. We have seen the positive outcomes for children, teachers and families.” (Ashe, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> has increased staff morale. It causes them to feel like they are being rewarded and they have a more positive attitude. Not to mention the benefits the children are reaping from the teachers doing the program.” (Ashe, director)

“I think Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup> is important because it showed me that people appreciated and respected the job I do. It can be helpful in the early childhood community to keep the people in this field.” (Bertie, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement seems to make my staff feel more valued.” (Bladen, director)

“Everyone desires to feel loved and appreciated. Since we as child care educators don’t receive state benefits like public school teachers do, everything and anything is appreciated.” (Bladen, director)

“It is really encouraging mentally to know the state cares about my work.” (Buncombe, teacher)

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

“I believe that Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me feel appreciated and that makes me feel so happy! It is wonderful and has really made me feel good about myself and the job that I do! You have helped in such an enormous way! I just want to say THANK YOU so much for this program!!!!!! I have told all of my friends about it!” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps me feel appreciated for working with younger children.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“It is extremely important because child care is so needed but also underappreciated and this helps teachers feel more appreciated and more capable.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“AWARD\$ makes me proud to say that I am an early childhood educator. It makes me feel more appreciated.” (Burke, teacher)

“I think that it is important to most teachers, because they really do believe in what they do caring for children. I believe it helps teachers believe in themselves and pushes them to do their jobs, and be more dedicated to their jobs and child care centers.” (Burke, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has given me a feeling of gratitude and accomplishment in my life and also a sense of ease.” (Burke, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® gives me an incentive to teach better and I feel more appreciated for all that I accomplish with the children I teach.” (Burke, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is important because it shows infant-toddler teachers that they are very important and valued. It supplements them financially and boosts the morale and enthusiasm for their jobs. Teachers need to be recognized for their love and devotion of caring for infants and toddlers. It has enriched a program with well-educated and dedicated staff.” (Burke, director)

“Infant-toddler staff appreciate being recognized this way. The supplement made them feel more valued.” (Burke, director)

“The best way to describe the importance Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has on me is that it shows me how special and important I am as an educator.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“The supplement has been an inspiration to our teachers and I feel it has encouraged teachers to pursue this field of education so they can be the best educator for the children in our community.” (Caswell, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped make me feel more confident and more like a professional and not a babysitter.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes the teachers feel appreciated and work harder to be better for children and parents. AWARD\$ was a big motivation and there was a difference in morale when they received it. It was encouragement all the way around to be better teachers. Better teachers make happy kids, which make happy parents, and happy everyone all the way around.” (Catawba, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes you feel worthy. It has made me more motivated to continue to work with small children, and to know that what I do is noticed.” (Carteret, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has proven to me that my job as an early educator is important and rewarding. It has changed my life drastically by being appreciated and made me more positive, which in turn has helped me be a better teacher.” (Chatham, teacher)

“This program has made me feel more appreciated and valued for my chosen profession. This is extremely important to me, because I often feel as if early childhood education is not valued.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it helps me feel appreciated as I’m often overlooked as a toddler teacher. The incentive has made me want to be a better teacher and this directly affects my kids and their families.” (Craven, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it lets the teachers know that their work is not overlooked. Their work is valued and it means something.” (Craven, teacher)

“Teachers deserve everything they can get in monetary awards, because all teachers wear many hats such as: counselor, nurse, coach, caregiver, and leader. Teachers are undervalued in our society.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I think AWARD\$ is important because it provides teachers with a sense of appreciation.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement is a confidence booster. When things get tough, it always seems to come at the right time to let you know that all your hard work is necessary and appreciated. It reminds me of how important my job is, guiding and teaching my children. Many times, the teachers in the infant-toddler areas are just looked at as regular babysitters and not actual teachers. Being recognized for my desire to go to school and become an educator for infants and toddlers is an honor. Many people do not realize that this is a very crucial part of a child’s educational journey. What we do during this important time in a child’s life has a huge impact on their future experiences in education.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Teachers already don’t get paid enough for what they do. But in the early childhood field, we get even less recognition. We don’t get the pay or reassurances that we need. We go through material faster than we get it. So to have that extra money here and there to pay off debt, help with a bill, and even buy more things for the classroom makes us feel like at least one person out there appreciates us.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is a great incentive that allows me to see my worth.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is something that has made me feel like someone actually recognizes that what I do every day is important.” (Davie, teacher)

“I feel like a teacher instead of a babysitter, and more like a professional.” (Duplin, teacher)

“It gives employees the incentive to want to learn more about their professional career as a teacher. Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® gives a positive reflection on the center when teachers come to work with a better attitude and love what they do.” (Duplin, director)

“It makes me want to achieve more and be the best I can be.” (Duplin, family child care provider)

“Everybody likes to be appreciated and recognized. AWARD\$ is something that is positive and beneficial and those that receive it do more things in the classrooms for the children.” (Gates, director)

“It’s important to feel appreciated in the child care field.” (Granville, teacher)

“It is very important because it encourages me to be better at my job. Most importantly Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes me feel valued, appreciated and enjoy my job as an early educator.” (Granville, teacher)

“It makes me feel more appreciated for the work I do with children. It makes me feel like somebody cares and they are advocating for me. Thanks.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I teach because I love what I do, which is shaping young minds. I do know that someone understands that the job I do is important and cares enough to know we are underpaid. The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® program shows me that someone cares about me.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I feel that with this supplement, early educators feel valued and appreciated. Especially when they put in so much time and effort in loving and caring for young children so they can reach their fullest potential. It's like our special treat/gift for the year.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® can be important to us as educators because it shows that people do appreciate the hard work we put in all year around, sacrificing a lot of our own family time. This award means that things are turning around and voices are being heard to help accommodate us more financially in this field of work that is always overlooked. Thank you.” (Guilford, teacher)

“This award is important because it says someone sees us and appreciates us for what we do. Not many people know how much work we do on a daily basis and how we give children meaningful experiences on a daily basis. We don't make much money, although we should, so receiving this money really helped me pay bills and to pay my car payment up. It relieves some temporary stress of living paycheck to paycheck.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It shows that the infant and toddler teachers are valued.” (Guilford, director)

“It brings additional validation to an often underappreciated, somewhat overlooked group of very caring and dedicated individuals.” (Guilford, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® adds a goal for teachers and gives them a feeling of appreciation. It shows them that what they do in the classroom is noticed.” (Guilford, director)

“It helps me feel valued and recognized for doing important work that is not well compensated.” (Harnett, teacher)

“It’s very important because so many of the teachers including myself feel underappreciated for all that they do. AWARD\$ gives us that sense of appreciation and encouragement to help us stay in this field.” (Johnston, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes me feel appreciated as a ‘teacher’ because some of the public only thinks of public school teachers vs. an early childhood teacher.” (Macon, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps me maintain a more positive attitude about my job.” (Macon, teacher)

“I really appreciate the fact that others appreciate me and the care/ learning environment I help provide for our children. I am so thankful.” (McDowell, teacher)

“AWARD\$ builds my self-confidence and reduces stress.” (McDowell, teacher)

“I think the financial support is important for all infant-toddler teachers, as well as the reminder/recognition that what we do each day does matter and will impact the lives of those around us today and in the future.” (McDowell, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes me as a teacher feel appreciated for what I do and that my education was not wasted.” (McDowell, teacher)

“The supplement has shown recognition to the teachers of infants and toddlers. That they are valued, needed, and important to the future of the children they teach.” (McDowell, director)

“I feel appreciated and know that I am making this world better by helping young children become all they can be.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I believe Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it makes the teachers feel appreciated for all they do since this is an underpaid profession. It has allowed me to be able to do more things around the classroom.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I feel teachers need to be reassured of how much of an impact they have on young children. We are helping to build young lives and AWARD\$ is a great way to assist in that effort.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® gives me more pride in my job. It encourages me to think above and beyond what is required. It helps me believe that what I do matters.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It lets me know that I am appreciated when working with my little humans. I feel wanted. I am able to provide the best education to them to the best of my knowledge and teaching.”  
(Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It makes me feel seen and appreciated for the work I do. It has helped me to pay for my wedding!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“AWARD\$ shows that our education is valued and that we are not just babysitters.”  
(Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It makes me feel appreciated and more professional in a field where many times I’m considered just a ‘babysitter.’” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I think by getting AWARD\$, it shows that the teachers are valued. They are invested in us and with the program, we are investing back into them. It helps because it shows the teachers we appreciate them.” (Mecklenburg, director)

“It builds morale and encourages staff to want to work with younger kids.” (Montgomery, director)

“Child care providers are not the highest paid profession, especially in this pandemic. They should be seen as essential to our economy. Giving them these small incentives boosts morale and helps confirm their professional status.” (Moore, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® brings more professionalism to the field through adequate pay.” (Moore, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps solidify why we do what we do, and helps us feel appreciated. We love working with children and building into their lives daily. One of the drawbacks is our pay, which is why this helps us stay encouraged and helps us give back.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Child care workers are underappreciated in so many ways. This AWARD\$ system that has been created helps us feel less like an employee ID number, and more like a human being.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“I appreciate the financial assistance, helps me feel more confident, and prepared as a teacher.”  
(New Hanover, teacher)

“Salaries are low in early childhood education. That’s why it’s good for staff to receive supplemental income and be recognized for the value they bring to early childhood.” (New Hanover, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® shows teachers that their job is important and also makes them happy to get rewarded for the work they do. Power of positivity and encouragement are key in this environment for retaining quality staff.” (New Hanover, director)

“AWARD\$ helps to validate the vital work we do as early childhood educators. It gives additional compensation that brings with it gratitude and value.” (New Hanover, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has made me feel very important and helps me to realize that I am worthy to receive this stipend, simply because of the hard work I do every day. Thank you so much AWARD\$.” (Pamlico, teacher)

“I am recognized for my hard work, and my commitment to children/families.” (Perquimans, family child care provider)

“AWARD\$ makes you feel as though people finally appreciate early childhood teachers.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because child care providers are often overlooked. So much is required of us for so little pay, so it feels good that someone thought about us for a change.” (Pitt, teacher)

“The award to me is a way of saying that I am a valuable asset in my field.” (Robeson, teacher)

“It has helped their morale because it has been hard for our center to increase wages.” (Robeson, director)

“It has made me feel more important and appreciated for the work I do.” (Rowan, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is proof that others recognize the importance of child care providers. That our jobs mean a lot.” (Rowan, teacher)

“AWARD\$ has made me feel appreciated and it’s good to know that there are people who really care about teachers.” (Rowan, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® makes the teachers feel more appreciated and feel like their schooling wasn’t in vain.” (Union, teacher)

“I am so proud when I can tell people about the check. So thankful for the extra help.” (Union, teacher)

“I believe Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® really shows that we are appreciated and it’s definitely nice to be reminded.” (Wake, teacher)

“AWARD\$ gives teachers an added bonus and shows us we are appreciated and valued in this field.” (Wake, teacher)

“Everyone knows that child care jobs are not high paying jobs. After working in this field for more than 15 years and getting a reward like this, it really makes me feel appreciated and feel like someone cares for people who are loyal to their work.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® shows the value and appreciation for the dedication of working with children in a field where the pay is not sufficient.” (Wake, teacher)

“It’s a great feeling to be recognized and appreciated for the work that we do. Educators are very often overlooked and highly underpaid.” (Wake, teacher)

“Receiving this award has let me know that infant and toddler teachers matter too!” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® helps me feel more accomplished and successful at my job.” (Wake, teacher)

“It is important to support teachers financially. Most teachers feel underappreciated and underpaid. The program helps me to feel like I’m making a difference and that I’m being rewarded for it.” (Wake, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has made me feel proud about being an early childhood educator. Being an FCCH provider and working for myself, I never received a bonus and I really appreciate this as it definitely helped me provide some much needed items for my classroom.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“AWARD\$ makes me feel like there are people out there that value me as a child care professional working from home.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important to recognize that quality educators are required for such an important stage in the children’s development. AWARD\$ is recognizing and valuing our work. I thank you for that.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“The AWARD\$ supplement shows that this career choice does matter and helps boost staff appreciation.” (Wake, director)

“I think recognition is important and it goes a long way.” (Wake, director)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because first it demonstrates to the staff that they are appreciated for their hard work. Secondly it is a great incentive to help promote education and quality staffing.” (Wake, director)

“The teachers are happy. Happy teachers make happy classrooms, which make a better environment for children.” (Wake, director)

“The teachers work so hard and put so much into caring for the children. It is not a high paying field and this supplement makes them feel validated and proud of their education.” (Wake, director)

“They feel appreciated for the important and challenging work they do and the wonderful care they provide for the earliest of learners.” (Wake, director)

“It has helped our staff feel that the work they do is valuable and recognized.” (Wake, director)

“It has made me feel/know that there are people who care about child care workers. They know that we put a lot of love and pride into our jobs because we are molding future leaders, fathers, mothers, etc.” (Watauga, teacher)

“When you feel more appreciated it shows in how you interact with the children and the parents.” (Wayne, teacher)

“I feel that this profession is a calling, one that you enter into to make a difference/impact. You go into it not to make money but because it is where your passion and heart are. Through this program, the work and time put into doing/being the best are recognized and valued, which I feel is important.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“The program gives meaning to me as a teacher and when I say meaning, I mean a purpose. It helps me to look forward to doing a great job each day, so that the children in my care can grow into great adults.” (Wilson, teacher)

“The Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® program is important as a way to show appreciation to the early childhood teachers who provide love, care, and a safe learning environment for each child.” (Wilson, teacher)

**Appendix E: DCDEE Messages**  
**Feedback Collected from AWARD\$ Surveys FY20**

“Thank You! It is a grateful blessing when I receive my AWARD\$<sup>1</sup> check in the mail.”  
(Alexander, teacher)

“Thank you DCDEE. The supplement helps me in many ways.” (Alexander, teacher)

“Thank you very much!” (Alexander, teacher)

“I just want to thank you for thinking about the little people. When we put them first, it is the beginning of a whole new life for them and us. Thanks. 😊” (Anson, teacher)

“Thank You!!! I've worked for a company who doesn't believe in providing raises or bonuses to employees.” (Anson, teacher)

“It is a good and helpful program.” (Anson, family child care provider)

“Thank you! The awards are making a difference!” (Ashe, teacher)

“I would like to thank you for coming up with these funds to help day care workers. I feel that we are underpaid. The funds help with financial burdens for teachers like me, living alone and providing for myself.” (Ashe, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you, thank you so very much. AWARD\$ has helped me so much this past year. I love my job (that's why I have done it for 28+ years), however, some days I do look for other positions with higher pay. This supplement has helped me to be happier and more satisfied with my job. I really hope that you can continue to offer these funds to all the well deserving infant and toddler educators.” (Ashe, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Ashe, teacher)

“This supplement is so deeply appreciated. When you love the career you have chosen and then have to struggle and worry about money, you begin to look for other options. This I have done. With the AWARD\$ supplement, money worries are much less. Thank you.” (Ashe, teacher)

“Thank you for showing your support and appreciation for us that are working in the child care field!” (Ashe, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Ashe, teacher)

“The program is wonderful and I would recommend it to anyone.” (Beaufort, teacher)

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

“Thank you.” (Beaufort, teacher)

“I have received Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® before and I am very grateful that we can be appreciated in a way that is very helpful.” (Beaufort, teacher)

“Thank you so much for providing us with this extra income! It means a lot to know you are appreciated and noticed for what you do! Even though we love the children in our care, the extra income allows us to do more for them in the classrooms and for our families!” (Beaufort, teacher)

“I want to express how much the AWARD\$ supplement has benefited me and my co-workers.” (Beaufort, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Beaufort, teacher)

“I am glad that I get the extra money to help out.” (Beaufort, teacher)

“Please continue the program because it’s very needed.” (Beaufort, family child care provider)

“It is such a blessing. Please, please keep it coming because it is so helpful and needed.” (Beaufort, family child care provider)

“I would like to tell the Division of Child Development and Early Education thank you so much and I am grateful for my incentive each year.” (Bertie, teacher)

“I would like to tell them about the supplement because I am confident of it helping me catch up on bills, loan payments, and other needs.” (Bertie, teacher)

“We are very thankful for your generosity.” (Bertie, teacher)

“Thank you for showing your support and interest in the lives of children and their providers.” (Bertie, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® totally helped me out.” (Bertie, teacher)

“I would like to tell DCDEE that I appreciate the supplement and thanks for recognizing child care teachers and not overlooking us. Our jobs really do matter. Thanks again!” (Bertie, teacher)

“Thanks for the extra funds.” (Bertie, teacher)

“The supplement helps my children and myself with purchasing supplies.” (Bladen, teacher)

“Thank you, it makes me feel appreciated.” (Bladen, teacher)

“Thanks.” (Bladen, teacher)

“Could it be considered to have an increase to be paid out?” (Bladen, teacher)

“The supplement is extremely helpful. I would immediately consider leaving my job if the program was pulled because the pay is so low. I am making \$10.00 an hour as a person with a bachelor’s degree.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“The supplements help a lot. The only thing I could think that might help better was if it was more often through the year.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Thank you for helping me make a difference.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“I want to say THANK YOU SO MUCH! This supplement has really helped me. It has really made me feel better about my job and myself! I am now looking into furthering my education in early childhood, because with the supplemental help, I feel like I can do it!!” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Thank you for creating such a great program!” (Buncombe, teacher)

“It is immensely helpful to me!” (Buncombe, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Buncombe, teacher)

“I have much respect for the Division of Child Development and Early Education because by doing this, it shows they see our financial struggle and they are here to support people that have a desire and mindset to be teachers and caregivers.” (Burke, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you.” (Burke, teacher)

“Thank you so much. I feel honored to have been chosen for the award.” (Burke, teacher)

“The supplement has taken some of the stress away. I am not financially able to do what I need to without it.” (Burke, teacher)

“The supplement is greatly appreciated and makes me feel as if my job and education matter.” (Burke, teacher)

“Thank you very much for these AWARD\$ supplements. I have been a child care worker for over 20 years and have never experienced this kind of award. I was overjoyed to have gotten this. I had money to do something for myself. I suffer from Lupus, fibromyalgia, Raynaud's Syndrome, and generative disc disorder. Serving these children daily really helps me to push and fight each day even though I hurt daily and have good and bad days. I thank God that I am able to continue working with children.” (Burke, teacher)

“Thank you for everything!” (Burke, teacher)

“I would like to say thank you for our supplement. It is so greatly appreciated. Your funding impacts our lives, and in turn our children’s lives, greatly.” (Burke, teacher)

“I would like to tell them thank you and I hope the program continues.” (Burke, teacher)

“Thank you for the financial help.” (Burke, teacher)

“It is the most wonderful gift for any early childhood teacher.” (Burke, teacher)

“Thank you so much for providing me with a little peace of mind when it comes to my financial responsibilities and for the extra income for a career that is worth so much more than you make.” (Burke, teacher)

“I greatly appreciate the award. Thank you very much. The award is a great incentive.” (Burke, teacher)

“Thank you for this opportunity to participate.” (Burke, teacher)

“I want to express my gratitude for recognizing our hard work.” (Burke, teacher)

“Thank you! Thank you and God bless you.” (Burke, teacher)

“This supplement makes me feel important and that people do recognize early education is a positive for a child’s development. Thank you for making a job I love feel so much more rewarding.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“Thank you, it was an unexpected surprise.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“Thank you for funding the program. It is very much appreciated.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“THANKS SO MUCH!!” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“I really appreciate DCDEE providing the AWARD\$ supplement to dedicated teachers who work regularly and are there for the children, parents, directors, and community. Please continue to provide the supplement during the difficult coronavirus times when some child care centers are striving to keep their doors open. Thank you.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has helped out a ton. I know pay is low and this helped make ends meet. I appreciate it more than I can express. It's definitely a huge blessing.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“Thank you so much for this opportunity. Child Care WAGE\$® was not available in our county, so when we found out about the AWARD\$ program, it was wonderful to feel valued. Working in child care itself can be stressful, but working with infants to twos is extremely important and hopefully more people will use this as an incentive to graduate and stay in the school they are employed in. Our children need consistency.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“Thank you for doing this for me and my co-workers.” (Cabarrus, teacher)

“Can the \$18 limit ever be increased?” (Caldwell, teacher)

“I appreciate all the help you give us. Thank you! I can’t even imagine life without it.”  
(Caldwell, teacher)

“Thank you for helping me go further with my education and pay my bills.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Caldwell, teacher)

“Thank you, 🙏” (Carteret, teacher)

“I think this is a wonderful supplement, it is helping me to go back to school to get my bachelor’s degree.” (Caswell, teacher)

“Thanks for believing in and supporting us.” (Caswell, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is a great thing. I just wish it was somehow based more on performance and education level. I also wish it was more parallel to education skill rank, but I am grateful because up until this point, I had prayed for some type of incentive because working so hard and still seeing no increase or what seems of value can be discouraging.” (Catawba, teacher)

“God bless you all! Thank you for the extra income! My family, classroom and I appreciate the opportunity to earn a good salary and support the little children that God allows me to work with.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Thank you so much!!!” (Catawba, teacher)

“Thank you very much!! It is DEFINITELY a BLESSING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” (Catawba, teacher)

“I would like to thank you for caring enough to give out AWARD\$. It’s very important to make teachers feel that someone cares and this really shows. I greatly appreciate everything.”  
(Catawba, teacher)

“I am very appreciative.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Thank you for making me feel appreciated in a field that normally doesn’t get much respect.”  
(Catawba, teacher)

“It makes me feel appreciated.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Catawba, teacher)

“Thank you for all you do!!! You’re truly a blessing.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Thank you for caring and making a difference in our lives.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Thank you so much for recognizing my service to the child care field.” (Catawba, teacher)

“Thank you. My AWARD\$ this summer will be paying for most of my daughter’s summer camp. If I did not receive this money, then she would not be attending.” (Chatham, teacher)

“Thank you so much! I was near resigning and the AWARD\$ supplement made me decide to continue teaching and further pursue a bachelor's degree in education.” (Chatham, teacher)

“I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart to be able to be blessed enough to receive this supplement. I’m forever grateful.” (Chatham, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing that we as teachers are underpaid and try to find a way to give back to us.” (Chatham, teacher)

“Thank you for finding the funds to do this again.” (Chatham, family child care provider)

“Thank you very much and continue doing it if you can.” (Chatham, family child care provider)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has been a great benefit to me, thank you.” (Cherokee, teacher)

I am extremely appreciative of the financial benefits of this program. It has helped me to become a better educator. (Cherokee, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Cherokee, teacher)

“Division of Child Development and Early Education, thank you for giving our children an early start on their education. It helps them to be more successful in their start and makes them feel good about themselves as well as us as providers. Whoever thought of this program, knows and cares about the children we care about.” (Chowan, teacher)

“I would like to tell DCDEE thank you and I hope it continues because it is one of the reasons I do my job and want to work with the babies.” (Chowan, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing us as real teachers.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“It is important that we keep it going because of the low pay.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is very helpful, it is financially helping to address the expenses with less pressure.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“Thank you for Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®. Thank you for the thought and work that goes into making it possible. Again, thank you.” (Cleveland, teacher)

“It makes me feel better about my job.” (Columbus, teacher)

“It is a blessing to me and the children. We are very thankful for this award.” (Columbus, teacher)

“The supplements are much appreciated and are used wisely.” (Columbus, teacher)

“Thank you so much for this incentive, which has helped ease the burden of paying bills and has helped me be able to provide extra resources for my classroom. I am grateful to be recognized for the work me and my fellow infant-toddler teachers do every day. I feel like we are making a difference in the lives of our children and their families!” (Craven, teacher)

“It is a great motivational tool for the teachers.” (Craven, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Craven, teacher)

“Thank you for providing these funds. It’s an improvement in my life.” (Craven, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you, thank you! I appreciate the recognition I receive for my dedication in the child care field.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you so much for the appreciation. This supplement is the only way I get the chance to go home once a year to visit my father and attend our family reunion.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I am so happy to receive this award, because it helps me to buy supplies for my classroom and a treasure box with gifts for my children. There are many teachers who used to work second jobs, now due to AWARD\$ they can spend more time with their children at home.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“The funds help with basic needs for me and my family.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you for thinking about the early educators.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“It’s very helpful.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you so much!” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart. The AWARD\$ supplement has helped me tremendously. Being a child care provider, I don’t think we get appreciated enough. This program helps me feel good about myself and my job.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“That it has released so much stress out of my life not having to worry about money. Thank you so much for all that you do for the child care workers.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I am greatly appreciative of AWARD\$.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I'm very appreciative to be part of the program.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you all so much for looking out for the well-being of the teachers and providing AWARD\$ that not only helps us out financially, but also helps us buy much needed resources for the classroom.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“It has been such a benefit.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you and I greatly appreciate it.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I hope the funding continues to help others.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“It really helps when you receive the supplement check.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you for all that you do and continue to do, so that the teachers can continue to enjoy working in their field that they love.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Please keep providing this supplement for child care educators as long as you can.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you so much. I have been in child care for over 30 years. It has always been because it's what I love to do. This award lets us know that you realize we don't make a lot of money and the stress from a financial point makes it hard for us to do the best for the children we care for. I hope you are able to continue with the program because it truly has made a difference.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you so much for the beautiful way that you show your appreciation of what infant-toddler teachers do.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“It helps a lot in my home and at day care, thank you so much.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you for believing in the care that is provided by the early childhood educators in our community.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I am very thankful for all that you do!” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you so very much, and please continue this program.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you for providing this program. It helps out where my supplies fall short inside the classroom.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you for all you do.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“Thank you so very much for providing Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I want to say that it is a great incentive that helps out financially and it makes me want to stay in my current job and to further my education.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I am very grateful and blessed. Thank you again, and again.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“This program is a good thing, not only does it help put items in the classroom, it also helps with my personal needs.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“First off, thank you. The supplement is an important incentive for early educators. I have worked with children for a while. I have witnessed some fantastic teachers leave the profession because of the low wages. This supplement is evidence that our job is still important and still needed. It helps a lot. Thank you.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“I would like to thank you. I appreciate your concern about early childhood teachers.” (Cumberland, teacher)

“It helps me pay bills and put a little money away. The only thing is at tax time, they tax the heck out of the money you get from AWARD\$.” (Dare, teacher)

“It is very helpful with financial needs for my family and me.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Thank you for appreciating us as child care providers.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Thank you for allowing me to be a part of the AWARD\$ program.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Thank you so much for thinking about early education teachers.” (Davidson, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has given me financial stability that has helped me give to the children in my classroom. When I am out of work for three weeks during the summer, the supplement has helped me pay some bills. I have been able to save money and open a savings account with the supplement I get from AWARD\$.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Thank you for your hard work and dedication to helping early childhood professionals.” (Davidson, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Davidson, teacher)

“THANK YOU!” (Davie, teacher)

“I really can say thank God for the program. It’s really a blessing and an increase. Again, thank you!” (Duplin, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Duplin, teacher)

“Thank you so much ❤️😊.” (Duplin, teacher)

“Thank you very much. We as child center teachers sometimes feel like we are not appreciated.” (Duplin, teacher)

“It’s a great program.” (Duplin, family child care provider)

“It helps make ends meet.” (Durham, teacher)

“Thank you for this great opportunity to have more and better resources.” (Durham, teacher)

“This program is very helpful to us in encouraging us to further our education, commit to our place of work, and helps us feel seen and encouraged.” (Durham, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Durham, teacher)

“It helps with getting special treats and supplies for my classroom.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“Thank you for thinking about the teachers.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“Thank you, it helps relieve stress and makes us feel better about ourselves. It makes you happy and want to go to work.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“Thank you, this is a huge blessing twice a year for me and my family!” (Forsyth, teacher)

“Thank you for opening up this program.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“I am thankful for the funds.” (Forsyth, teacher)

“AWARD\$ is very helpful, thanks.” (Gaston, teacher)

“I think it is a great benefit for those of us who struggle financially.” (Gaston, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me financially and I hope it continues. THANK YOU SO, SO MUCH. BLESS ALL OF YOU.” (Gates, family child care provider)

“Thanks so much, you have no idea how much this helps me and my day care babies.” (Gates, teacher)

“I really appreciate my supplement.” (Granville, teacher)

“Thank you so much for the supplements. The supplement has always helped me at my point of need.” (Granville, teacher)

“Thank you so much for all the help you have given us. The award supplement has helped me out a lot. It has helped put gas in my car, getting me to and from work, and helped pay for materials, fruits, and vegetables I need in my classroom. Thank you again.” (Greene, teacher)

“I would like to say thank you for thinking about us. It always seems like they remember the teacher and forget us.” (Greene, family child care provider)

“It is definitely an incentive to stay in an underpaid profession, especially if you enjoy the field of work.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It is a great help. Thanks so much.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I want to tell the Division of Child Development and Early Education that the supplement helps to let early childhood teachers know that our little ones are our future leaders. So getting that early start helps them become better leaders. Thanks for caring about early childhood teachers enough to help keep them working with young children.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you, thank you so much for all the support and time spent making sure the funds are available to us in a timely manner.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you so much for bringing this back to us. I’m so glad our voices were heard.” (Guilford, teacher)

“This supplement helped me in my financial struggle.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you. it was much needed and appreciated.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you for looking out for teachers.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I’m glad this program exists.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I am very thankful for this program. I am able to still work and get a supplement for the things that I purchase as well as help with my house.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I wish it was more money.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thanks.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I’m very grateful and thankful for the funds that are provided to us. It means that someone is looking after us for being here with young children.” (Guilford, teacher)

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

“Please keep making us feel that our job is valued. This financial help gives me the chance to feel more confident to spend a little bit on others.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thanks for all you do.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you for the supplement. It is very helpful and you are helping us further our career, make our classrooms better, and help our families at home.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I want to tell the Division of Child Development and Early Education THANK YOU!” (Guilford, teacher)

“It helps to feel appreciated in the work you do.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I think it is a wonderful incentive.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you for all that you do.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you so much for continuing to fund this award!” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thanks so much.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is very important to underpaid teachers.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Guilford, teacher)

“It is very much appreciated and very useful.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I would like to say thank you and it really does help me with getting materials for my class to help with the children learning.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thanks for all your support!!!!” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thanks so much.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you. The supplement is a great success.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you for even coming up with something like this for early educators. We do this job because we love children and love watching them learn and grow, but as the prices of everything go up, we still make the same and it gets hard to stay at a job where you don’t make much. This award is very helpful for someone like myself and I really appreciate it. Thank you.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I am grateful for the supplement. It really helps me and my children.” (Guilford, teacher)  
Crystal Embry

“I would like to thank you for developing a supplement for people that are serving infants and toddlers. This is a critical time in their lives. They need dedicated people to help nurture these children.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It was a good idea.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I’m so grateful for this supplement. It has helped me make decisions about my future in the early childhood classroom.” (Guilford, teacher)

“The supplement is extremely helpful.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you for thinking of early educators and for making them feel appreciated.” (Guilford, teacher)

“AWARD\$ supplements help the teachers a lot.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do to help educators like me. I appreciate you!” (Guilford, teacher)

“AWARD\$ helps out when my check comes in short. I can also plan extra activities around the time I get it.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I know that all the recipients are very grateful for the supplements. They really do help us all!!!” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you for acknowledging that our work is important and needs a higher value with regard to pay.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It is very helpful and makes us feel appreciated.” (Guilford, teacher)

“The award is great! Thank you!!! (Guilford, teacher)

“Please give more money.” (Guilford, teacher)

“I think it is a great program to really show child care workers we are appreciated. Those checks have helped me through some hard times, when money was low.” (Guilford, teacher)

“Thank you for everything. Please try your best to keep this program, because it is very beneficial to me and I’m sure to many other child care workers.” (Guilford, teacher)

“It helped out in so many ways such as medication for myself and new materials for the children.” (Guilford, family child care provider)

“I just want to say thank you to all of you. I truly thank God for all of you. God bless you all. The money really does help in so many ways.” (Guilford, family child care provider)

“Thank you!!!” (Guilford, family child care provider)

“Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!” (Guilford, family child care provider)

“The supplement was definitely a need and a want, it really added and not subtracted from my livelihood! Thank You!” (Guilford, family child care provider)

“I would like to say thank you. AWARD\$ makes a great and positive difference in my financial situation and gives me a feeling of appreciation for the work that I do with infant and toddlers and their families.” (Halifax, teacher)

“I want to thank you for supplying the funds to this program. It has helped my family and me with education and bills. This program keeps me in the child care field.” (Halifax, teacher)

“Please continue to spread the word about the program so that others can share in the benefits.” (Harnett, teacher)

“I feel like teachers are so underpaid so this helps out.” (Haywood, teacher)

“Thank you so much for the supplement. It allows me to spend money on my classroom and it takes some stress off financially.” (Henderson, teacher)

“This money has helped my family financially and I can plan for the future.” (Henderson, teacher)

“I would like to say that the supplement has helped me financially by helping to get the resources I need for the classroom, so that the children can learn effectively. I feel that the supplement helps the teachers out positively, especially when they are getting underpaid. I enjoy working with children to help them meet their potential goals.” (Hertford, teacher)

“This award has made a big impact on my day care children as well as mine. I have been able to purchase outside toys like a teeter totter that looks like an airplane and a dome for the children to climb. I have been able to pay bills and it has helped with other things that I needed to do. Thank you so much for this.” (Hoke, family child care provider)

“The AWARD\$ program keeps me motivated to stay in this business. It helps me decorate and buy books for my classroom. I also use it to pay for my yearly training at the Partnership for Young Children.” (Iredell, teacher)

“It is greatly appreciated and makes me feel as valued as a teacher.” (Iredell, teacher)

“Thank you!!” (Jackson, teacher)

“It’s wonderful.” (Jackson, teacher)

“Thank you for having this incentive for the teachers of NC. I really appreciate it. I can get my transportation fixed.” (Jackson, teacher)

“Thank you!!” (Johnston, teacher)

“It is very helpful in a lot of different ways!” (Johnston, teacher)

“Please do not stop this program, it gives teachers life and hope to stay in this field. We understand this is not a get rich career, but it’s a career that we love doing and every ounce of appreciation goes a long way. So thank you from all of us.” (Johnston, teacher)

“It has helped in so many ways, thank you!” (Johnston, teacher)

“I greatly appreciate the supplement. As a teacher and single mom, I live paycheck to paycheck. This helps with additional costs, dental work, medical bills, school supplies, and clothes for the kids. I have used the supplements on so many different items.” (Johnston, teacher)

“Thank you and God bless you all.” (Johnston, teacher)

“This is a great, great program.” (Johnston, teacher)

“Please continue to fund the AWARD\$ program so we can continue to nurture/teach infants and toddlers.” (Johnston, teacher)

“I greatly appreciate the program not just for myself but for the children in my class. This supplement enables me to be a better resource to my community.” (Johnston, teacher)

“It has helped me a lot because I have my associate’s and I have to finish paying my fee before I can receive my bachelor’s degree. I have passed my grades and I owe \$1700.00 before they can mail my degree out.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“Thank you very much!” (Lenoir, teacher)

“The supplement fills in the gaps where I do not make enough to make ends meet.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“I really appreciate the supplement that I received. It has been very helpful.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“Thank you for this program. It helps us teachers out a lot.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“It’s a blessing.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“Thank you for starting this program. It has helped me out in a lot of ways.” (Lenoir, teacher)

“Thank you for the supplement because it has helped me a lot.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“Thanks for thinking of me and I am so thankful for all of you.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“It is greatly appreciated.” (Lincoln, teacher)

“Thank you so much for providing the AWARD\$ supplement! It has benefited both myself and other child care professionals for our dedication to this field.” (Macon, teacher)

“I am so glad that the AWARD\$ supplement is available to help.” (Macon, teacher)

“It is very helpful. Please keep up the good work, if possible.” (Macon, teacher)

“Thank you so much for this supplement.” (Macon, teacher)

“Thank you so much. It has been a blessing to me and my family.” (Macon, teacher)

“Thanks.” (Macon, teacher)

“The supplement helps my family so much. THANK YOU.” (Macon, teacher)

“I am very happy to receive these awards. It will help provide a graduation party for my son in the spring. He is graduating from high school!” (Macon, teacher)

“What a help and blessing. Thank you!” (McDowell, teacher)

“I seriously believe these children benefit later in life using the education experience we give them. It’s great watching them learn and grow and to see how excited they get to learn something new.” (McDowell, teacher)

“Thank you!!!” (McDowell, teacher)

“The supplement has been greatly appreciated. Not just for myself, but also for the children we serve in our community. Thank you so much!” (McDowell, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement is a great thing to help out others.” (McDowell, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you, thank you!” (McDowell, teacher)

“This supplement is very much appreciated. I see the motivation this support gives to teachers to stay in this field.” (McDowell, teacher)

“Thank you for all you do to help the early childhood teachers and for all you have given us.” (McDowell, teacher)

“Thanks.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ is a blessing. I wish it would or could come more frequently.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It’s a great help, more training and funds are needed. Thank you so much for what you do. Keep the teachers informed about changes, new information that’s needed to help our children benefit.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I would like to thank you very much for the supplement that has helped me financially and I truly appreciate it.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thanks. Thanks for your great hearts and for keeping us in your beautiful agendas.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

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

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

“We really appreciate everything you are doing to support us.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Being awarded/given the AWARD\$ supplement makes me feel so appreciated. It makes me feel good. Thank you to the Division of Child Development and Early Education. Thank you so much for thinking about me and other child care teachers. Thank you for providing these supplements. Thank you again and again.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® has helped me in many ways. Buying supplies for my class, decorations, trays, and gifts for the children. It has allowed me to take time off to de-stress and enjoy myself. Child care is a hard field and we do not get the credit that we deserve, but this is something that does help show that some people know and understand what we go through on a daily basis in our career.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you!!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

Thank you, it’s greatly appreciated.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you so much.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you. What a life saver.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“The supplement is very appreciated. It gives you a little boost of energy because we are so underpaid and underappreciated as educators.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you, I hope this program stays in existence for a long time.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I am grateful to get it.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“While the AWARD\$ supplement has been great for me, it has not been easy to receive. I work for CMS in a very unique child care program. My principal nor HR really knows what or how I work. So they get frustrated to answer the questions. In addition, because I work for the school system, I do not get the full benefit of the supplement. I only receive it once a year instead of twice. I feel like I’m being penalized for the program I’m in.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing how important these stages are to children and those that are helping.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It is very beneficial as a teacher to help others in life learn and moreover for me as a teacher to achieve my goals.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I think it’s a great idea! It shows that we are appreciated for the work we do. Now we need to get the owners of child care centers to appreciate their workers more and stop feeling that since we get an incentive from the state they don’t need to give us a raise.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you. I really appreciate the funding.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

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

“Thanks for caring.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I would like to tell DCDEE thanks.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thanks. I appreciate the supplements. They are really welcomed in my family and classroom.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It’s wonderful! Thank you!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you for giving us the incentive to continue our education. It has made life a little easier for the teachers in the program.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you so much, it is a blessing to receive such a blessing!!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“You have REALLY helped me out financially! THANK YOU!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“It encourages me to do better in my career. I can buy some educational materials for the classroom. It helps me feel appreciated, that I am doing a great job and someone recognizes it.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

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

“Thank you! I can actually have a real vacation this year and make my monthly bills easier to pay!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you so much. You have really helped my family out a lot.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“I truly appreciate all that you do for me!” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you. I really appreciate the funding.” (Mecklenburg, teacher)

“Thank you very much for the supplement.” (Mecklenburg, family child care provider)

“Thank you!” (Mecklenburg, family child care provider)

“I am thankful, grateful and appreciative for this supplement. It has been very helpful.” (Mecklenburg, family child care provider)

“Thank you.” (Mitchell, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Montgomery, teacher)

“Thank you so much for seeing the need to provide this supplement. Ultimately it truly does benefit the children we are serving. It provides quality caregivers who feel appreciated for the hard work they do every day.” (Moore, teacher)

“First, I would say thank you sooooo much!! You will never fully know the impact that this supplement has on the providers and the children in their care. It is definitely a Godsend. I would like to make a plea to DCDEE to try to continue to make it available so that all the good that is coming from it will continue and maybe even grow.” (Moore, teacher)

“Thanks for the supplement.” (Moore, teacher)

“Thanks for all you do. I cry every time I get a check because I know I need it so much.” (Moore, teacher)

“This supplement is an incentive to stay for the teachers who struggle to stay in this field.”  
(Moore, teacher)

“Please continue to supply this supplement to us. It is very helpful in reminding me that I make a difference in these young children’s lives. The parents are very thankful that their children’s teachers have been with the same age group for years. The parents and their children readily trust us with our years of experience.” (Moore, teacher)

“This is a great program and please keep it going as long as you can.” (Moore, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Moore, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is very helpful. It helps me feel like teachers’ work is being appreciated. Dealing with children can be stressful. A little extra money for our efforts makes us want to do more. Thank you for making sure that we feel needed and appreciated.”  
(Moore, teacher)

“The supplement is a wonderful incentive to help me do my very best on the job.” (Moore, teacher)

“Thank you for all you’ve done.” (Moore, teacher)

“I appreciate what the Division of Child Development and Early Education has accomplished for the teachers.” (Moore, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you for all you do. You have no idea how you touch the lives of others through your generosity.” (Moore, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Moore, family child care provider)

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!” (New Hanover, teacher)

“I would like to let the Division of Child Development and Early Education know how appreciative I am for the additional income. It is an added bonus to doing a job that I love.”  
(New Hanover, teacher)

“I think the AWARD\$ program is great, especially for a teacher just starting out. I have been in child care a long time and I have lost all enthusiasm for it. I wish I could treat myself with the money, but it just goes to bills.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing the importance of early childhood education.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you!” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thanks for recognizing the younger age teachers.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Please, please continue funding Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$®. I understand there is now a waiting list, and you need to make sure these deserving teachers receive a supplement, too. The supplement encourages commitment and dedication to child care, which gives children the stability they so desperately need at this age.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you! Please continue this service!” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you, the supplement is greatly appreciated.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“It is very useful and thank you all for what you do.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you so much for providing this much needed assistance.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you.” (New Hanover, teacher)

“Thank you. This program has helped me so much!” (New Hanover, teacher)

“I am very grateful to the Division of Child Development and Early Education for the support of this supplement. It has helped my facility tremendously. It has provided an outside validation for the work that I do even when I am not normally compensated for it.” (New Hanover, family child care provider)

“It is very helpful.” (New Hanover, family child care provider)

“I would like to say thank you for recognizing the hard work that child care professionals do. I think in our field of work we are often regarded as babysitters. I thank Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® for recognizing that we as teachers of young children play an important part in the children’s social/emotional education as well as gross motor and physical health. The extra income provided is an incentive to stick with the job that we are at, which makes a big impact on the children. Having the same teacher and less turnover between child care providers is beneficial in the child’s development. They gain trust and security seeing the same face every morning, giving them the chance to relax and learn without the stress of greeting a new teacher every few months. Thank you again AWARD\$ for caring about not only the teachers, but our children. They are our future. We need to get them started off on the right foot today. They are our future leaders. They are our most precious resources!” (Onslow, teacher)

“Why is it only for infant and toddler teachers? Do you have anything for three and four year old teachers? I believe it should go to all teachers with the proper education.” (Onslow, teacher)

“Keep the AWARD\$ program moving forward because it benefits so many providers in child care. Thank you guys for providing this program.” (Onslow, teacher)

“This is very beneficial to me as a family child care provider. It has helped me purchase items that I otherwise wouldn’t be able to afford. This has and hopefully will continue to enhance the quality of my child care home!” (Onslow, family child care provider)

“Thank you for funding the AWARD\$ program. It really makes a difference.” (Orange, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Orange, teacher)

“I just want to say thank you so much! I am trying hard to finish my bachelor’s at UNCG.” (Orange, teacher)

“Thank you! Please continue this program, and feel free to increase the award amount as well!” (Orange, teacher)

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

“Thank you.” (Orange, teacher)

“Thank You. Keep it coming. It is very helpful and appreciated.” (Orange, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Orange, teacher)

“It was a very good help for me and my family.” (Orange, teacher)

“It has helped me make ends meet and at the time I received my first check, I had to take in two of my grandchildren to help deal with a divorce.” (Pamlico, teacher)

“I truly thank you because with this supplement I have been able to accomplish a lot for myself and my family.” (Pamlico, teacher)

Thank you. The AWARD\$ supplement was and is much needed. The first half was meant for business and hopefully the second half can be used for bettering the provider.” (Pasquotank, family child care provider)

“Thank you. The funds were very helpful.” (Pasquotank, family child care provider)

“It is greatly appreciated.” (Pender, teacher)

“I would like to thank them for offering this reward. This can be a bit of a thankless job (at least at the center I work at). This reward was a thank you to me for doing a great job and really made my day when I received it. It really made me feel so much better about what I do. I love working with children. Seeing their faces light up when they learn something new brings joy and reassurance that I am doing something right. That is the biggest reward of all, but receiving a monetary reward is awesome. It gives you the flexibility to get new things for your classroom, that in turn, lights up their faces. Thank you so much for my reward.” (Pender, teacher)

“Thank you all. There are many quality child care programs in homes that provide quality care and should also be given the supplement. So thank you for giving us the opportunity to receive the supplement.” (Pender, family child care provider)

“Thank you, thank you, thank you. My award came during my rating assessment window and I was able to purchase needed materials to help increase the quality of care I provide.” (Pender, family child care provider)

“Thank you very much for the support and incentive. I will continue to do my best for my children and families.” (Perquimans, family child care provider)

“Keep it coming because it was a blessing for me.” (Person, family child care provider)

“Thank you all very much.” (Person, family child care provider)

“Thank you for recognizing and awarding those in early childhood who provide care for the very young child and for seeing that learning is important even at infancy.” (Pitt, teacher)

“I want to thank you and tell you that this incentive gives me the push to continue a new step towards my career.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you so much.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you very much!!! It is very much needed and appreciated!” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you for the supplement. It is very helpful for early childhood educators who are otherwise overworked and underpaid.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you so much!!! I really appreciate the funds. Keep up the good work!” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you for being supportive to the teachers and for the financial assistance that is very important to most teachers.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you very much, it is much appreciated!!” (Pitt, teacher)

“The supplement is very helpful. It provides funds for me to buy more supplies for my classroom.” (Pitt, teacher)

“I really appreciate the Division of Child Development and Early Education for taking their time out to show good teachers that we are appreciated in all matters. It’s absolutely a big help to some of us. Especially myself being a single parent. Thanks again.” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you for the funds that have helped me be a better teacher and for providing me with the right tools to work in the classroom. I feel that I am able to provide the children with the best

learning environment, tools to use, and my extra knowledge when I go to workshops and extra classes. Thank you for helping me to be the best early childhood teacher!!” (Pitt, teacher)

“Thank you! This is a blessing to educators!” (Randolph, teacher)

“Thank you for relieving some of the financial stress.” (Randolph, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is an experience that has helped me to know that I qualify and I can help my students and others. It encourages teachers to go and get their degree, so you can help them to better their education and also learn why it’s important to all.” (Richmond, teacher)

“Thank you so much.” (Richmond, teacher)

“Thanks.” (Richmond, teacher)

“This is a great program.” (Richmond, teacher)

“Thank you and thank you for giving us a little hope in staying and doing.” (Richmond, family child care provider)

“I want to thank them so much for helping infant-toddler teachers with this extra money.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thank you so much for this award. It really helps teachers out a lot.” (Robeson, teacher)

“I am glad for the help you provide me.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thank you for caring for all of us that are benefiting from this program. It does make a difference in our classrooms and in our personal lives.” (Robeson, teacher)

“I would like to thank you for the supplement, because it has helped me out a lot. My car is sounding rough, and it gave me the money to be able to fix some of the stuff that was wrong with it. It also helped me to go back to school and work on my bachelor's degree, because I was told that I have exceeded my loan, so I don’t qualify for any loans except for the ones that I have to have a cosigner for, and I don’t know anyone that could be a good cosigner for me.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thank you so much for putting such a great program in place. This program truly brings about a change in the lives of many. 🎁🎁Thanks a million.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thanks so much for helping early childhood workers.” (Robeson, teacher)

“To me, it’s like a blessing. It helped me pay my car payment so I could keep it.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thanks for all you have done. This supplement was a major help for me for financial burdens, classroom expenses and more. THANK YOU!!!!” (Robeson, teacher)

“It’s been a blessing to me. It came at the right time. It helps me to catch up on my bills and other things I need to do. I’m very appreciative that you all thought of us and did this for the educators.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thank you for thinking about us.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thank you for the award and I hope I can continue getting it.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thank you so much.” (Robeson, teacher)

“Thank you! My car died on me last year and this award allowed me to purchase another vehicle! It’s not much but I am riding!” (Robeson, teacher)

“The award helps me get ahead of my bills and it allows me to buy some extra things for my day care children.” (Robeson, teacher)

“I’m glad to be receiving the supplement. It truly helps out with my home life and work situations.” (Rockingham, teacher)

“THANK YOU!” (Rockingham, teacher)

“It has helped me a whole lot and I appreciate it and want to thank you for it.” (Rowan, teacher)

“The supplement not only helps teachers and families, it also helps teachers with supplies and tools they will need for their classroom.” (Rowan, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement is very helpful, especially since teachers work hard, are underpaid, and less appreciated.” (Rowan, teacher)

“Thank you very much. It has helped me a lot. Again, I say thank you.” (Rowan, teacher)

“Thanks for acknowledging us, giving us another reason to stay in the field, and providing us with the extra help that we often need.” (Rowan, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Sampson, teacher)

“The supplement relieves financial hardship and gives providers the incentive to provide child care in your community.” (Sampson, family child care provider)

“Thank you so much!” (Sampson, teacher)

“I am very thankful and grateful for the supplement. It is awesome. Please continue the supplement, it helps in so many ways.” (Sampson, teacher)

“Thank you for starting this program.” (Scotland, teacher)

“I just can’t thank you enough for allowing me to be eligible for this award.” (Scotland, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Scotland, teacher)

“The supplement has been very helpful to me and I think you all are wonderful.” (Scotland, teacher)

“Sunshine don’t need to say anymore... Now take care of children on the weekends! Do I love it? Yes... I have a grandbaby helping write this... What would life be without children... God I wouldn’t want to know. Thank you!!!” (Stanly, teacher)

“I would like to tell them how wonderful it is to know that this organization is truly concerned about the needs of the infant-toddler educator. This is an organization that considers our personal needs as well as our needs in the classroom. I am truly grateful.” (Stokes, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Surry, teacher)

“Thank you so much. It means a lot to me.” (Union, teacher)

“Thank you so much for providing the supplement. It truly helped me last year with supporting my family and the children I help serve. It took a burden off me as to how I was going to pay certain things. I truly appreciate the supplement.” (Union, teacher)

“I am very, very grateful!” (Union, teacher)

“Thanks” (Union, teacher)

“I appreciate the award I receive every 6 months and I also appreciate how respectful and kind the staff is when I have questions. I am forever grateful.” (Union, teacher)

“You make educators and teachers feel important in teaching children.” (Union, teacher)

“I sincerely appreciate and am truly grateful for this supplement.” (Vance, teacher)

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! The AWARD\$ program is greatly, beyond words appreciated.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you is not enough, every little bit helps.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you for the supplement, it is a great help.” (Wake, teacher)

“As a toddler teacher in North Carolina I do not make much, but I am happy with my career choice. I love going to work and making my toddlers smile by learning through play. Working and playing with my toddlers makes my day worthwhile!” (Wake, teacher)

“This supplement has helped me tremendously in being able to maintain financial stability in a time in which money was strained!” (Wake, teacher)

“It’s a great benefit, and to know your appreciation is greater matters.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you so much for seeing the need.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Wake, teacher)

“It is greatly appreciated!! It can be a tough job at times, but also very satisfying.” (Wake, teacher)

“I want to tell the Division of Child Development and Early Education that I really thank them for supplementing our income. I love working with babies, but the pay is not enough to take care of basic needs and have extra to do things with family, like take a trip.” (Wake, teacher)

“I would like to thank the DCDEE for recognizing early educators. This program has great incentives and gives teachers a sense of encouragement and appreciation.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you for helping families with children and their teachers by rewarding us with this wonderful AWARD\$ program.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you for seeing the work we do and knowing how much of an impact early educators have on children’s lives. We create the path for each child's future.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Wake, teacher)

“It’s wonderful, but should be opened to toddlers, threes, and fours because any early childhood is a lot of work.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thanks.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you for helping me.” (Wake, teacher)

“I appreciate everything.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you for all you do.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thanks so much for your kindness and consideration. It’s definitely appreciated. It’s my hope that more teachers would take advantage of this opportunity and not worry about a financial burden.” (Wake, teacher)



“It was a tremendous help to me because I was able to help my daughter purchase her first home. It helped to relieve some of my financial stress. I felt appreciated. We never get raises, but just a COLA raise sometimes. This is so sad.” (Wake, teacher)

“The supplement should continue as long as you are a teacher, work with infant-toddlers, even if you change centers for better pay at your new center.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Wake, teacher)

“I think it’s amazing and a great resource.” (Wake, teacher)

“I would like to thank them for having the program for teachers.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you so very much. What a great help!” (Wake, teacher)

“Thanks so much for implementing this program.” (Wake, teacher)

“The AWARD\$ supplement has been a tremendous help to me. It is public knowledge that teachers are underpaid, but I do it because of my passion to help others. We all know that passion will not purchase food or pay my bills. I want to thank the Division of Child Development and Early Education for your generous income supplement.” (Wake, teacher)

“More is always better.” (Wake, teacher)

“I’m very thankful, but they should tax it before so it doesn’t affect my taxes.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you so much for making it easier to maintain as a teacher, become more educated, and purchase supplies for my classroom.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you very, very much! Do not stop.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thanks so much!” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you for funding this supplement, which is very much needed. I work for a company that does not offer raises to the teachers, so the AWARD\$ supplement helps me supply the things my family needs.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you very much for supporting us with this.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Wake, teacher)

“I appreciate it.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you!” (Wake, teacher)

“Thanks!” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you for the opportunity to increase my knowledge and help to achieve some of my goals and for the support to achieve my best, at work and at home.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I pray that the funding continues! It has really assisted me in so many ways. It is such a blessing!!!” (Wake, teacher)

“Thanks for thinking about us. Thank you for extending your hands and opening your hearts to help others.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you, thank you, thank you. You are truly making a difference.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you so much for advocating for the infant-toddler teachers. Sometimes it feels like our age group causes us to be lower on the totem pole, so this serves as a reminder that we are just as important and just as valued as other teachers in various age groups. It truly makes a difference!” (Wake, teacher)

“Receiving the supplement has helped relieve so much financial stress. I was able to catch up on bills and place credits on some of my accounts. Thank you to everyone who plays a role with AWARD\$.” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you oh so much! I feel a greater sense of leadership and importance in early childhood education. I feel empowered to go back to school after my newborn arrives. I want to have an even higher education to serve my community!” (Wake, teacher)

“Thank you, this money was so needed.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you!” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you! I appreciate this supplement and it encourages me to remain in this profession!” (Wake, family child care provider)

“It is appreciated and thanks for including family child care providers.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“DCDEE, thank you so much for opening the door for family child care providers to also receive this AWARD\$. It is a great supplement to look forward to!!! Thank you so much!!!” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you so much!!” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you for the recognition of our work with infants and toddlers by allocating funds towards family child care homes through this program.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thanks for recognizing me as an in-home child care business and how important it is for families to know that I am a teacher and not a babysitter.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you for thinking of us front liners.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“I paid part of my child’s surgery cost, bought a plane ticket to visit my family in MI, and bought some new supplies for my family child care home. This award money is helping early childhood teachers. I hope to see more programs and grant money going to family child care homes.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“I would like to thank the Division of Child Development and Early Education for this grant. This grant has made a huge and positive impact on the lives of the children I serve. A new playground was purchased with the grant. The children’s smiles at playtime speak volumes. I could not make that possible without your help.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“I sent DCDEE a thank you card expressing my gratitude for their insight and provisions.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Words cannot express my gratitude, so I will say God bless you and thanks a million times over.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“THANK YOU, DCDEE. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you so much, the AWARD\$ program has enhanced my program in being able to purchase good quality toys and supplies.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you so much.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you, DCDEE, from the bottom of my heart, for the opportunity to apply for this award. It is certainly a motivator. It helps improve my business for the children and my business as a whole with the upcoming website. This award helped make my child care business a better place of business.” (Wake, family child care provider)

“Thank you so much for recognizing the work we do.” (Watauga, teacher)

“Thank you for your support and for caring about all of us. This makes us feel appreciated for what we do.” (Watauga, teacher)

“This supplement helps those that work in child care be able to do it. The center that I work at does not pay well and the supplement helps me to stay afloat.” (Watauga, teacher)

“Thanks, God bless.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you, Division of Child Development and Early Education, for the funds and supplement.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you, I really appreciate it.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you a million times, thank you!” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you so very much.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you for this supplement. I look forward to its arrival each time.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you very much. Words can’t explain the impact your supplement has had on my daughter and my life.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you. It has made a big difference in my life!” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you, the AWARD\$ supplement has been very much needed and appreciated.” (Wayne, teacher)

“It helps me financially. It is something that I look forward to every year.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you very much for recognizing the hard work I put in every day.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thanks for the extra check every six months for working in child care.” (Wayne, teacher)

“Thank you.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“Thank you so much! You may never know the full extent of what AWARD\$ means to teachers all over the state. There are great teachers making a difference in many children’s lives, but unfortunately, they do not get paid enough to keep them where they are. This AWARD\$ supplement is a bonus that many teachers look forward to every six months. It helps so many people!” (Wilkes, teacher)

“Thank you for recognizing the value and hard work of the people who work in this field.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“Thank you, I appreciate it very much.” (Wilkes, teacher)

“I say thank you for the supplement. It has been a blessing and a help to me in so many ways.” (Wilson, teacher)

“I thank God for the supplement and the supplement is a gift to teachers. It is like a message saying thank you for all you do.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart. It really makes a difference.” (Wilson, teacher)

“The supplement is very appreciated and is helpful for the provisions needed in my personal and professional life. Thank you.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Thank you so much for providing the opportunity to add to my income.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Thank you for providing an incentive that says we see you to the workers.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Thank you for caring about those in the field that work hard and are underpaid.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is really necessary and helpful to me.” (Wilson, teacher)

“Thank you! (Yancey, teacher)

# Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup>

## Salary Supplement Scale



Level	Education Required	Annual Supplement
13	Doctorate degree plus or including at least 18 birth-5 focused* semester hours	\$4,000
12 12	Doctorate degree plus or including at least 12 birth-5 focused semester hours or Master's degree plus or including at least 18 birth-5 focused semester hours	\$4,000
11 11	Master's degree plus or including at least 12 birth-5 focused semester hours or Bachelor's degree plus or including at least 18 birth-5 focused semester hours	\$4,000
10 10	Bachelor's degree plus or including at least 12 birth-5 focused semester hours or 90 semester hours toward a bachelor's degree, including at least 18 birth-5 focused semester hours	\$3,000
9 9 9	Doctorate degree plus or including at least 6 birth-5 focused semester hours or Master's degree plus or including at least 6 birth-5 focused semester hours or Bachelor's degree plus or including at least 6 birth-5 focused semester hours	\$2,500
8	Associate degree plus or including at least 24 birth-5 focused semester hours	\$2,000

The AWARD\$ scale is based on a copyrighted document, the Child Care WAGE\$<sup>®</sup> scale, which includes education levels below an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. AWARD\$ funding begins with level 8.

**Supplement totals shown represent annual awards for full-time eligibility.**

\*“Focus” *generally* means coursework with extensive content related to children ages birth-5 years old.

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

- work at least 35 hours per week with infants, ones or twos
- work in a facility with at least three stars
- earn at or below \$19/hour
- have one of the education levels listed above (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

**For more information,** call 919-967-3272 or visit our website at [www.childcareservices.org](http://www.childcareservices.org).



**Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup>**

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