

Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Project

Want to make a significant difference for young children in your community?

Invest in the Early Care and Education Workforce

Research suggests that the teacher is the most important determinant of quality in early childhood settings; yet poor compensation and lack of benefits are barriers to recruiting and retaining a highly qualified workforce. Turnover of staff has negative effects on program quality and the social-emotional development of young children. A stable well-trained and fairly compensated workforce is essential to provide the level of quality young children need for success in school and life.



What is the Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Project?

The **Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA Project** is a successful strategy aimed at retaining the early childhood workforce and incentivizing ongoing education to improve the practitioner's knowledge, skills and abilities in working with young children. WAGES is a nationally recognized program created and licensed by Child Care Services Association in North Carolina. The Children's Forum is licensed to provide both WAGES and T.E.A.C.H. in Florida. Through a well-defined program of training, technical assistance and quality assurance, T.E.A.C.H. and WAGES programs across the country receive thousands of hours of support. To ensure the quality, integrity and fidelity of these programs, the National Technical Assistance and Quality Assurance Center requires each licensed state to engage a self-study process resulting in the development of an individual program portfolio that is updated regularly. Additionally, programs are monitored through ongoing programmatic and database review.

What does the Children's Forum do as the WAGE\$ licensee?

When the Children's Forum is contracted to provide the WAGE\$ program in a local area, we will:

- **Administer the program for the fiscal year:**
 - ♦ Receive and evaluate all applications
 - review pay stubs to ensure salary is within allowable limits for supplements
 - evaluate education documents, college transcripts and college accreditation
 - assure compliance with participant and program eligibility requirements
 - ♦ Data enter all recipient information
 - ♦ Correspond with program participants and employers
 - ♦ Issue salary supplement checks to qualified recipients twice a year
 - verify practitioner employment, work hours and education prior to issuing each check
 - ♦ Prepare bills and invoices for the funder
 - ♦ Maintain all files and make available all records for monitoring and audit purposes
 - ♦ Maintain the WAGE\$ database
 - ♦ Maintain a waitlist if necessary
- **Provide marketing and application materials for this program:**
 - ♦ Provide generic program brochures, fact sheets and all provider application materials in quantities sufficient for the total number of qualified early childhood teachers in the county.
 - ♦ Work with the funder to target the specific market intended for the program.
 - ♦ Local early learning coalitions or other local funders may request customized marketing materials from the Forum for an additional cost.
- **Provide IRS-1099 forms at the end of the year to recipients as mandated by current tax law.**
- **Provide training and technical assistance as needed to the local funder staff and board.**
- **Provide quarterly and end-of-year reports to the local funder:**
 - ♦ Quarterly reports on the number of WAGE\$ recipients
 - ♦ Remaining balance of funds
 - ♦ Documentation of outcomes
 - ♦ A final annual report and cumulative report at the end of the agreement period

- **Provide career counselors / support staff to all participants**
 - ♦ Annual evaluations are sent to each participant and their centers to evaluate the program's effectiveness, their satisfaction with the program and the Forum's services
 - ♦ Evaluation data are provided to the funder for quality assurance purposes
- **Provide a specific webpage on the Children's Forum website that can link directly from the funder's website to:**
 - ♦ Provide detailed eligibility information
 - ♦ Provide downloadable applications and brochures
 - ♦ Brand page according to local "look and feel"

How Effective is the Child Care WAGE\$® FLORIDA Project?

Child Care WAGE\$® Works!

Data show that those participating in the Child Care WAGE\$® program increase their education levels and stay at their jobs longer. WAGE\$ participant's turnover is reduced from a national average of 30% - 40% to less than 10% annually. Feedback from practitioners confirms that they are more committed to their jobs, continuing their education and remaining in the field of early childhood. Investing in the early childhood workforce through Child Care WAGE\$® is a wise investment strategy.

What are the costs for local funders?

The Child Care WAGE\$® program has proven to be an effective strategy to incentivize participation in Quality Rating Improvement Systems or strategically targeting other audiences to improve the quality of services for young children. Central to the success of the program in achieving these positive outcomes is careful adherence to procedures, practices and guidelines that are evidence based to produce intended results to ensure that the investment is well spent.

The Forum administers the program typically for the costs outlined below.

- Administration (5%)
- Direct program support, case management and career counseling (13%)
- WAGE\$ Supplements to Practitioners (82%)

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For more information on the Child Care WAGE\$® FLORIDA Project, contact:

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