

FY21 Results

Before first grade, a child may spend more than 10,000 hours in child care. Research tells us that children enrolled in a good early care and education program in the first five years of life are most likely to be in a highly skilled job or in college at age 21. Ensuring quality early care and education for children today creates a viable workforce for the future and a strong American economy in the long run.

The quality of early care and education a child receives is directly linked to teacher education and compensation, but in **Nebraska** many early educators do not have higher education degrees and earn less than \$15 an hour. The Child Care WAGE\$® Program provides education-based salary supplements to early educators to address the key issues of under-education, poor compensation and high turnover in the early childhood workforce. The WAGE\$ supplements make the early childhood field a more affordable and attractive professional option, thus reducing turnover rates. Higher financial awards are offered as more education is obtained, offering an important incentive to return to school. Ongoing supplements at the lower levels of education on the WAGE\$ scale are contingent upon completion of more coursework.

In **Nebraska**, Child Care WAGE\$® is administered by **Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children**. In FY21, Child Care WAGE\$® **Nebraska** provided salary supplements to **29** child care professionals for education earned and for their commitment to their early childhood program. These teachers, directors and family child care educators worked in **29** different programs serving approximately **218** children.

Education

72% of active participants either had an associate degree in ECE or higher or submitted education documentation to show progress in college.

Compensation

- **93%** of WAGE\$ participants earned less than \$15 per hour from their employers. WAGE\$ recipients earned an average six-month supplement of \$1,048, or approximately \$2,096 more per year, as a result of their participation.

Retention

- Only **3%** of WAGE\$ participants left their early education programs.

Demographics

- **7%** of WAGE\$ participants were people of color and/or Latinx.
- **100%** of WAGE\$ participants worked in family child care homes.

Personal Impact

In surveys of WAGE\$ participants:

- **84%** said WAGE\$ encouraged them to stay in their current early education program.
- **79%** said WAGE\$ encouraged them to pursue further education.
- **100%** said receiving a WAGE\$ supplement helped ease financial stress.
- **60%** said they needed the funds to pay bills.
- **55%** said they were more able to address the basic needs of their families such as food and housing.

This year alone: **218** of **Nebraska's** children benefited from consistent care provided by a better educated teacher.

“It is difficult to stay in child care when you are underpaid. When you are paid competitively, it makes you feel successful and the enthusiasm then is transferred to the children. My life and the lives of my children have been forever changed with my educational level and the money.” **–WAGE\$ participant**

The Child Care WAGE\$® Program is currently licensed and operating in six states. National outcomes can be found in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE\$® 2020-2021 [Annual Program Report](#).





Child Care WAGE\$® Nebraska FY21 Voices From the Field



Tammy Kresser graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 2004 with a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She then took a break from her education to raise her brother and sister. She opened her own family child care program in May 2011 when her sister was struggling to find a child care program that offered her boys the warm and loving environment she desired. In 2018, Tammy began work on her Master's Degree in Early Childhood with an emphasis in Leadership and Advocacy through the Erikson Institute in Chicago through their new online program. She graduated in May 2020.

On the WAGE\$ scale, Tammy started at a Level 9 and is now at a Level 10, the highest level in Nebraska. Having the extra income from WAGE\$ has allowed Tammy to purchase new things for her child care program. It has also provided the funding for her to be able to take more classes. Tammy is always looking for new trainings and classes in order to better improve her family child care program.

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