

# Child Care WAGES<sup>®</sup> Program **Fact Sheet**

## **What is the Child Care WAGES<sup>®</sup> Program?**

The Child Care WAGES<sup>®</sup> Program (WAGES) provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care educators working with children ages birth to five years old. The program is designed to increase retention, education and compensation. WAGES is a funding collaboration between your local Smart Start partnership and the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). It is administered by Child Care Services Association (CCSA).

## **Who is eligible to receive a salary supplement?**

Any child care professional earning at or below the income cap selected by the funding partnership may be eligible to participate. A partnership may choose one of three income cap options: \$14, \$16 or \$18 per hour. Bonuses received from the employer will be included in calculations to determine hourly rate. The supplement recipient must work with children ages birth to five at least 10 hours per week in a licensed child care program in a participating county and must have a level of education appearing on the Child Care WAGES<sup>®</sup> supplement scale (see reverse for eligible education levels). Partnerships also may elect not to fund administrative time, level two education or time worked in a site with less than three stars or less than four stars.

## **How much will I receive?**

Salary supplements are tied to the recipient's level of education, with teachers and family child care educators awarded on a different scale than directors. The awards also vary based on the tier selected by the funding partnership. Local Smart Start partnerships choose one of five different supplement models (tiers) and awards are issued accordingly. The scales show annual award amounts for full-time eligibility. Awards are issued in two six-month payments, each after the participant completes an assigned six-month commitment period in the same child care program. The amount received will reflect the schedule worked during the six-month period; supplements for part-time employees are prorated based on a 40-hour work week. Funding partnerships may also choose to apply an additional percentage cut to supplements due to budget constraints.

## **What do I have to do to participate in the Child Care WAGES<sup>®</sup> Program?**

Interested child care professionals must submit a completed WAGES application, pay documentation and official transcripts. See the application for further details.

## **How are supplements received?**

Checks are issued following commitment period completion to eligible participants who have met the requirements. Commitment periods run from mid-month to mid-month and are established by CCSA for each individual participant using application date, start date and education documentation. Payments are based on half of the annual award amount and reflect the schedule worked during the six-month period. All payments are contingent upon funding availability. Program staff must verify that participants have worked in their child care programs during the preceding six months before checks can be issued. Payments are mailed after CCSA has received the necessary funding from DCDEE. Once approved for an award, participants who remain in the same child care program and obtain the necessary education (if applicable) do not need to reapply to receive future payments.

## **How can I increase the level of the supplement I receive?**

Participants in the Child Care WAGES<sup>®</sup> Program may increase their supplement amounts by gaining more education. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood<sup>®</sup> Scholarship Program offers scholarships to child care professionals who want to earn course credits toward specific early childhood credentials or degrees. Contact the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood<sup>®</sup> Scholarship Program at CCSA (919-967-3272) for more information. Participants are encouraged to send WAGES an updated official transcript after the completion of any formal coursework so staff can determine the highest possible award. If this transcript has been sent to EEC, no further documentation is necessary. All educational levels noted with an asterisk on the scale are temporary. Participants must advance to a higher level as noted on the scale to remain eligible. Deadlines are shared with individual participants as applicable.

## **Do I have to pay taxes on the supplement I receive?**

The salary supplement is income. Participants will receive an IRS-1099 form at the end of the year if they received \$600 or more from CCSA during the calendar year. Recipients are responsible for reporting and paying any personal income taxes due.

## **Will I receive a supplement if I move to another child care program?**

Checks are issued to participants after each six-month period in the same child care program. If a participant moves to another licensed child care program in a participating county within the six months, then the commitment period must be reset based on reapplication and the employment date at the new site. This policy is designed to encourage more stability for the children in care.

## **If I work in a child care center, what is the center's responsibility?**

A child care center must agree to provide verification of an applicant's employment status and income and agree not to use participation in the program to offset normal pay increases. The center is not responsible for providing the salary supplement should funding no longer be available.

## **What is Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ and how is it different from WAGES?**

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$ (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 DCDEE. AWARD\$ is available to eligible infant-toddler teachers in every county in NC while WAGES is available only in counties that have elected to fund the program. Eligible applicants can only participate in one salary supplement program.