

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 **Iowa**, 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 **Iowa**, Child Care WAGE\$® is administered by **Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children**. In FY21, Child Care WAGE\$® Iowa provided salary supplements to **278** 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 **161** different programs serving approximately **5,968** children.

Education

- **74%** of active participants either had an associate degree in ECE or higher or submitted education documentation to show progress in college.

Compensation

- **84%** of WAGE\$ participants earned less than \$15 per hour from their employers. WAGE\$ recipients earned an average six-month supplement of \$929, or approximately \$1,858 more per year, as a result of their participation.

Retention

Only **18%** of WAGE\$ participants left their early education programs.

Demographics

- **7%** of WAGE\$ participants were people of color and/or Latinx.
- **65%** of WAGE\$ participants worked in early care and education centers.
- **35%** of WAGE\$ participants worked in family child care homes.

Personal Impact

In surveys of WAGE\$ participants:

- **95%** said WAGE\$ encouraged them to stay in their current early education program.
- **88%** said WAGE\$ encouraged them to pursue further education.
- **97%** said receiving a WAGE\$ supplement helped ease financial stress.
- **63%** said they needed the funds to pay bills.
- **23%** said they were more able to address the basic needs of their families such as food and housing.

This year alone: **5,968** of **Iowa'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\$[®] Iowa FY21 Voices From the Field



Daria Darling has been providing child care to families in Allamakee County for more than 40 years. She has been described as the kindest, most giving and humble person one could know. For the last 21 years, Daria has worked as an assistant to a child development home provider. Due to the limited resources available to the home provider, Daria has been receiving just \$100 a week for full-time employment.

Daria spent her adult life in the home she grew up in as the caretaker for her parents and youngest brother. After they passed, she continued to live in the family home, but because her finances were so limited, she was barely able to buy food for herself. The home eventually became uninhabitable and had no heat, lights or running water when community members, led by a parent whose eight children had been cared for by Daria over the years, decided to step in and help.

At around the same time that the community stepped in, the WAGE\$ program became available to Daria and the money that she has received has been life changing. She has been receiving WAGE\$ salary supplement checks since May 2020. Daria now lives in a clean, safe apartment. She is receiving the health care she desperately needed. She had gone more than 40 years without being able to see a dentist. Her outlook on life has improved beyond measure. The money Daria has received from WAGE\$ has allowed Daria to have some spending money that she hasn't had for many years as well as savings that she can use after she and her home provider retire in the upcoming years. Daria stated, "The WAGE\$ program helped me have peace of mind in my financial security." She also said that WAGE\$ makes her feel "more appreciated." We are so happy that funding became available in Daria's county allowing WAGE\$ the opportunity to help grant her some financial relief.

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