

EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE COMPENSATION INITIATIVES

Fact Sheet

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What is a Compensation Initiative?

Compensation initiatives are designed to supplement the salary of child care providers working in both family homes and centers. According to the Center for the Child Care Workforce, there are currently 16 states that offer compensation supplements to their early childhood workforce (Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, Vermont and Wisconsin). The size of supplements offered varies from state to state and is based on education levels and length of time working in the field.

Why is it Needed?

Research shows that poorly educated teachers and high turnover rates negatively impact young children, and low wages are often what cause teachers to leave the field.

What Are the Results?

North Carolina was the first state to design and implement a compensation initiative called WAGES[®] in 1994. Since that time they have witnessed among their program participants low turnover rates, an increase in college level coursework being completed and upward movement on their supplement scale due to continued education.

What Are the Benefits?

Children

- Benefit from educated caregivers who are knowledgeable about and sensitive to the needs of young children.
- Flourish in relationships with consistent teachers in their early care and education environments.

Child Care Programs

- Retain staff members who are knowledgeable about best practices in early education.
- Improve their marketability and quality of care provided by increasing education levels of staff members and decreasing staff turnover.

Participants

- Receive increased compensation for formal education received and for their commitment to consistency of care.
- Receive support and encouragement for their professional development.
- May increase their compensation level by continuing their formal education.
- Experience increased professional status and job satisfaction.

What is the Biggest Misconception?

The biggest misconception regarding compensation initiatives is that it will raise the cost of child care due to higher salaries. The reality is that the supplements come from other sources of funds and do not come out of a center's budget or parent fees.