

# TEACH EARLY CHILDHOOD® NATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT

2025



**TEACH EARLY CHILDHOOD®**  
**CHILD CARE WAGES®**

[teachecnationalcenter.org](http://teachecnationalcenter.org)



# A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

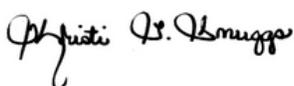
As Early Years moves beyond our 50th anniversary, we continue to honor our unwavering commitment to a transformed early care and education system. We believe that steadfast support for early childhood professionals is essential to building that future. This belief guides every organizational endeavor and directly benefits every child and family we serve. Early Years will remain a leader in advancing early childhood by standing united in our passion for advocacy, innovation and practice. We move forward with confidence, embracing growth and promise as we work toward a brighter future for the entire early care and education system.

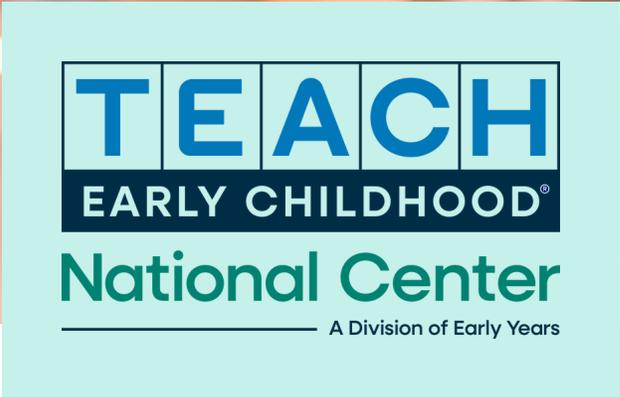
Even amid shifts in federal policy and rapid changes across the field, we choose to meet these challenges head-on. Our work is rooted in shared goals, collaboration and a commitment to solutions. The TEACH National Center's Annual Report reflects this spirit of empowerment and determination, amplifying a national voice ready to forge ahead. The personal impact stories shared by TEACH Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGES® participants serve as powerful reminders of the resilience, progress and achievements made possible when professionals receive the support they deserve. We are honored to highlight both measurable outcomes and lived experiences that demonstrate the profound, ongoing impact of increased education, fair compensation and workforce retention in early care and education.

The evidence is clear: the TEACH National Center is driving meaningful change. We support states as they develop and implement enhanced scholarship models, salary supplement program pilots and statewide apprenticeship programs—initiatives that strengthen the workforce and elevate the field. We remain committed to partnering with and advocating for states that invest in TEACH and WAGES. At the same time, we are energized by opportunities to collaborate with new partners willing to think beyond traditional approaches and explore innovative strategies to strengthen early education.

As you read this Annual Report, we invite you to reflect on the success of the hundreds of thousands of program participants who show us that sustained investment leads to lasting change. Let their stories inspire you to become part of the workforce solution. Now is the time to consider your next step and join us in building sustainable, forward-thinking strategies that will propel our beloved early childhood field to the next level.

With gratitude and respect,





## WHAT WE DO

Provide leadership in the creation of programs and policies that promote and support equity toward an educated, well-paid and stable early childhood workforce. Thus ensuring the long-term success of our nation’s children in school and in life.

## HOW WE DO IT

The TEACH Early Childhood® National Center, a division of Early Years, works across states, providing accountable workforce development strategies that lead to measurable education and compensation gains and real career mobility and stability for the early childhood education workforce. In the past year, Center staff have worked diligently, bringing to life a new program, new resources, events, publications and direct support to TEACH Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE\$® state program staff.

## FUNDING STATEMENT

Our work is funded in part by the Alliance for Early Success, the W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation, the Stranahan Foundation, Early Care & Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS), the National Early Care & Education Workforce Center, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Building Bright Futures (North Carolina Business Committee for Education). We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of these organizations.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

## TEACH EARLY CHILDHOOD®

The TEACH Early Childhood® Initiative is an evidence-based model providing debt-free college education with comprehensive support for the early childhood education workforce. It provides the structure for a comprehensive, sequenced program of early childhood higher education opportunities that recognizes the varied educational backgrounds of early childhood educators. TEACH targets increased education leading to credentials and degrees, increased compensation and job and career retention. Employer and employee dollars are partnered with public or private funds in each state to support their early childhood workforce. Within states, as a large buyer of education, TEACH can leverage a more accessible, responsive higher education system to support education and career pathways.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE FEATURE

“The TEACH Early Childhood® Scholarship Program is an indispensable tool for building a stronger, more educated early childhood workforce. By providing crucial financial and counseling support, TEACH empowers educators to achieve higher degrees and credentials, directly addressing the critical need for qualified professionals in the field. The scholarship not only elevates individual careers but fundamentally enhances program quality, ensuring children receive the best possible start and fostering a more stable and professional early childhood field.”



**KELSEY LAIRD**  
MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

# RECIPIENT TESTIMONIALS



**ANDREA HAYDEN**  
PEA RIDGE, ARKANSAS

“Balancing work, school, and motherhood isn’t easy, but the TEACH scholarship made it possible. As a mom of three, I often wondered how I could afford to continue my education while working full-time. TEACH lifted that financial weight and gave me the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. I’m proud to be setting an example for my children—proving that with support and perseverance, dreams really can come true.”



**ALLISON RITSICK**  
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS/  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR  
BUILDING BLOCKS, PENNSYLVANIA

“There is a momentum throughout our company that we support employees who want to further their education. TEACH has allowed us to do that. We promote that we have educational support for career development, and it attracts people at all different stages of their careers. TEACH has brought more professionalism to the field. Now you can make early education your career. I’ve been at Building Blocks for 21 years. I remember people saying, ‘I’m going to get my real job now.’ I don’t hear that much anymore. They are not just working at a daycare center. They are professionals.”



**A-SHAYA  
PIERCE-MONITOR**  
FIRST CLASS PRE-K WITH THE  
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

“The TEACH Early Childhood® Scholarship Program has been a cornerstone of my success, providing not only financial support but also encouragement, guidance and opportunities for professional growth. This program truly helped me break barriers, advance in my career and continue making a positive impact in the field of early childhood education.”

# TEACH NATIONAL DATA

## Funding and Support

- \$849 million total funding leveraged to date
- 19,975 TEACH scholarship recipients were supported
- 699,814 children benefited

## Higher Education

124,911 credit hours completed at 542 participating higher education institutions, including 309 community colleges and 233 universities, provided college courses and benefited from enrollment.

## Average Annual Credit Hours Completed

- 15.24 – associate degree scholarships
- 18.1 – bachelor's degree scholarships

## Average Annual Recipient Grade Point Average

- 3.42 – associate degree scholarships
- 3.57 – bachelor's degree scholarships

## Participating Programs

### TEACH Scholarship Recipients

55.8% were the first generation in their immediate family to acquire a higher education degree.

### TEACH Sponsoring Employers

- 9,381 employers sponsored a recipient on a TEACH scholarship
- 9.8% were family child care home practitioners
- 38.4% of recipients worked with children in publicly funded pre-K programs
- 15.9% of recipients worked in Head Start programs

## Scholarship and Degree Completion

- 525 associate degree graduates
- 445 bachelor's degree graduates
- 201 master's degree graduates

## Increased Compensation Average Wage Increase

- 12.5% – associate degree scholarships
- 11.5% – bachelor's degree scholarships

## Stabilize Workforce

- 96% retention rate for associate degree recipients
- 96% retention rate for bachelor's degree recipients



# NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR APPRENTICESHIP NETWORK

The TEACH Early Childhood® National Center supports states through the National Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship Network as an industry intermediary to develop registered apprenticeship models that work in coordination with existing scholarships to build the workforce. As an industry intermediary, the National Center provides individualized technical assistance to states to develop, recruit and implement early childhood apprenticeships using the approved U.S. Department of Labor registered model.

Apprenticeships provide a unique opportunity to support skill development in the high-demand field of early childhood education. Utilizing the unique structure of this model, a participant will be able to gain employment and attend institutions of higher education to work toward industry-recognized credentials and degrees. Registered apprenticeship programs have five main components: **paid job, on-the-job training, related-technical instruction, mentorship and credentials**. Blending these key components together is what makes the model a unique opportunity to meet participants where they are and support them in earning credentials and degrees.

## NATIONAL STATE DATA

**98**

Apprentices

**36**

Average age of participants

**956**

College credit hours taken

**3.35**

Average GPA

**71,070**

On-the-job training hours

**1,470**

Individualized apprentice-mentor meetings

**5** pre-apprentices completed

**38** dual-enrollment college courses with a

**3.2** average GPA

# STATE HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## ARKANSAS

“Watching these first graduates of the TEACH Arkansas Early Educator Apprenticeship Program grow from eager learners to confident educators has been such a rewarding experience. Their journey reminds us that when we invest in teachers, we invest in the future of every child they will teach.”

**-Elizabeth Miller,  
Apprenticeship Coordinator,  
Arkansas Early Childhood Association**



## MINNESOTA

“TEACH really helped me a lot. When I first started, I was a little rusty because it had been awhile since I graduated from college in 2011. As I began my journey, it made me realize that no matter how old you are and where you are in life, you have the ability to keep going. Knowing, you are encouraging others to keep going with hope and confidence. Take the opportunity to further your education. TEACH is very understanding, will work with you and respond in a timely manner with whatever questions you have.

**-Natasha Miller,  
Apprentice,  
New Horizons Academy**

## PENNSYLVANIA

“Workforce-centered apprenticeships are essential in early childhood education because they honor the realities our classroom staff face. By offering flexible, hands-on learning that fits their schedules and builds on their experience, these programs help staff grow while they continue to work. When professional development is designed around the unique needs of our workforce, everyone wins —educators feel supported, families see stronger relationships, and children thrive.”

**-Mary Graham,  
Executive Director,  
Children’s Village**

## COLORADO



“I am truly grateful to be a recipient of the TEACH Apprenticeship Scholarship especially for the opportunity to work so closely with my mentor. Through her education and experience, she expertly guides our weekly meetings through discussions about classroom management, curriculum development and best practices. She is well versed in neurodiversity and how to meet the needs of all students. She is an accomplished program manager at her school and offers relevant resources and strategies for building my leadership skills as I pursue my ECE director’s certification. We discuss communicating with families about their child’s development as well as developing active listening skills for managing teachers on my team. I come away from these sessions inspired, encouraged and empowered to teach and lead to the best of my ability.”

**-Lorie Shetter,  
Boulder Country Day Preschool Program**

# STATE HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## OHIO

“The TEACH Early Childhood® OHIO Scholarship has made a tremendous impact on both my education and my career in Early Childhood Education. Having the opportunity to further my education through a full scholarship provided by TEACH Ohio and supported by my employer has truly been life-changing. This program has lifted the financial burden that often prevents educators like myself from advancing their education, and it has allowed me to focus fully on becoming the best teacher I can be for young children and their families.



Through this scholarship, I have gained not only new knowledge, but also a deeper level of confidence in my skills as an educator. The coursework, along with the ongoing support and encouragement provided through TEACH, has strengthened my teaching practices, expanded my understanding of child development, and inspired me to continue growing in this field. I feel more prepared, capable, and driven to create meaningful learning experiences for children.

TEACH Apprenticeship has empowered me to further my education while continuing to work in the classroom, and it has helped me build a strong foundation for a long-term career in Early Childhood Education. I truly believe that this scholarship is shaping me into the teacher I strive to be and allowing me to make a lasting difference in the lives of the children and families I serve.”

**-Alicia French, Over the Rainbow Early Learning Center**

## NEBRASKA

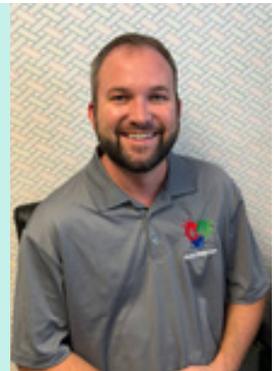


“TEACH is a great opportunity. TEACH has given me the opportunity to go to college, further my education and to help me help the next generation grow and develop. TEACH has given me support after support from my program coordinator and my apprentice mentor. I was given the opportunity to join the National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) and without TEACH none of this would be possible! I am extremely grateful for this opportunity.”

**-Eden Peed,  
Little Disciples Childcare**

## NORTH CAROLINA

“I feel the Apprenticeship program is essential to the sustainability of the early education workforce because it brings together experienced professionals and those that are newer to the field, giving them first hand experience that cannot be taught in a classroom or oftentimes even during practicum learning. I also see an advantage when it comes to youth and their interest in the work that we do. When they can experience this field from a point of passion instead of just a job, it makes all the difference in the world.”



**-Dustin Brande, Quality Child Care Inc.**

# FIVE YEAR IMPACT

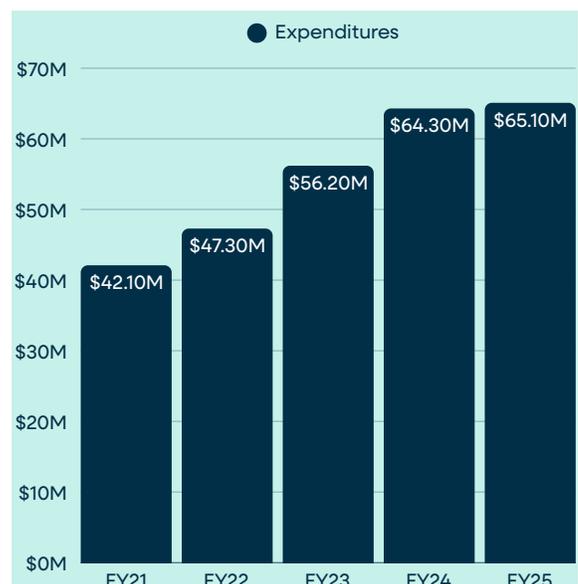
## AVERAGE WAGE FOR TEACHERS



Over the past five years, wages for early childhood educators have steadily increased, reflecting progress in strengthening and supporting the workforce that shapes young children's futures. While this growth is promising, continued investment is crucial to ensuring fair compensation for educators' expertise and dedication. Programs like TEACH Early Childhood® are instrumental in this effort, providing scholarships and comprehensive support that help educators earn higher credentials, advance their careers and increase their earning potential.

## TEACH FUNDING

Funding for the TEACH Early Childhood® program has grown significantly over the past five years, reflecting a strong commitment to strengthening the early childhood education workforce. This increased investment has expanded scholarship opportunities, professional development and financial support for educators pursuing higher education and credentials. As TEACH continues to receive critical funding, more early childhood professionals can access the resources needed to advance their careers—ultimately enhancing the quality of care and education for young children nationwide.





CHILD CARE  
**WAGES<sup>®</sup>**  
An Early Years Initiative

## WHAT WE DO

The Child Care WAGE\$<sup>®</sup> Program provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children between the ages of birth to 5 in participating counties.

## HOW WE DO IT

The Child Care WAGE\$<sup>®</sup> Initiative was created in response to research-based evidence showing that the quality of care children receive is lowered by high turnover rates and inadequate teacher education. To help stem the tide of turnover and increase teacher continuity, Child Care WAGE\$<sup>®</sup> awards education-based salary supplements to early childhood professionals to address the key issues of under-education, poor compensation and high turnover in the early childhood workforce. Supplement awards are based on education and the continuity of care provided.

# RECIPIENT TESTIMONIALS

TENNESSEE



“Being a part of the program was kind of like checks and balances for me. I have been sitting on my Associate's for many years, and so with the incentive, it's pushing me to go ahead and get that bachelor's degree that I keep putting off. And someone to call and follow up and say, 'Hey, have you signed up for your classes?' 'Where are you at this point?' That was one of the main incentives that I took from it.”

-Kimberly Arnett

NORTH CAROLINA

“WAGE\$ helps support early childhood educators, ensuring they receive fair compensation for their hard work and dedication. For me, this program has provided financial stability and motivation to continue pursuing my passion for early childhood education. It has motivated me to pursue further education in early childhood development so that I can enhance my skills and provide even better care for young children. The financial support and recognition have encouraged me to continue growing professionally, which ultimately benefits the children in my care and the early childhood community.

I sincerely appreciate the support provided by Smart Start through the Child Care WAGE\$® supplements. This funding not only recognizes the value of early childhood educators, but also directly impacts the quality of care and education young children receive.”



-Eman Alsamawi

## WAGE\$ LICENSED STATES DATA

Nearly  
**\$9M**  
invested

**1,806**  
Participating  
programs

**4,075**  
Supplement  
recipients

**\$1,227**  
Average 6-month  
supplement

**13%**  
Turnover  
rate

**89%** of active participants whose counties have participated 2 or more years have the AAS ECE or higher, or have submitted education during the year to document additional coursework

# TEACH AND WAGE\$ LICENSED ORGANIZATIONS

Currently, TEACH and WAGE\$ programs are housed in a group of statewide organizations serving the early childhood community. In FY2024-2025, 23 states were licensed.

## **Alabama**

Alabama Partnership for Children

## **Arkansas**

Arkansas Early Childhood Association

## **Colorado**

Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance

## **Florida\***

The Children's Forum

## **Indiana**

Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Iowa\***

Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Maine**

Maine Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Michigan**

Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Minnesota**

Child Care Aware® of Minnesota

## **Missouri**

Child Care Aware® of Missouri

## **Nebraska\***

Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Nevada**

Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children

## **New Hampshire**

Community Action Partnership Hillsborough and Rockingham Counties

## **North Carolina\***

Early Years

## **Ohio**

Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association

## **Pennsylvania**

Pennsylvania Child Care Association

## **Rhode Island**

Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children

## **South Carolina**

SC Endeavors

## **Tennessee**

Signal Centers

## **Texas**

Texas Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Utah**

Utah Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Vermont**

Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Wisconsin**

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

\*Denotes both TEACH and WAGE\$ Programs operating in the state.

# FY 2024-2025 NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Toshiba Adams**  
University of Wisconsin  
– Milwaukee

**Marica Cox Mitchell**  
Bainum Family  
Foundation

**Ana De Hoyos O’Connor**  
San Antonio College

**Lauren Hogan**  
National Association for  
the Education of Young  
Children

**Kelsey Laird**  
Michigan Association  
for the Education of  
Young Children

**Beth Ann Lang**  
Child Care Aware® of  
Missouri

**Paul Lazenby**  
Arkansas Early Childhood  
Association

**Calvin Moore**  
Council for Professional  
Recognition

**Debra Murphy**  
Cape Cod Community  
College

**Jeanette Paulson**  
Wisconsin Early  
Childhood Association

**Ex Officio Members –  
Early Years Staff**

**Kristi Snuggs**  
President

**Edith Locke**  
SVP, Professional  
Development Initiatives

**Allison Miller**  
SVP, Compensation  
Initiatives

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE CONVENING SPONSORS

