



**Step Up to
WAGE\$
Rhode Island**

A demonstration program of
Child Care Services Association

Step Up to WAGE\$ RI Fact Sheet

What is Step Up to WAGE\$?

Step Up to WAGE\$ provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators, directors and family child care providers working with Infant/toddler children in an early childhood setting. Step Up to WAGE\$ RI is a demonstration program of Early Years in North Carolina and is based on the Child Care WAGE\$® Program. This funding was specifically set aside to retain highly qualified infant and toddler educators and to ensure the availability and quality of infant and toddler child care is sustained and strengthened as public investment in preschool grows.

Who is eligible to receive a salary supplement?

A child care professional earning at or below \$23 per hour who is working with infant/ toddler children in an early childhood setting, at least 10 hours per week, and in a licensed child care setting may be eligible to participate. The supplement recipient must also have a level of education appearing on the Step Up to WAGE\$ supplement scale.

How much will I receive?

The awards vary based on the education earned by the participant and the eligible hours worked. The salary supplement scale shows annual award amounts for full-time eligibility. Awards are issued in two six-month installments per year, each after the participant completes an assigned six-month commitment period in the same child care program. The amount received will reflect the average hours worked during the six-month period; supplements for part-time employees are prorated.

The program is being piloted in Rhode Island and is a public investment in preschool grows. Awards are based on limited time and funding.

What do I have to do to participate in Step Up to WAGE\$?

Interested child care professionals must complete an application and provide verification of (1) current employment in a licensed child care program, (2) current wages and (3) education earned, as verified by an official transcript. See the program application for a checklist of documentation needed.

How are supplements received?

Payments 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 for each individual participant using application date, start date and education documentation. The installment is based on half of the annual award amount and reflects the average hours 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 payments can be issued. Once approved for an award, participants who remain in the same child care program do not need to reapply in order to receive future installments.

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

Step Up to WAGE\$ participants may increase their supplement amounts by gaining more education. TEACH Early Childhood® Rhode Island offers scholarships to child care professionals who want to earn course credits toward specific early childhood credentials or degrees. Contact TEACH Early Childhood® Rhode Island at 401-739-6100 for more information. Participants are encouraged to send Step Up to WAGE\$ RI an

updated official transcript after the completion of any formal coursework so staff can determine the highest possible award.

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

The salary supplement is income. Participants will receive an IRS-1099-MISC form at the end of the year if they received \$600 or more from The Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (RIAIEYC) 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?

Payments 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 within the six months, then the commitment period must be reset based on eligible 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 wages and agree not to use participation in the program to offset normal wage increases. The center is not responsible for providing the salary supplement should funding no longer be available.

What is an Official Transcript?

Hard-copy transcripts are considered “official” when they arrive in a sealed, stamped, official envelope with the seal and any other security feature intact. Electronic transcripts are considered “official” when we receive them from a secure site. Transcripts must come from a regionally accredited college or university. Copies of degrees and unofficial transcripts are not accepted. Internet transcripts cannot be accepted unless sent directly from the college to the Step Up to WAGE\$ staff. A copy of a CDA Certificate is accepted. Workshops and Professional Development training hours are not acceptable documentation.

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