

Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida

Request: \$750,000 to establish a statewide infrastructure (administrative and program support) for early learning coalitions to opt into Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida using their quality dollar allocations. This appropriation would enable approximately 2,500 – 3,500 early childhood educators access to INCENTIVE\$.

Background: Teachers are the most important determinant of quality in early childhood settings, yet poor compensation and lack of persistent benefits are barriers to recruiting and retaining a highly-qualified workforce. Turnover of staff has negative effects on program quality and the social-emotional development of young children. A stable, well-educated, and fairly-compensated workforce is essential to provide the quality care and opportunities young children need for success in school and in life.

Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida retains the early childhood workforce and rewards educational advancement to ensure quality early learning experiences for young children. INCENTIVE\$, through its affiliation with Child Care WAGES®, is a nationally-recognized, evidence-based program. Operated by the Children’s Forum, the program provides early educators with financial incentives based on their education and continued employment. In conjunction with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, INCENTIVE\$ participants receive education, technical assistance, quality assurance, and financial support. To ensure quality, integrity, and fidelity, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center monitors INCENTIVE\$ through ongoing programmatic and database review.

WHY INCREASE COMPENSATION?

- There is a relationship among the qualifications of early educators, their compensation, and the quality of their classrooms.
- When pay increases for early educators, so does continuity of care for children and families.
- Child care is an economic driver for Florida industries.
- An investment in INCENTIVE\$ promotes equity since women are disproportionately represented in these poorly-paid positions.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF TURNOVER?

- Constant change in the early learning environment stresses children.
- Teachers with lower compensation are unlikely to remain employed in an early learning setting.
- High rates of teacher turnover negatively impact the operational cost of child care businesses.
- Frequent turnover also makes it difficult to sustain a positive work environment for qualified teachers.

References available upon request

Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida is an affiliate of Child Care WAGES®, CCSA, Chapel Hill, NC.



Early Childhood Educators in Florida

30-40%

overall turnover in the field nationally

\$1,286

average annual stipend for INCENTIVE\$ participants

\$1.93

average increase in hourly rate for early childhood educators with degrees

63%

early childhood educators rely on public assistance

59,520

in the workforce

10%

average turnover for INCENTIVE\$ participants

\$20,987

average annual salary, only \$10.09/hour

Higher INCENTIVE\$



Teacher stability and higher quality interactions with children in classrooms