

Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida

Request: \$22,404,000* to allow statewide participation in **Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ Florida** program, a successful evidence-based strategy aimed at increasing retention and rewarding education to improve teacher effectiveness and child outcomes. This appropriation would enable approximately 12,000 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, child outcomes, 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 increases retention of the early childhood workforce and rewards educational advancement to ensure quality early learning experiences for young children. INCENTIVE\$, through its affiliation with Child Care WAGE\$®, 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? **

- Early educators with higher qualifications have better compensation and higher quality interactions in 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.

*Estimates are based on the county utilization rate in Miami-Dade by level and applied to an estimate of 12,000 eligible participants statewide at an average cost of \$1,867 annually.

**References available upon request.



Early Childhood Educators in Florida

30-40%

overall turnover in
the field nationally

\$1,120

average annual stipend
for INCENTIVE\$ participants

\$1.93

average
increase in hourly
rate for early
childhood
educators with
degrees

5.7 times

the poverty rate
of K-8 teachers

59,410

in the workforce

\$22,610

average annual salary,
only \$10.87/hour

13%

average turnover for
INCENTIVE\$ participants

**Higher
INCENTIVE\$**



**Teacher stability
and higher quality
interactions with
children in classrooms**