

Child Care WAGE\$® DELAWARE Fact Sheet/Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Child Care WAGE\$® Program? Child Care WAGE\$® DELAWARE is an education-based salary supplement program for early child care professionals. WAGE\$ is designed to increase stability and to improve the quality of child care by reducing turnover and encouraging education. The ultimate goals of the program are to increase retention, education, and compensation for the educators who are working directly in the classroom. WAGE\$ helps to ensure higher quality care to young children and helps to prepare them to be successful in school and life.

How is WAGE\$ Funded? WAGE\$ is administered by the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (deaeyc) and is funded by the Delaware Office of Early Learning. *In the event that the amount needed to offer awards to all eligible applicants exceeds the amount of funding received, a waiting list may be developed.

What are the Eligibility Requirements? The applicant must:

- be included in ratios for classrooms with children ages birth to five at least ten hours per week (directors, curriculum coordinators, and administrators are only eligible for time when they are included in the ratios for the classrooms);
- earn a wage of \$17.00 an hour or less;
- have at least six college credits of early childhood education, earned from a regionally accredited school;
- work for a licensed program participating in Delaware Stars, as a Star level 2 or above;
- have transcripts sent directly to the WAGE\$ office;
- work at least six months in the same child care program before receiving payment; and
- be employed at this same child care program at the time of employment verification.

Are Directors, Assistant Directors, Curriculum Coordinators and Other

Administrators Eligible? Child Care WAGE\$® DELAWARE offers awards for time spent in the classroom. If directors, assistant directors, curriculum coordinators, or administrators spend at least ten hours a week working directly with children, they are eligible to receive a prorated award, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Are Part-Time Employees Eligible to Receive an Award? The Child Care WAGE\$® Program offers prorated awards to part-time employees working a minimum of ten hours per week, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.

How Much Money Will I Receive? Supplements are determined by the applicant's level of education and are awarded in two installments after he/she completes the assigned six-month commitment period in the same child care program. Employees who work full-time in the

classroom will receive the full amount listed for their level of education, and part-time employees will receive a prorated award based on a 40-hour work week. See the Supplement Scale for award amounts. Please note that the award amounts on the supplement scale are annual amounts, not the amount that you will receive every six months.

How do I Participate in the Child Care WAGES® DELAWARE Program? Interested child care professionals must submit a completed application (found on the deaeyc website www.deaeyc.org) along with the following documents:

- Staff should submit two (2) recent paycheck stubs.
- Family child care providers verify their income by completing an income worksheet, which is required with the initial application and each subsequent six-month confirmation.
- Center owners working in the classroom must submit tax forms, including all supporting documentation to the 1040.

All applicants:

- Official transcripts (MUST be submitted directly to the WAGE\$ office);
- Completed direct deposit form;
- Voided check or bank note
- Completed W9 tax form.

How and When are Supplements Received? Once your application has all the necessary documentation to process, you will be given a commitment period, which is a six-month cycle. (Be advised: The commitment period is based off of your individual application, and it may be different from someone else who is a WAGE\$ participant in the center where you work. Additionally, if you are a nine-month or ten-month employee, your commitment periods will be different to compensate for the time you are not in the center.)

| Standard Six-Month Cycles | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| January – July | July – January |
| February – August | August – February |
| March – September | September – March |
| April – October | October – April |
| May – November | November – May |
| June – December | December - June |

On the 14th of every month, WAGE\$ staff begins to verify employment for all participants whose commitment periods end that month. For example, if your commitment period is November – May, we will begin to call centers on May 14th to confirm that you have worked consistently over the previous six months, included in ratio for the birth-to-five classrooms. Once the verification calls are completed and all of the participants are confirmed (for that month), WAGE\$ will



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submit the invoice to its funder who has 30 days from the time of submission to provide deaeyc with the funds for deposit. The supplements are received through direct deposit; the paperwork for which is part of the application process and should be completed before supplement amounts are awarded.

How Long Can I Receive a Salary Supplement? Levels 1 – 5 are considered temporary levels. Participants awarded at one of these levels are encouraged to move up to a higher level within two years in order to retain eligibility. Deadlines will be reestablished at each temporary level. Family child care providers have three years to achieve the education needed to move up. Levels 6 – 8 are permanent education levels, meaning you do not have to increase your education by a set date; however, you do have to maintain eligibility through the other requirements listed.

How Do I Increase my Supplement Amount? Participants can increase their supplement amount by obtaining more college credits at a regionally accredited school. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® DELAWARE offers scholarships to early care and education professionals to be used to earn credentials or degrees in early childhood education. WAGES\$ applicants are encouraged to send their updated transcripts directly to the WAGES\$ office after the completion of any formal coursework, so that the WAGES\$ staff can determine the highest possible award. If the transcript has been sent, please notify the WAGES\$ staff.

Do I Have to Pay Taxes on the Supplement I Receive? The salary supplement is considered income. Each applicant will fill out a W-9 Form for tax purposes. Participants whose earnings exceed \$600 will receive an IRS-1099 Form at the end of the year to be filed with their federal income taxes. Recipients are responsible for reporting and paying any personal income taxes due.

Best Practices: Keep WAGES\$ up-to-date at all times. If you've obtained more education, send your transcript directly to the WAGES\$ office, and let the WAGES\$ staff know. Send any updated contact information our way, as well as any updates to your job/position. If you've received a raise of more than \$1 from what you provided on your application, new pay stubs should be sent to update your file.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Child Care WAGES® DELAWARE office.

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