

NC Early Education Coalition

Improve Early Education Teacher Compensation Now!

Parents can't afford to pay more.

Child care programs can't afford to pay their teachers more.

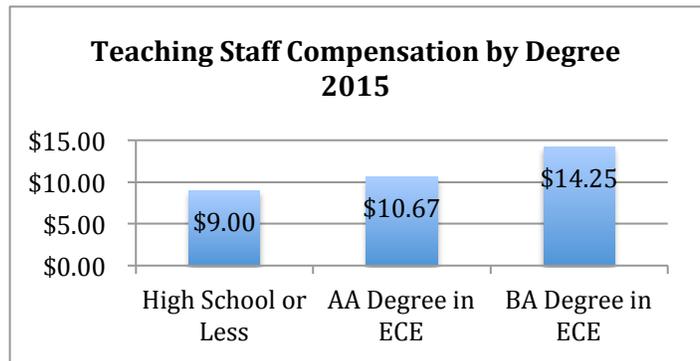
Early education teachers can't afford to work for such low wages.

Here's The Problem:

- **Compensation is too low and not commensurate with education and experience.**

In 2015, the median hourly wage for early education teachers was \$10.97 per hour which equates to \$22,800 per year. Early education teachers have an average of 11 years experience.

Early education teachers with higher education degrees earned more. A teacher with an Associate Degree in early education earned \$10.67 per hour, and with a BA degree in early education earned \$14.25 per hour. For those earning at the \$14.25 an hour level, this equates to an annual salary of \$29,640, and is about 70% of what a starting kindergarten teacher with less experience would earn in the public school system at a prorated yearly salary. Further, teachers in public schools often receive health insurance, retirement and other benefits which are generally not available to most early education teachers in the private sector.



- **Many teachers are paid so low that they rely on public assistance.**

Statewide, 40% of early childhood teachers reported that they have needed at least one type of public assistance (e.g., TANF, Medicaid, SNAP/Food Stamps, etc.) in the past three years. Also, 19% of all teachers have no health insurance from any source.

- **Low wages affect the ability of teachers to support their own families and children.**

In 2015, 11% reported that they worked a second job, and 56% of all teachers have a family income of less than \$30,000 per year.

- **Low compensation is the top reason why early childhood education teachers are leaving the field.** Statewide, 19% of full-time teachers left their center and 16% of full-time assistant teachers left their center last year. 13% of directors, 19% of teachers, and 21% of assistant teacher said they did not think they would be in the field in three years. "Better pay" was listed as the number one incentive to keep them in the field with "better benefits" listed as number two by both teachers and assistants.

- **Although the current Child Care WAGES® program has demonstrated success in supporting higher education levels, reducing turnover and increasing teacher retention, it is not available statewide.** The Child Care WAGES® program is not statewide, and is only available in 59 counties through support from local Smart Start Partnerships for Children at their discretion. In FY2015, only 3,809 early childhood teachers—just 14% of the total early education teaching workforce—received these WAGES® salary supplements.

Here's The Solution: Establish a State-level Salary Supplement Program Now!