



Expand Child Care WAGE\$ Program Statewide

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Child Care WAGE\$ Program?

The Child Care WAGE\$® Program provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children between the ages of birth to five in participating counties. The program is operated by Child Care Services Association (CCSA), and funding for the salary supplements is provided by local Smart Start Partnerships. The Division of Child Development and Early Education funds the CCSA administrative costs. For more information, visit <https://www.childcareservices.org/programs/wages/>.

Does the state pay for the Child Care WAGE\$ Program?

Currently, the state does not pay for this program directly. Rather, the state provides funding to the NC Partnership for Children and local Smart Start Partnerships can opt to pay for the program in their own county.

Why doesn't my county have the Child Care WAGE\$ program? How many Counties already have the Child Care WAGE\$ Program?

Child Care WAGE\$ availability depends on funding provided by local Smart Start Partnerships. 58 counties have this program because their local Smart Start Partnership has elected to fund the program with their current Smart Start allocation. Altogether, it serves about 3,700 early educators. See the attached map.

How much will it cost to take the Child Care WAGE\$ Program statewide and have it available in all 100 counties?

We estimate that it will cost about \$35 million per year to be able to serve every eligible early educator who wants to participate in the program. This would serve about 18,000 early educators.

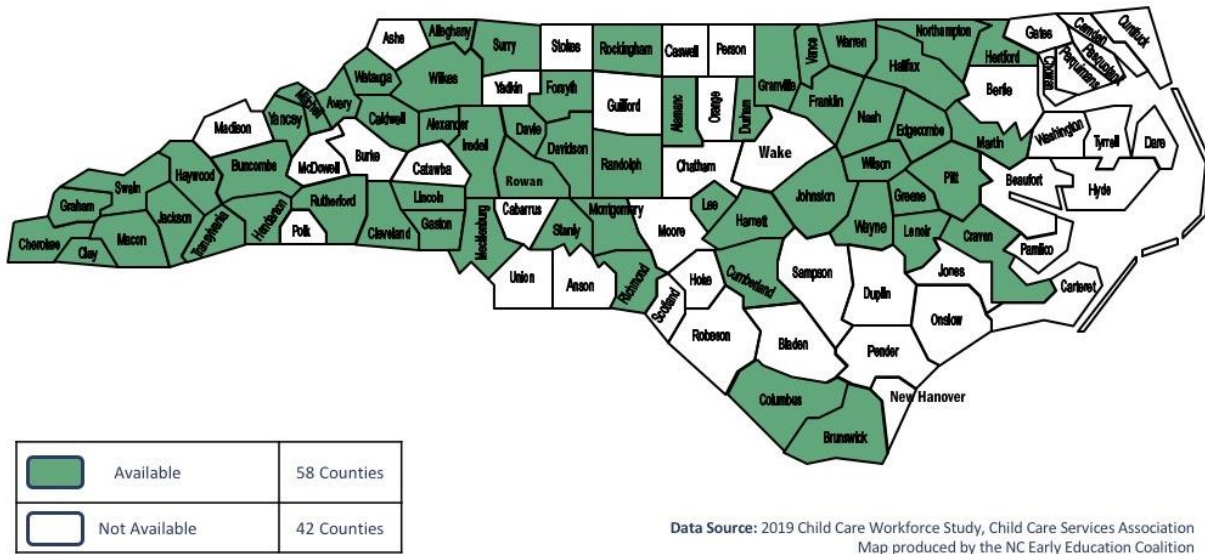
How will the state pay for this?

North Carolina will receive \$1.3 billion in child care relief funds through the federal American Rescue Plan, and a portion of this funding could be used to expand the Child Care WAGE\$ Program to every county for two years. After that period, the state could use federal and/or state general fund appropriations to continue to pay for it.

Why can't child care programs just pay their teachers better?

Child care programs operate on razor-thin margins and just don't have the resources to pay teachers more. During the pandemic, child care programs' costs have increased by 19% due to increased staffing requirements for social distancing, additional cleaning, and other measures to keep children and staff safe. Most programs still have high vacancy rates, which means they aren't bringing in enough revenue from parent tuition to cover their operating costs. Child care programs simply can't compete with Amazon, Walmart and other retailers that pay \$15.00 or more per hour. Unlike other industries, child care programs can't just raise the cost of their product and pass the higher costs on to consumers in order to increase wages. Parents can't afford to pay more for child care, which is already higher than the cost of public college tuition.

Child Care WAGE\$ Program Availability 2021



Alamance	Yes	Duplin	no	Mitchell	yes	Vance	yes
Alexander	Yes	Durham	yes	Montgomery	yes	Wake	no
Alleghany	Yes	Edgecombe	yes	Moore	no	Warren	yes
Anson	No	Forsyth	yes	Nash	yes	Washington	no
Ashe	No	Franklin	yes	New Hanover	no	Watauga	yes
Avery	Yes	Gaston	yes	Northampton	yes	Wayne	yes
Beaufort	No	Gates	no	Onslow	no	Wilkes	yes
Bertie	No	Graham	yes	Orange	no	Wilson	yes
Bladen	No	Granville	yes	Pamlico	no	Yadkin	no
Brunswick	yes	Greene	yes	Pasquotank	no	Yancey	yes
Buncombe	yes	Guilford	no	Pender	no		
Burke	no	Halifax	yes	Perquimans	no		
Cabarrus	no	Harnett	yes	Person	no		
Caldwell	yes	Haywood	yes	Pitt	yes		
Camden	no	Henderson	yes	Polk	no		
Carteret	no	Hertford	yes	Randolph	yes		
Caswell	no	Hoke	no	Richmond	yes		
Catawba	no	Hyde	no	Robeson	no		
Chatham	no	Iredell	yes	Rockingham	yes		
Cherokee	yes	Jackson	yes	Rowan	yes		
Chowan	no	Johnston	yes	Rutherford	yes		
Clay	yes	Jones	no	Sampson	no		
Cleveland	yes	Lee	yes	Scotland	no		
Columbus	yes	Lenoir	yes	Stanly	yes		
Craven	yes	Lincoln	yes	Stokes	no		
Cumberland	yes	Macon	yes	Surry	yes		
Currituck	no	Madison	no	Swain	yes		
Dare	no	Martin	yes	Transylvania	yes		
Davidson	yes	McDowell	no	Tyrrell	no		
Davie	yes	Mecklenburg	yes	Union	no		