



QUALITY COUNTS

Striving for Five Star Early Learning



Quality Counts Child Care WAGES® Project, Miami-Dade Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Quality Counts Child Care WAGES® Project?

The *Quality Counts* Child Care WAGES® Project is designed to increase stability and improve child care quality by reducing turnover and encouraging continued education of child care practitioners (teachers and assistant teachers in child care programs). This program provides education-based salary supplements for low to moderate wage earners who work with young children ages birth to five.

Where does the funding come from?

The *Quality Counts* Child Care WAGES® Project in Miami-Dade County is funded by The Children's Trust and by the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. The Children's Forum is the licensee for Child Care WAGES® in Florida and currently administers this program in partnership with local funders.

Who is eligible to participate in the program?

Child care practitioners working at a Quality Counts (Quality Rating Improvement System - QRIS) site not operated by Head Start or the public schools working directly with children for at least 10 hours per week earning less than \$17.50 per hour may be eligible for a salary supplement if they have some formal child care training and/or education beyond a high school diploma. (*Note: Staff employed in Head Start centers operated by Miami-Dade County and/or programs operated by Miami-Dade County Public Schools are not eligible to participate at this time. Center directors do not qualify*).

How much can I receive through Quality Counts Child Care WAGES®?

The value of each salary supplement is determined by the level of education and the position held by the child care practitioner. For example, a teacher or family child care provider is eligible for a \$450 annual supplement for possessing a national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and can earn \$1,500 per year with an AS or AAS in Early Childhood Education. The amount of the supplement increases as the level of education increases. Wage supplements for part-time practitioners are prorated based on a 40-hour work week.

How do I sign up to participate in the program?

Interested child care practitioners must complete the Child Care WAGES® Florida application and provide verification of: (1) current employment in an eligible Quality Counts early learning program, (2) current salary, and (3) educational credential and/or unofficial transcripts.

When will I receive a check?

Each participant who meets the requirements for the *Quality Counts* Child Care WAGES® Project and remains eligible will receive a supplement check in the seventh month, after the completion of a six-month commitment period. The commitment period means that the practitioner has remained continuously employed in their program. The commitment period is established for each individual practitioner based on the application date, date of employment and documentation of education. The amount of the salary supplement is based on one-half of the annual award amount and reflects the schedule worked during the six-month period (part-time prorated or full-time). All payments are contingent upon funding availability.

Before checks can be issued, project staff must verify continuous employment with their employer for the preceding six months. Once approved for a supplemental payment, participants who remain in the same child care program do not need to reapply in order to receive future supplement checks. Participants who leave their place of employment must re-establish eligibility for WAGES®.

How can I increase the amount of money I receive through Child Care WAGES®?

Child care practitioners participating in the *Quality Counts* Child Care WAGES® Project may increase their supplement award amounts by successfully completing additional education. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program offers scholarships to child care practitioners to earn credentials or degrees in early childhood education. Scholarship funding for approved educational activities is also available from The Children's Trust **Quality Counts Career Center** to assist child care practitioners in Miami-Dade County who want to increase their educational qualifications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Children's Forum: (888) 352-4453
Quality Counts Office: (305) 646-7242
www.thechildrensforum.com/WAGES