

April 30, 2024  
Debra Vickers  
In support of H-7251

My name is Deb Vickers and I am an early childhood educational coordinator. I am advocating for the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act. Early childhood funding is imperative for organizations to retain staff and to provide quality care and education for our children.

I started in this field when I was in High School. This field has always been a passion for me. I love working with children and being a part of educating our future population. Later in life I went back to school and got my BA in Early Childhood. I am now working on my Masters.

One of the biggest challenges for us right now is gaining and retaining qualified staff. Many people have opted to work for places like McDonalds and other chains because the pay is much more, and the work is less demanding.

Step Up to Wages has helped me personally to stay in the field that I love. I watch many of our teachers struggle daily to pay their living expenses. Many of them are dedicated and do not want to leave the field, but unfortunately, they have no choice due to low wages. These payments help them to hold their heads above water and stay in the field they love. Our children benefit from having consistent teachers that stay with them and are dedicated to their education.

The time between birth and age three is when children have rapid brain development. Their experiences that they have with us as educators affect the development of the brain, which provides a foundation for future learning, behavior, and health. We help them to develop the skills that they need to become well-functioning adults. Our field is Rhode Islands future.

Thank you,

Debra Vickers