



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



Right from the
Start

April 30, 2024

The Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (RIAEYC) voices its strong support for H7251 (Donovan), the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will continue two initiatives that are helping early care and education programs recruit and retain early educators that will END in the Summer 2024 without continued funding:

1. The Rhode Island Child Care WAGE\$ Program: providing significant wage supplements (ranging from \$3,000/year for a CDA credential to \$12,000/year for a bachelor's degree in early childhood education) to 273 credentialed early educators who earn less than \$23/hour and work on the frontlines in early learning programs. Child Care WAGE\$ has been shown to dramatically improve retention of credentialed early educators and improve the quality of care available to children. Current retention rate of educators receiving this supplement is 98%!
2. The Rhode Island Child Care Pandemic Retention bonuses: providing \$750/quarter to all staff of all licensed child care programs for more than two years – more than 4,000 individuals per quarter. This bill would continue these retention bonus payments only for individuals who work on the frontlines directly with children, earn less than \$23/hour, and have been consistently receiving a payment. Failure to continue these programs will result in more closed classrooms, increased child care tuition for private-paying families, and longer waiting lists.

Simply put, these programs have been proven successful to date and they are keeping educators in classrooms and preventing further closures. The economic premise is simple: **Better-staffed early care and education programs will increase the supply of child care, allowing more parents to re-enter and remain in the workforce. We are the workforce that supports the workforce of Rhode Island.**

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa A. Hildebrand".

Lisa A. Hildebrand, M.A.
Executive Director, RIAEYC