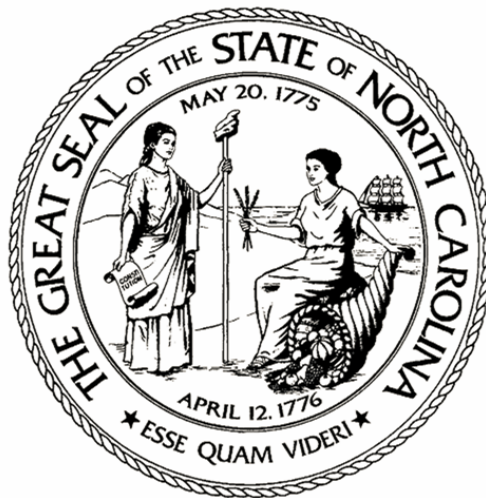


**Report on Specified Criteria after DHHS Resumes Environmental
Rating Scale (ERS) (Star Rating) Assessments for Licensed Child
Care Facilities**

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5



Report to

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services

By

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

June 7, 2023

Background

Section 2.5 of S.L. 2021-127 directs DHHS to submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services that contains the following information from June 30, 2021, to January 31, 2023:

- (1) Number of new high school Early Childhood Career and Technical Pathways programs across the State.
- (2) New community college and university courses that award college credit towards a degree in early childhood based on work experience.
- (3) New community college and university courses that allow college credits for taking online health, safety, and nutrition training modules.
- (4) Number of enrollees in the Early Childhood and Infant-Toddler Certificate Programs, number of graduates from the programs with certificates, and the increase in the number of enrollees and graduates from the programs.
- (5) Number of early childhood educators using T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships to pay for college tuition and the increase in the number of early childhood educators using T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to pay for college tuition.
- (6) Availability of WAGE\$ salary supplement program by county, the number of early childhood educators working toward degrees in early childhood education who received salary supplements from WAGE\$, and the increase in the number of early childhood educators receiving WAGE\$ salary supplements.
- (7) Number and percentage increase of early childhood educators with associate degrees in early childhood education.
- (8) The number and percentage increase of early childhood educators with associate degrees between June 30, 2016, and June 30, 2021.

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5.(1): Number of new high school Early Childhood Career and Technical Pathways programs across the State.

- Between June 30, 2021, and January 31, 2023, the number of new high school Early Childhood Career and Technical Pathway programs increased by 35.

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5.(2): New community college and university courses that award college credit towards a degree in early childhood based on work experience.

- Between June 30, 2021, and January 31, 2023, there were 3 new community college courses that award college credit towards a degree in early childhood for students who successfully complete the required Portfolio for Life and Work Experience (EDU 119, EDU 130, and EDU 159).

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5.(3): New community college and university courses that allow college credits for taking online health, safety, and nutrition training modules.

- There was 1 new community college course created that allows college credits for taking online health, safety, and nutrition training modules between June 30, 2021, and January 31, 2023. There are no policies or code that allow college credit for prior learning at the University level.

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5.(4): Number of enrollees in the Early Childhood and Infant-Toddler Certificate Programs, number of graduates from the programs with certificates, and the increase in the number of enrollees and graduates from the programs.

- Between June 30, 2021 and January 31, 2023, the number of enrollees in Early Childhood associate degree Programs increased by 7.1%. Enrollment increased in the Early Childhood Certificate programs by 13.6% and increased in the Infant Toddler Certificate programs by 7.8%.
- Graduation data for the community colleges is provided based on graduates in an academic year. Graduation data for the 2022-2023 is not available currently so graduation data for the time period of June 30, 2021 and January 31, 2023, is not available.

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5.(5): Number of early childhood educators using T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships to pay for college tuition and the increase in the number of early childhood educators using T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to pay for college tuition.

- On June 30, 2021, 1,118 early childhood educators were using T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships to pay for college tuition.
- By 1/31/2023, 1,889 early childhood educators have used a T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to pay for college tuition, a 40.8% increase in participation.
- Currently there are 2,023 early childhood educators using T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships to pay for college tuition, an almost 45% increase.

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5.(6): Availability of WAGE\$ salary supplement program by county, the number of early childhood educators working toward degrees in early childhood education who received salary supplements from WAGE\$, and the increase in the number of early childhood educators receiving WAGE\$ salary supplements.

Alamance	Gaston	Wilkes
Alexander	Graham	Wilson
Alleghany	Granville	Yadkin
Avery	Greene	Yancey
Brunswick	Guilford	Martin
Buncombe	Halifax	Mecklenburg
Burke	Harnett	Mitchell
Cabarrus	Haywood	Montgomery
Caldwell	Henderson	Moore
Cherokee	Hertford	Nash
Clay	Iredell	Northampton
Cleveland	Jackson	Pitt
Columbus	Johnston	Randolph
Craven	Lee	Richmond
Cumberland	Lenoir	Rockingham
Davidson	Lincoln	Rowan
Davie	Macon Transylvania	Rutherford
Durham	Union	Stanly
Edgecombe	Vance	Surry
Forsyth	Warren	Swain
Franklin	Wayne	

- Most of the WAGE\$ participants already have degrees, particularly since they must advance up the scale to retain their eligibility until they obtain a degree. Those who do not yet have degrees represent a smaller percentage of program participants. Out of the 1,440 participants at temporary eligibility levels (which include degrees *without* significant early childhood coursework), 655 (45%) submitted coursework to verify their pursuit of education during this time frame.
- WAGE\$ pays participants annually based on the funding available and the counties that have elected to participate, making it difficult to quantify a specific year-to-year increase during this overall time frame.

As of the end of FY21, (June 30, 2021) 3,751 early childhood educators received WAGE\$ salary supplements. For FY22 (ending June 30, 2022) 4,018 early childhood educators received WAGE\$ salary supplements and as of January 31, 2023, which represents approximately half of the current fiscal year, 3,737 have received these supplemental payments. (Please note that participants typically receive 2 payments per year and some additional applicants are expected to be included in the year-end number for this fiscal year.)

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5.(7): Number and percentage increase of early childhood educators with associate degrees in early childhood education.

- Graduation numbers for NC Community Colleges are reported based on academic year. The percentage of increase in educators with associate degrees in early childhood education cannot be accurately reported for the dates between June 30, 2021 and January 31, 2023, because complete graduation data for the 2022-2023 academic year will not be available until the academic year ends.

Session Law 2021-127, Section 2.5.(8): The number and percentage increase of early childhood educators with associate degrees between June 30, 2016, and June 30, 2021.

- The number of graduates of the Early Childhood associate degree declined between 2016-2017 and 2019-2020 academic years. Between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, there was an 8% increase of graduates with associate degree in early childhood education.