



It's Not Just for States – The Children's Trust

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There are now 24 statewide T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program (T.E.A.C.H.) and Child Care WAGE\$® programs supporting early childhood educators to gain more education and improve their compensation. If your state does not have a state-wide program, local funders still have the opportunity to establish a locally or regionally based administrative home to manage the investment being made in their local early education workforce community(ies).

There are a growing number of localities that are passing ballot initiatives to increase revenue dedicated to early childhood education, an opportunity to build a new or expand an existing T.E.A.C.H. and/or WAGE\$ program. Miami-Dade County in Florida is one example of a locality that is expanding the reach of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ (called Incentive\$ in Florida). Florida has “special taxing districts” which provide a revenue stream passed by local voters to increase access to and improve the quality of services for children and families. [The Children's Forum](#) is the state administrator for T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ and The Children's Trust, a special taxing district, is the funder of the local programs to support more early childhood educators.

[The Children's Trust](#) was created through a local ballot initiative and has the authority to levy a property tax whose revenue is dedicated to improving the lives of children and families, including early childhood education. Its Thrive by 5 program includes T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$/Incentive\$. In addition to the tuition assistance and counseling for success in higher education, The Children's Trust works with its partners to provide educators with ESL classes, document translation, and developed and offers a bilingual 18-credit program at Miami Dade College and Florida International University. Now they are expanding their efforts to the Haitian Creole-speaking providers. An early learning community provider advisory group provides an inclusive process for determining how resources match up with the professional growth, recruitment, compensation, and retention of early childhood education.

While not every locality has access to the size of resources available in this special taxing district, Rachel Spector, Associate Director Programs at The Children's Trust advises others, “Don't be afraid to start small. The early efforts are a pathway to a robust system of scholarships and retention awards. Be very diligent about tracking data and outcomes, which is important to the program but also attracts additional funders.”

