

TEACH Early Childhood® Iowa

FY24 RESULTS

From birth to age eight a child's brain is developing faster than at any other time in their life. The experiences a child has in those first eight years provide a foundation for their future. Children who receive high quality early learning experiences are more likely to live healthier lives, earn higher wages and contribute to society.

The quality of early care and education a child receives is directly linked to the education and compensation of early educators. In Iowa, many early educators do not have higher education degrees and many earn less than \$15 an hour. The TEACH Early Childhood® Program awards educational scholarships to early education professionals to address the key issues of under-education, poor compensation and high turnover in the workforce. All TEACH Early Childhood® scholarships link increased education with higher compensation and retention. Scholarship recipients and their sponsoring early care and education programs share the cost.

In Iowa, **Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children** administers the TEACH Early Childhood® Program. In FY24, the program helped **560** early education professionals increase their education. TEACH recipients show powerful dedication to remaining in their professions with turnover rates far less than the national average. This year alone, **23,228** of Iowa's children were cared for in settings who participated in TEACH.

EDUCATION

- Recipients on associate degree scholarships completed an average of **12** credits per contract.
- Recipients on bachelor's degree scholarships completed an average of **15.50** credits per contract.
- Recipients in Iowa completed more than **5,000** credit hours.
- The average grade point average (GPA) for a recipient on an associate degree scholarship was **3.35**.
- The average GPA for a recipient on a bachelor's degree scholarship was **3.45**.

COMPENSATION

- The average hourly wage of a teacher on a TEACH scholarship was **\$15.72**.
- The average increase in earnings for a recipient on an associate degree scholarship was **18%**.
- The average increase in earnings for a recipient on a bachelor's degree scholarship was **19%**.

RETENTION

- For associate degree scholarship recipients, the average retention rate was **95%**.
- For bachelor's degree scholarship recipients, the average retention rate was **92%**.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- **81.4%** of recipients worked with 3-5-year-old children.
- **59.3%** of recipients worked with children less than 3 years old.
- **15.7%** of recipients were people of color and/or Latinx, and an overwhelming majority of all recipients were women.
- Recipients attended one of **13** community colleges or **12** universities offering early childhood degree programs in Iowa.

PERSONAL IMPACT

- In a survey of recipients, **99%** said they would recommend TEACH to their peers, and **97%** of their employers would recommend TEACH.

The TEACH Early Childhood® Program is heralded by experts in the field as a national leader in creating solutions for early childhood education workforce challenges. National outcomes can be found in the TEACH Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE\$® 2023-2024 Annual National Program Report.

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FY24 VOICES FROM THE FIELD



Mary Loftus

My name is Mary Loftus, and I am a preschool teacher at Stella Sanford Child Development Center in Sioux City, IA. I have worked in the early childhood field for 20 years, and in that time, the TEACH Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGES® programs advanced my career when I didn't think it would be possible. Without these programs, I wouldn't be doing what I am doing today.

My career at Stella began in 2003 when I graduated with an associate degree from Western Iowa Tech Community College in early childhood education, after following a dream to work with young children. I completed my field experiences at Stella and was offered a position as a floater when I graduated. After a couple of years, I applied for a position as the lead teacher in the 2-year-old classroom, where I enjoyed 6 years of watching the youngest in our center grow. When my older children started

school, I took a position in the preschool room as an assistant, as my associate's degree was not enough to put me in a lead teaching position. I was content as an assistant, but there was a little something inside of me that wanted to be more. I knew I had the potential, but financially I was held back. In 2015, that all changed when a counselor from Iowa AEYC walked into the center and told us about the TEACH and WAGES programs.

It was a great feeling knowing I would be getting a bonus check from WAGES every 6 months for the work I'd already put in to make myself a better educator, as we know this field is not known for its high financial payout. My stipend checks have been put towards a variety of things, depending on what stage in life my family has been at when it arrived. Some examples are, back to school clothes, a new bathtub for our renovated bathroom after a pipe had burst in our basement, and we put some away into savings when we knew I'd be busy for 20 weeks with student teaching.

With the TEACH Early Childhood® scholarship, I was being given a chance to achieve something I never imagined. As a mom of two young children, I knew we couldn't afford for me to go back to school on my child care wage and my husband's income. The TEACH scholarship was the catalyst that launched me to earn a bachelor's degree. In May 2023, I graduated from Buena Vista University with a bachelor's in Elementary Education with Reading and Pre-K endorsements. I am now qualified to be a Preschool Teacher with the Sioux City Preschool Initiative, and am the lead teacher in the preschool classroom where I was formerly the assistant. Not only did earning my degree advance my career, but it gave me the personal satisfaction that I could achieve this goal that once felt out of reach.