

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 Rhode Island, many early educators do not have higher education degrees and many earn less than \$15 an hour. The T.E.A.C.H. 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 T.E.A.C.H. 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 Rhode Island, **Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children** administers the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Program. In FY23, the program helped **92** early education professionals increase their education. T.E.A.C.H. recipients show powerful dedication to remaining in their professions with turnover rates far less than the national average. This year alone, **4,047** of Rhode Island's children were cared for in settings who participated in T.E.A.C.H.

### Education

- Recipients on associate degree scholarships completed an average of **14.21** credits per contract.
- Recipients on bachelor's degree scholarships completed an average of **14.71** credits per contract.
- Recipients in Rhode Island completed more than **725** credit hours.
- The average grade point average (GPA) for a recipient on an associate degree scholarship was **3.5**.
- The average GPA for a recipient on a bachelor's degree scholarship was **3.47**.

### Compensation

- The average hourly wage of a teacher on a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship was **\$16.36**.
- The average increase in earnings for a recipient on an associate degree scholarship was **15%**.
- The average increase in earnings for a recipient on a bachelor's degree scholarship was **15%**.

### Retention

- For associate degree scholarship recipients, the average retention rate was **98%**.
- For bachelor's degree scholarship recipients, the average retention rate was **81%**.

### Demographics

- **91.3%** of recipients worked with 3-5-year-old children.
- **51.1%** of recipients worked with children less than 3 years old.
- **57.6%** of recipients were people of color and/or Latinx, and an overwhelming majority of all recipients were women.
- Recipients attended the **1** community colleges or **2** universities offering early childhood degree programs in Rhode Island.

### Personal Impact

- In previous years, **97%** of recipients said they would recommend T.E.A.C.H. to their peers, and **95%** of their employers would recommend T.E.A.C.H.

The T.E.A.C.H. 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 T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGES® 2022-2023 Annual National Program Report.





## T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Rhode Island FY23 Voices From the Field



"At 41 I decided to go back to school for my Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education. I had recently made the career switch from retail management to working with young children. In my mind if you are going to switch careers, you need to push yourself to learn all you can, as quickly as you can. I have never been one to just sit and let the information find me.

I went for a consultation at Rhode Island College, determined on going back to school, but having no idea of how I was going to afford it. My advisor told me about the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. She said that my company would most likely support it and that I should look into it. Armed with this new information, I went home relieved as I read about T.E.A.C.H. T.E.A.C.H. would enable me to attend school, work, and not put strain on my finances.

I pursued this straight away and within a few weeks I was on my way to this new adventure. I entered college in September 2019 and never looked back. There were some tears and fears through the process around my grades. I was able to complete three and a half years of school for less than \$1,000 out of pocket.

Now, I have my degree, a job I love, a career to build and some wonderful friends I made along the way. I honestly don't know how I would have managed without T.E.A.C.H. They helped build me up, support me financially, and even acknowledged me when I completed my degree. It has been a dream partnership and I can honestly say that T.E.A.C.H. changed my life."

**- J. Lea Plante, T.E.A.C.H. Graduate**



At a time where I felt lost, defeated in finishing my degree and in search of a role in my career, I stumbled upon the T.E.A.C.H. program. I was able to work and create my own schedule at the child care facility and it did not affect my position, I stayed lead. I was able to work and go to school on my time. I didn't have to worry about getting the funds for books and supplies, gas money, or tuition bills, these were covered. It gave me the motivation and support system to continue my studies, receiving good grades. I will never forget when I was advocating for test alternatives at my college. In the middle of the pandemic, tests were getting canceled or changed, making students stressed. When I advocated for myself and the other students in my cohort I had the support of the T.E.A.C.H. team.

I was recognized for earning my degree and my advocacy efforts. Being a T.E.A.C.H. scholar and mentor of other T.E.A.C.H. scholars reminds me that together, we can! We can reach our goals, we can work together, and we can create a future for educators to feel empowered and secure in their choices. Being able to delegate work and school can be overwhelming at times, but having a team that supports you along the way helps make your dreams become reality!

**- Hailey L'Heureux, T.E.A.C.H. Graduate**



Yocasta Castro has been an early childhood educator for more than 15 years and in 2018, she jumped at the opportunity to continue her studies with scholarship support from T.E.A.C.H. As a single mother, Yocasta has had to balance her determination to finish school with meeting the needs of her son. This year, Yocasta, submitted testimony to legislators in support of additional investments and better compensation for our early childhood field. Yocasta continues to stay focused and committed to obtaining her associate degree in early childhood education despite the challenges she has had to face along the way.

**- Yocasta Castro, T.E.A.C.H. Scholar**

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