



NEWS RELEASE

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Scholarship Program in Florida Celebrates 10 Years of Service *T.E.A.C.H. serves more than 3,000 early care and education teachers statewide*

TALLAHASSEE, FL (August 14, 2008) – This year, the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, which helps to improve the education, compensation and retention of the early childhood work force, is celebrating 10 years of service in Florida. Administered through the Children's Forum and funded through The Agency for Workforce Innovation-Office of Early Learning, T.E.A.C.H. provides scholarships for early care educators and center directors to work towards earning an Associate's degree or credentials in early childhood education.

T.E.A.C.H. provides the majority of college tuition and books, but there is also a partnership for the sharing of expenses by the teacher receiving the scholarship and the sponsoring child care center or family child care home which represents a three-way commitment. T.E.A.C.H. participants receive a stipend for travel or internet access, three hours of paid release time while classes are in session and bonuses once their scholarship contract is complete. In turn, they agree to continue employment in their sponsoring early childhood facility for a specific period of time (typically one year). In most cases, T.E.A.C.H. reimburses a portion of the costs for child care facilities to provide release time for scholarship recipients.

"The average rate of compensation for teachers in early care and education programs is around \$9 per hour and more than 30 percent of individuals employed in a child care setting will leave within the first year of employment," said Lori Stegmeyer, Director of Early Childhood Workforce Initiatives at the Children's Forum. "Without T.E.A.C.H., many teachers would never be able to enhance their education, receive an increase in pay or remain employed which all reflect positive outcomes for young children."

To date, 22,084 T.E.A.C.H. scholarships have been awarded to 14,633 participants. Of these recipients, 5,683 have earned their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or equivalent and 435 have graduated

with their Associate degree. In addition, T.E.A.C.H. participants have a low turnover rate compared to the field in general.

“Early learning programs, teachers and children all benefit from T.E.A.C.H.,” said Dr. Brittany Birken, Director of the Agency for Workforce Innovation’s Office of Early Learning. “Early care and education programs experience reduced turnover, teachers are better compensated through their participation in the program and children receive quality care from teachers who are specialists in early childhood education and child development.”

For more information about T.E.A.C.H, please call 877-FL-TEACH or visit www.thechildrensforum.com/teach.htm

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About the Children’s Forum

The Children’s Forum is a statewide, not-for-profit organization with an uncompromising vision to make Florida a state where children grow and thrive in quality environments and where families have access to information, resources, and options to assist them in their parenting roles. Through a broad array of programs, research, advocacy, training and education, the Forum is committed to achieving our vision by targeting and supporting those who care for and educate our children daily; the early care and education workforce.

About the Agency for Workforce Innovation

The Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) is Florida’s lead workforce agency and directly administers the state’s various workforce and unemployment programs, as well as the Office of Early Learning. Workforce development policy and guidance are provided by Workforce Florida, Inc. Partnering together, along with the 24 Regional Workforce Boards that deliver services through 88 One-Stop Career Centers around the state, they compose the Employ Florida network.

AWI’s Office of Early Learning works to support families and ensure children have quality care and early learning opportunities. The Agency provides state-level support and direction for early learning professionals and practitioners. The state’s 31 early learning coalitions work within communities providing early learning support services to families and child care providers.