

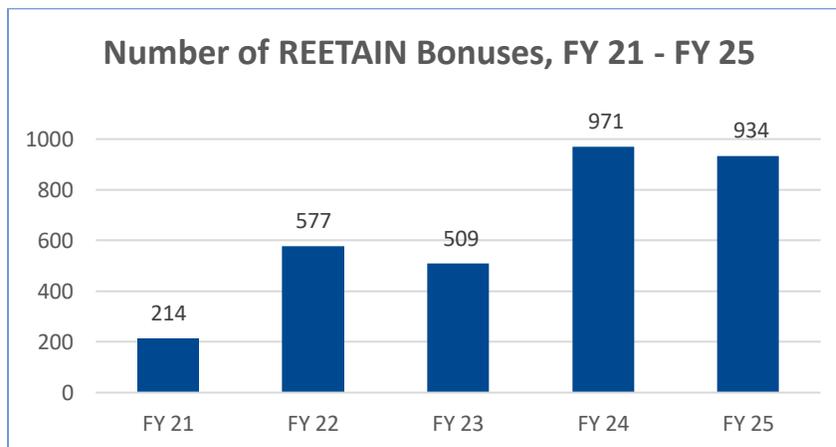


REETAIN Bonus Program

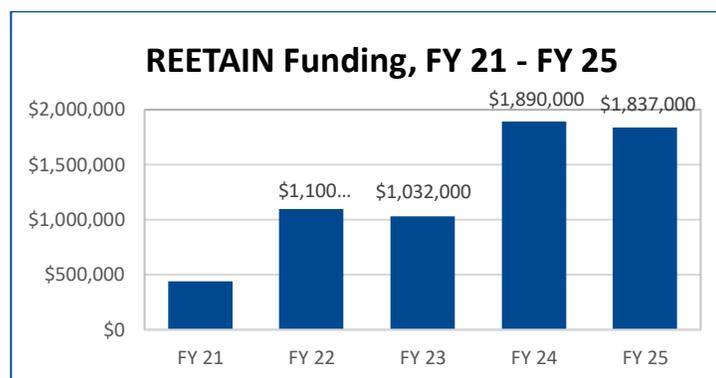
The REETAIN Bonus program (Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now) helps supplement income for early childhood educators as they work to establish a career in the field. The goal of this program is to keep qualified educators in the early childhood field. REETAIN bonuses can be used for program supplies, professional development, or personal expenses.

The Reach:

- Since 2003, REETAIN has awarded grants to over 5,200 early childhood and school-age care professionals with degrees or credentials. In Fiscal Year 2025,* 576 center child care staff and 358 family child care staff received bonuses.



- Increased funding allowed the program to award many more bonuses in FY 2024 and 2025 than in previous years.
- Bonuses ranged between \$500 and \$3,000 depending on degree or credential. The average bonus in FY 2025 was approximately \$2,000.



* July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025

The Results:

In a 2019 survey of REETAIN recipients conducted by Child Trends, over half reported that the grant had a strong or very strong influence on their decision to remain in the field. Interview respondents also indicated that funds from the REETAIN program relieved considerable stress by helping them pay bills and other expenses and allowing them to focus more easily on their work.¹ Bonuses are now available annually and increase for higher levels of education. In 2025, the REETAIN application process was streamlined so that applicants can use the Grants and Scholarships Application Portal to create an account and apply online.

The Need:

- **Low Wages.** Child care workers are underpaid. In 2022, the median wage for Minnesota early educators was \$13.66 an hour. This compares to an overall median wage of almost \$25, and a median wage of \$34 for elementary and middle school teachers. The poverty rate for early educators in Minnesota was 10.8% percent, higher than for all Minnesota workers (5.5%) and 6.8 times higher than for K-8 teachers (1.6%).²
- **Turnover.** Turnover in the child care workforce remains high. In centers, turnover is estimated to be around 30% overall, with turnover among aides (the lowest paid workers) at 38%.³ Family child care owners continue to leave the field as well; Minnesota has had a 42% decrease in family child care businesses over the past decade.

REETAIN bonuses supplement wages, and bonus recipients commit to remaining in their current position or business for at least one year after the grant is awarded.

Testimonials:

"The bonus is really a great one and I am very thankful to have been granted it. Thank you to everyone involved that made this bonus possible for us child care workers!"

"REETAIN bonuses are so helpful, as early childhood teachers do not always get the pay they deserve!"

"Thank you so much for awarding me the bonus. It is really appreciated. When a person has worked professionally with children since 1979, and has been providing home childcare for the past 31 years, it means so much to be recognized...I feel blessed to be in a field that is being recognized as an important profession."

More testimonials from REETAIN recipients in this video: youtu.be/c0Xq6QetD_c

¹ Child Trends. Evaluation of R.E.E.T.A.I.N., Minnesota's Child Care Workforce Retention Program. Accessed January 7, 2022 at www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Evaluation-of-REETAIN-Final-Report_ChildTrends_Jan2019.pdf

² Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. State profiles - Minnesota. Accessed on December 22, 2025 at <https://csce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2024/states/minnesota/>

³ Wilder Research. Executive Summary: Minnesota's Early Childhood Educators 2023 Statewide Study of the Demographics, Workforce Supports, and Professional Development Needs of the Early Care and Education Workforce. Accessed December 22, 2025 at www.wilder.org/wp-content/pdf-file/EarlyCare_EducationWorkforce_Minnesota_Report_12-23.pdf