

Early Childhood Priorities for the 2019 North Carolina Legislative Session

Our early childhood policy priorities for the 2019 legislative session focus on increasing opportunities for early learning, healthy beginnings, and supporting families to promote young children’s healthy development and learning. We continue to promote policies to advance the quality, availability, and affordability of North Carolina’s early education system, which currently serves over 250,000 young children and their families. Our policy priorities are actionable, evidenced-based, and solution-oriented and will create the best outcomes in health, education, and economic well-being for everyone in North Carolina.

Early Education Policy and Funding

Continue to strengthen policies and expand funding for the early education system including its three key programs - Smart Start, NC Pre-K, and Child Care Subsidies - and the state’s nationally renowned star-rated license system.

Smart Start

Expand funding for local partnerships for children to address urgent unmet needs in early learning, child health, and family support for young children and families.

NC Pre-K

Improve the NC Pre-K program by: 1) continuing expansion funding to eliminate the wait list and serve 75% of all eligible children; 2) increasing NC Pre-K rates to cover the cost of the program and to add increased capacity to serve additional children in all 100 counties; and 3) providing a stable, ongoing funding base through state and lottery funding that does not use federal TANF or CCDF child care subsidy funding for this purpose.

Child Care Subsidy and Child Care Deserts

- Expand state and federal funding for child care subsidies to serve the 30,000 eligible young children and their families currently on the wait list by fully investing all federal CCDF and TANF funding directly to child care subsidies.
- Create equitable access for infants and toddlers, ages 0-3, by requiring state and county wait lists to be maintained and reported by age, and requiring counties to proportionately serve children ages 0-3 when enrolling new children.
- Establish incentives to support the development and expansion of quality infant-toddler child care programs in “child care deserts” – communities which have disproportionately fewer 4- or 5-star child care programs serving young children and families.

Early Education Teacher Workforce

Increase the readiness and retention of the early education teacher workforce by improving minimum education standards and increasing compensation for lead teachers with degrees in early childhood education.

Child Health

Close the health insurance coverage gap for parents and their children to ensure positive health outcomes.

Home Visiting and Parenting Education

Support families by expanding opportunities for home visiting and parenting education programs.

Fact sheets and infographics with more information on these issues are available upon request or at the Coalition’s website: www.ncearlyeducationcoalition.org.

For more information contact:

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