

Early Childhood Education Issues, Challenges and Advocacy Opportunities

March 1, 2019



**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**

The NC Early Education Coalition is a proud partner in the national ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ campaign and in the Pritzker Children's Initiative's National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.

Goals for the Webinar

- Provide an overview of early childhood education issues, and challenges, and advocacy solutions for 2019
- Encourage you to join in the advocacy efforts to move these issues across the finish line during the 2019 legislative session.

2019 Early Childhood Education Issues

NC Early Education Coalition Priorities 2019

- Increase child care subsidy funding
- Advance the early childhood teaching workforce
- Expand infant toddler child care programs – child care deserts
- Expand NC Pre-K and address capacity issues

Issue: Increase Child Care Subsidy Funding

Why Is this Important to Do Now?

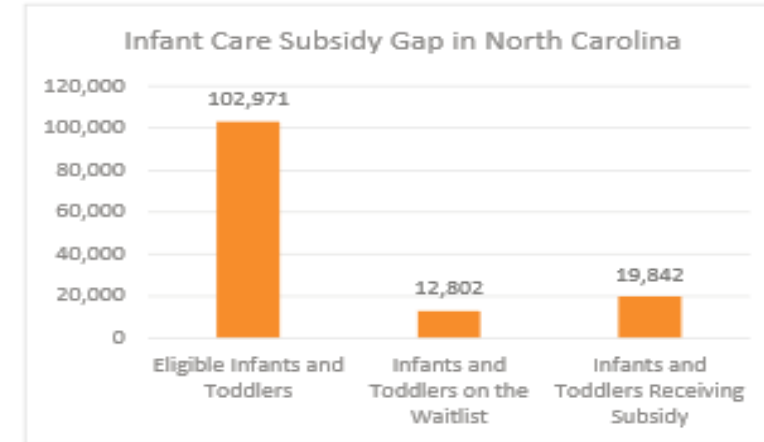
A shortage of child care subsidy funding exists for all age children 0-5, and especially for families of infants and toddlers.

• Waiting List

- There are 29,000 children are on the child care subsidy wait list.
- 56% of children under 6 on the subsidy waitlist are infants and toddlers.

• Subsidy Eligibility Gap

- There are over 200,000 children ages 0-5 who are eligible for child care subsidies – but just 44,379 children (22%) received services in 2018.
- Only 19% of all eligible infants and toddlers received subsidy in 2018.
- 97 of North Carolina's 100 counties serve less than one third of eligible infants and toddlers.



Child Care Subsidies = Two-generation Program

Supports working parents
AND

provides early learning opportunities
for disadvantaged children.

Get your county's Child Care Profile
on our website.

Challenges: Increase Child Care Subsidy Funding

- No spare federal funding to invest – new 2018 federal funding fully invested
- New funding = state funding or rearrangement of federal CCDF and TANF block grant funding
- No legislative champions for child care subsidy program
- Many think that this is a “public assistance program,” not an early education and family support program
- Popularity of NC Pre-K overshadows all other early childhood education

Opportunities: Increase Child Care Subsidy Funding

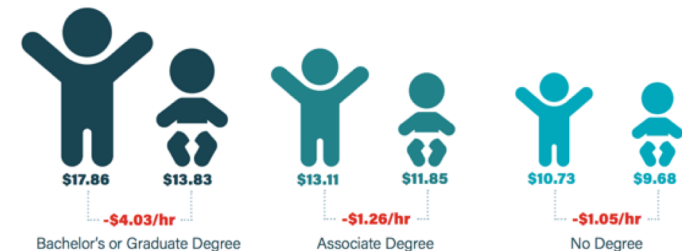
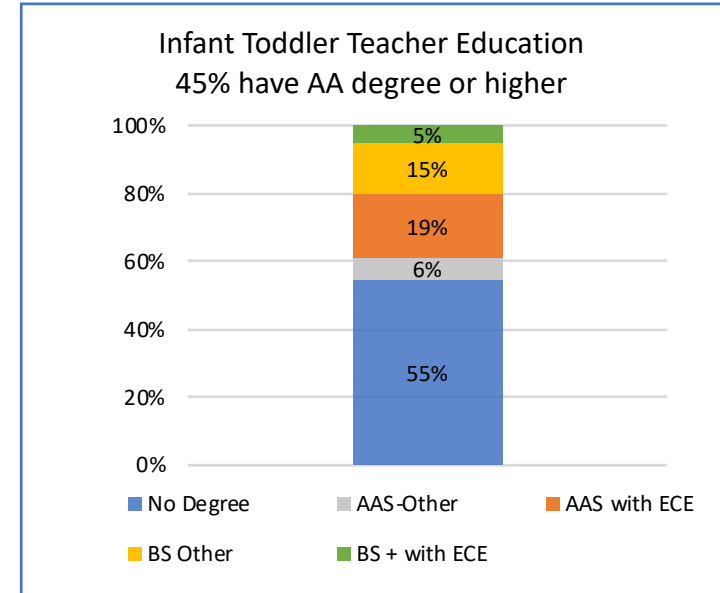
- U.S. Congress could increase child care subsidy funding and raise the visibility of the importance of child care subsidies
 - Expanding CCDF funding
 - Child Care for Working Families Act
- New Ready Nation Report out mid March
- What we need you to do now!
 - Parent voices – ask parents in your community to speak out if they are receiving child care subsidies or are on the waitlist
 - Child care providers voices – do child care programs in your community serve families on subsidy?
 - Ask early childhood organizations - Smart Start partnerships and business community – to talk about the importance of supporting working families.
- Sign our petition to tell NC Legislators to increase funding for subsidies!
 - <https://www.ncearlyeducationcoalition.org/action-alerts.html>

Issue: Ensure early childhood teachers have education, skills and compensation

Why Is this Important to Do Now?

Some early childhood teachers lack educational background and all are poorly compensated for the important work they do.

- Law: Only one course in early childhood education is required to be a lead teacher in early education. Yet two-thirds of early childhood teachers have at least AA degree.
- Even with degrees, teachers earn \$10.50 per hour – almost half rely on some type of public assistance.
- Infant toddlers teachers have the least education and are paid the least.
- Programs can't attract or retain qualified early educators.
- Turnover – one in three teachers say they will leave the field in 3 years.
- Increase supply of quality child care programs for working parents.



Challenges: Ensure early childhood teachers have education, skills and compensation

- Parents can't afford to pay more and early childhood programs don't have a way to pay teachers more, and early childhood teachers can't afford to work for such low wages.
- Early childhood education is mostly a private, small business.
- Early childhood teachers are invisible.
- Early childhood education is not seen as a gateway to success in K-12.
- Early childhood teachers in private child care aren't viewed as professionals
 - Currently NC only requires an early childhood credential = one course.
 - Only NC Pre-K program has educational standards.
- Reality is that 65% of all preschool teachers and 45% of infant-toddler teachers have associate degree or higher.
- Compensation programs (WAGE\$ and AWARD\$) are limited in scope.

Opportunities: Ensure early childhood teachers have education, skills and compensation

- **Reports:** NC Early Childhood Workforce Index, CCSA Workforce Study, Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce for Children 0 to 8 – document the issue.
- Early childhood teacher shortage - #1 reason why we need to address this issue.
- Compensation model programs exist – need to scale up.
 - Promote Infant/Toddler AWARD\$ program – demand the same for preschool teachers
 - Promote WAGE\$ program to local partnerships
- Raise the visibility of the early childhood teachers – videos, job shadowing, Facebook posts
- **What we need you to do now!**
 - Raise early education teacher voices – story collection, videos
 - Organize early childhood teachers in your communities
 - Write a letter/email to your legislator – use Coalition template with your own data
 - Ask DCDEE/Child Care Commission to replace the current Early Childhood Credential with Infant-Toddler or Preschool Certificates

Issue: Expand Quality Infant Toddler Child Care Programs

Why Is this Important to Do Now?

- North Carolina is a child care desert when it comes to quality infant toddler care. Desert = 3 parents competing for every available slot.
- There is an acute shortage of quality infant toddler care.
 - In North Carolina, there are 5 infants and toddlers for each licensed care slot.
 - 99 of North Carolina's 100 counties qualify as "child care deserts."
 - Quality care is even more scarce: 30 counties have five or fewer 4- and 5-star programs serving infants and toddlers.
 - Early Head Start programs is only available in half of all the counties.

Greatest Undersupply			
County	Infant-toddler population	Infant-toddler Capacity	Infants/Toddlers per Available Slot
Hyde	91	3	30.33
Camden	341	17	20.06
Yadkin	1275	67	19.03
Jones	296	18	16.44
Polk	454	28	16.21
Yancey	420	31	13.55
Onslow	11485	859	13.37
Warren	561	49	11.45
Currituck	684	65	10.52
Madison	463	46	10.07

Resources:

- Infant Toddler Subsidy Fact Sheet
- Quality Infant Toddler Availability Fact Sheet
- Get your new county's Child Care Profile

Challenges: Expand Quality Infant Toddler Child Care Programs

- Few 4- and 5-star programs in some counties.
- Need model programs – do you have quality programs in your county?
- Rates – even at 100% for programs serving children ages 0-5, rates are below the true cost of care.
- Early Head Start program will happen only when local EHS grantees apply for new funds.

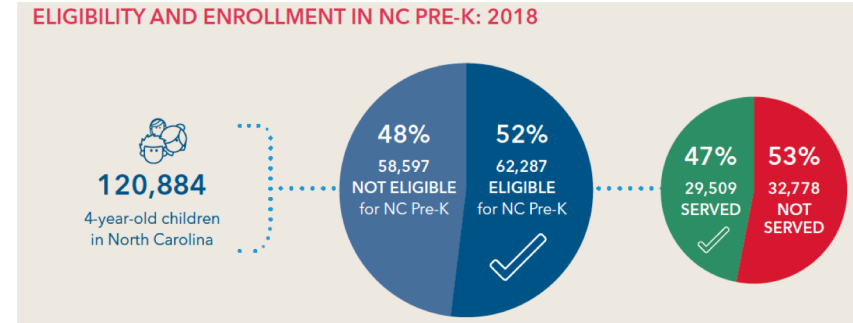
Opportunities: Expand Quality Infant Toddler Child Care Programs

- Center for American Progress Report.
- New federal funding for Early Head Start in March 2019.
- NC received PDG grant and will pilot 'NC Baby First' program – expansion possible 2020.
- Encourage local programs to raise their private rates take advantage of 100% rates.
- Identify and support model programs in your county.
- **What We Need You to Do Now!**
 - Write letter to Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Anna Carter, Director of DCDEE, and tell them your county needs more quality infant toddler programs.
 - Write your own legislator and document the lack of quality infant toddler programs in your county.
 - Host a policymaker tour of infant-toddler programs in your county.

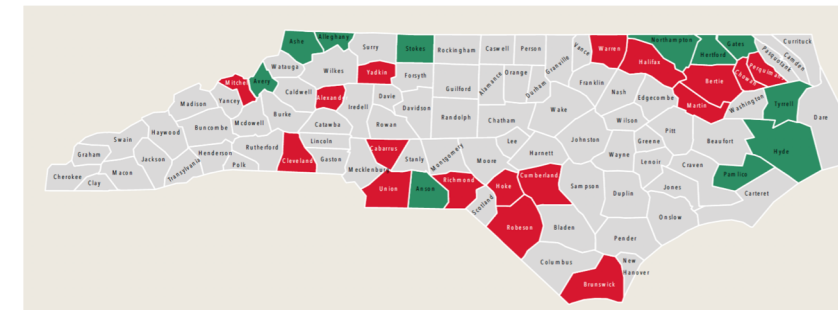
Issue: Expand NC Pre-K and address capacity gaps

Why is this important to do now?

- Not serving all eligible children now.
- Waiting list doesn't represent need, not an accurate measure.
- Some counties can't expand and face capacity issues
 - 2017 expansion funding available for **1,750 NC Pre-K "slots" requests from 56 counties for 6,000 slots.**
 - **44 counties** – with thousands of eligible but unserved children – **declined** any expansion dollars.
- **Capacity Challenges** –
 - Stagnant rates + gap between rates and true cost.
 - State funding inadequate – only 60% of program costs, scarce local or other dollars
 - Challenge recruiting and paying for qualified teachers
 - Low administrative rates
 - Rates are reimbursed, no upfront funding



Counties declining expansion funds 2017 and 2018



Red=Counties not serving 75% target
Green= counties serving 75% or more

Challenge: Expand NC Pre-K and address capacity gaps

- Funding - \$50 million in state funding for NC Pre-K removed from budget in 2018, replaced with child care subsidy (TANF) funding.
- NC Pre-K rates are too low.
- Local match is not always available.
- Shortage of qualified early childhood teachers.
- Shortage of 4 and 5-star programs.
- Rates are reimbursed – not upfront.

Opportunities: Expand NC Pre-K and address capacity gaps

- Governor Cooper supports expanding NC Pre-K.
- NIEERS Report + Business Roundtable Support – see recommendations from the report.
- Strong legislative champions for NC Pre-K.
- New state funding for expansion built into the budget.
- Local partnerships for children understand the capacity issues.

What we need you to do now!

- Write a letter to Governor Cooper and your local legislators if your community has not expanded NC Pre-K because of these challenges
- Ask local Pre-K Committee to document local capacity problems and send a letter to DCDEE
- Tell your local legislator about NC Pre-K waiting list and eligibility gap in your county
- Interview or survey parents on the waiting list – what are their options?
- Share their stories

NC Early Childhood Education Advocacy Opportunities 2019



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Contact Your Own Local Legislators!

- Build a relationship – in person and virtual.
- See Coalition legislator contact lists or visit www.ncleg.net
- Schedule meetings or program tours on Mondays or Fridays in the home district. Do this soon!
- Write or email them about early childhood issues that matter to you and your community. Do this soon!
- Send them information about what's working – share photos, stories, awards about your local child care and NC Pre-K programs.
- Post the same on their Facebook and Twitter pages.

Contact Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee Members

House HHS Appropriations

- **Chairs** – Reps. Murphy, Potts, White
- **Vice-Chairs** – Reps. Brisson, Dobson, Lambeth
- **Members** –
 - Belk
 - Black
 - Bumgardner
 - Cunningham
 - Farmer-Butterfield
 - Insko,
 - Jarvis
 - R. Smith
 - Terry

Senate HHS Appropriations

- **Chairs** – Sens. Bishop, Krawiec
- **Members** –
 - Burgin
 - Hise
 - Lowe
 - McKissick
 - Perry
 - Robinson
 - Van Duyn

Advocacy Resources and Opportunities

Tools to help you make your voice heard

- Fact sheets
- Infographics
- Social media toolkit
- Advocacy toolkit
- County-level data and County Child Care profiles
- Events in Raleigh and across the state
- Action Center
- Legislator contact information

All available at: www.ncearlyeducationcoalition.org/think-babies.html



Tuesdays for Tots

Let's #ThinkBabiesNC every Tuesday!

- Post on social media and join weekly Twitter chats
- Contact your legislators
- Meet with your legislators at home or in Raleigh
- Invite policymakers to tour a child care center or program serving babies in your county
- Write an op-ed, letter to the editor, newsletter, or blog
- Share your story and/or collect stories from your community

Monthly Themes

- March – Early Care & Education
- April – Family Support

Be a Big Voice for Young Children!

Here are 5 things you can do right now:

- Choose an issue that matters to you and get involved
- Share your story: <http://bit.ly/ThinkBabiesNCStories>
- Reach out to your local legislator at home
- Use one of our templates to share the issue in your own community
- Complete our survey – tell us what you are going to do!
 - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EarlyEdAdvocacy>

Save the Date – Come to Raleigh!

Think Babies™ Advocacy Day

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

N.C. General Assembly in Raleigh

During the Week of the Young Child

Co-sponsored by MomsRising and the
NC Association for the Education of Young Children



Questions?



Thank you!

www.NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org

See Think Babies™ Page and Take Action Page for resources

For more information:

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