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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The North Carolina Early Education Coalition brings families to Raleigh for *Strolling Thunder*<sup>™</sup> to tell policymakers to make every baby a priority**

*Event is part of ZERO TO THREE's national Think Babies<sup>™</sup> campaign to bring attention to what babies and families in North Carolina need to thrive.*

**Raleigh, NC – The North Carolina Early Education Coalition (the Coalition)** is ready to take Raleigh by storm as it holds its first *Strolling Thunder*<sup>™</sup> event on June 7, 2018, from 8:30am-12:00pm at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and Bicentennial Plaza. As a state partner in the national ZERO TO THREE *Think Babies*<sup>™</sup> campaign, the Coalition will bring families with young children and other early childhood advocates to raise public awareness and speak with their policymakers about making the potential of every baby in North Carolina a top priority.

*Strolling Thunder*<sup>™</sup> is the flagship advocacy event of the *Think Babies*<sup>™</sup> campaign to bring national attention to the many issues that affect what babies and families need to thrive. Families without the social and economic resources to provide their babies and toddlers with positive, nurturing experiences are at a disadvantage, and currently, more than half of North Carolina's babies live in or near poverty. Giving all babies a strong start in life benefits everyone in North Carolina and yields significant returns in the long run through more years of education, more employment, and better health as an adult.

"We are excited for North Carolina's legislators to hear from some of their youngest constituents," said Michele Rivest, Policy Director of the Coalition. "The science is clear: our brains grow faster between the ages of 0 and 3 than at any later point in our lives. Through *Strolling Thunder*<sup>™</sup> and our other *Think Babies*<sup>™</sup> activities, we hope to increase awareness about the importance of having healthy beginnings, supported families, and high-quality early care and education for all babies across our state."

Along with *Strolling Thunder*<sup>™</sup> partners at MomsRising.org and the North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children (NCAEYC), the Coalition has a variety of activities planned for the event, including meetings with legislators, stroller rally and stroll around the General Assembly, baby playtime, and more. Registration is now open at [strollingthundernc.eventbrite.com](http://strollingthundernc.eventbrite.com).

Following *Strolling Thunder*<sup>™</sup>, the Coalition will continue to educate the public and policymakers on the need for improvements in a wide range of supportive policies for babies and toddlers and their families. Additional information on *Think Babies*<sup>™</sup> and *Strolling Thunder*<sup>™</sup> can be found at [www.ncearlyeducationcoalition.org](http://www.ncearlyeducationcoalition.org).

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**About the North Carolina Early Education Coalition**

*The North Carolina Early Education Coalition works to ensure that all children have access to high quality early care and learning experiences. Since 1990, the organization has highlighted the proven power of quality early childhood education by sharing information and resources with parents, professionals and policymakers. For more information, please visit [www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org](http://www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org), [facebook.com/nearlyedcoalition](https://facebook.com/nearlyedcoalition) or follow [@NCEarlyEdCo](https://twitter.com/NCEarlyEdCo) on Twitter.*

**About ZERO TO THREE**

*ZERO TO THREE works to ensure all babies and toddlers benefit from the family and community connections critical to their well-being and development. Since 1977, the organization has advanced the proven power of nurturing relationships by transforming the science of early childhood into helpful resources, practical tools and responsive policies for millions of parents, professionals and policymakers. For more information, and to learn how to become a ZERO TO THREE member, please visit [zerotothree.org](http://zerotothree.org), [facebook.com/zerotothree](https://facebook.com/zerotothree) or follow [@zerotothree](https://twitter.com/zerotothree) on Twitter.*