

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Communities in NC receive funding to support young children and families
NC Early Education Coalition announces eight recipients of mini-grants for community
advocacy activities**

Raleigh, NC – The NC Early Education Coalition (the Coalition) announced today that eight communities in North Carolina will receive Think Babies™ NC Community Partner Mini-Grants in order to support community advocacy efforts focused on infants, toddlers, their families, and their educators. This funding is provided by the Coalition, with support from the national ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ campaign and the Pritzker Children’s Initiative’s National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.

The mini-grants are a component of Think Babies™ NC. This statewide initiative seeks to ensure that North Carolina’s young children, ages 0- 3, benefit from effective public policies, programs and funding to promote a solid foundation for what they need to thrive: healthy beginnings, supported families, and quality early care and learning experiences.

Communities were invited to apply for a mini-grant to design a local activity to increase public awareness and policymaker support to address issues facing their community’s youngest children, ages 0-3, their families, and their educators.

This is the second round of Think Babies™ NC Community Partner Mini-Grants that the Coalition has funded. The first eight communities were funded for activities that took place October 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019. Their work included community forums and roundtables, public awareness campaigns, bus tours of child care programs, documentary screenings, and other events engaging state and local policymakers, community leaders, and advocates.

“We are very excited about the opportunity to continue to expand the Think Babies™ NC initiative at the local level with our new community partners,” says Michele Rivest, Policy Director of the Coalition. “We know that these committed advocates will raise awareness of the issues facing infants and toddlers, and together we will build a stronger network to help advance solutions in local communities and throughout North Carolina.”

The following organizations are the 2019 recipients of the Think Babies™ Community Partner Mini-Grants:

Chatham County Partnership for Children will build on their existing work of the Chatham Action for Resilience Initiative by holding 10 small group sessions for key community leaders to view and discuss the film, Resilience. The forums will include small groups of policymakers, child care directors, first

responders, caregivers, educators and judges to increase the awareness of ACES among the people who make and influence decisions in their community.

Lee County Partnership for Children, in collaboration with Central Carolina Community College Early Childhood Education Department, will promote the importance of quality child care and social-emotional development for infants and toddlers through a series of events, continuing education and presentations throughout Lee County that will engage child care providers, early childhood education students, health educators, social workers, business leaders and policymakers, including an educational booth and presentation at the Lee County Fair.

Mecklenburg Partnership for Children will host a series of Coffee and Conversation forums featuring medical professionals speaking about early brain development and toxic stress. These community conversations will be targeted to reach state legislators, business leaders, and neighborhood groups. They will also host a public policy forum to engage and educate policymakers, community advocates, business leaders and public officials on the economic and social benefits derived from supporting the parents of infants and toddlers.

Partnership for Children of Cumberland County will present an infant-toddler advocacy training for child care providers. The training will include a call-to-action for each participant to inform policymakers about the importance of focusing on policy issues impacting infants, toddlers, their families, and their educators. Facilitators will continue to engage participants to offer support and guidance for connecting with policymakers.

Partnership for Children of Wayne County will hold a community forum and bus tour focused on the issue of infant and toddler child care availability in their county. The forum will share information on the current demographics and provide advocacy strategies to advance policies and programs that support infants, toddlers and families in the community. A tour for policymakers and community leaders of a local child care program will highlight the need for additional infant toddler spots and increase awareness of the overall importance of early childhood education.

Smart Start of New Hanover County will implement an extensive, multi-step public awareness campaign focused on infants and toddlers. They will form a county-level collaborative to focus on infants and toddlers to lead the campaign, which will include local radio and television, social media, and other promotional materials. They will also hold an advocacy training for students in early childhood education programs at local colleges and universities.

Smart Start of Pender County will host a series of trainings around the Resilience documentary for child care providers and community partners. With information from a 2018 community health assessment, the hosts will focus on the top three issues identified by residents affecting quality of life in the community. The trainings will draw connections between toxic stress facing infants and toddlers and the identified issues of alcohol, drug or medication abuse, low income/poverty, and child abuse and neglect.

The Enola Group, Inc., an Early Head Start partner in Burke County, will host a Resilience screening and discussion panel. Their goal is to raise awareness of ACES and how they affect the development and

overall needs of infants, toddlers and their families. Community partners assisting with this event include local institutions of higher education, the local Smart Start Partnership, as well as the regional CCR&R agency.

For more information about the mini-grants and the Think Babies™ NC initiative, please visit www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org/think-babies.html.

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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. 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. For more information, please visit www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org, facebook.com/nearlyedcoalition or follow [@NCEarlyEdCo on Twitter](#).