



NORTH CAROLINA  
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION

# It's Time to Take A Stand for Children! Joint Conference Committee Advocacy

*August 26, 2021*

# Goals for Today

- Focus on Joint Conference Budget Process
- Update and analysis on the House and Senate budgets
- Advocacy opportunities and next steps
- Answer your questions!



What's in the budget for young children and families?



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# The State Budget

# NC Early Education Coalition Policy Priorities

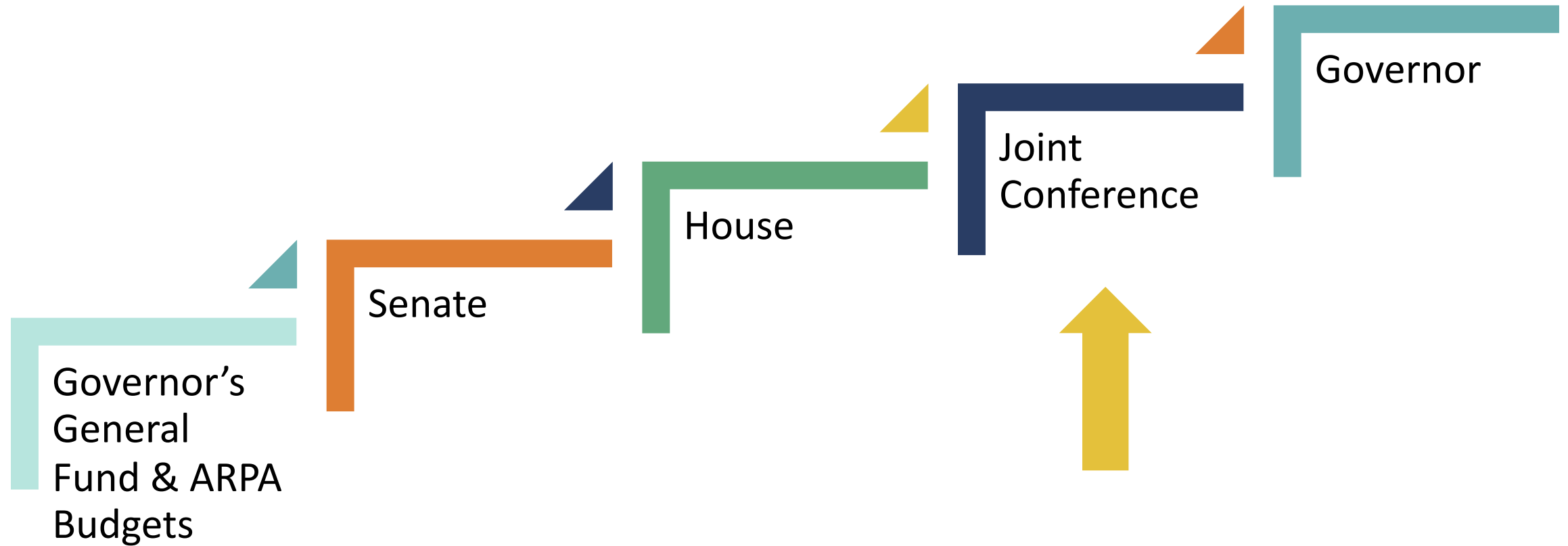


## Top Line – Child Care is Essential!

- **Expand funding for all major early childhood programs**
  - Smart Start, NC Pre-K, Child Care Subsidies
- **Child Care Workforce Compensation**
  - Expand Child Care WAGE\$ statewide + retention bonuses
- **Fund and Implement Leandro Action Plan**
- **COVID Child Care Funding**
  - Stabilize and sustain the child care industry
  - Expand child care subsidy assistance to families on the wait list and additional eligible families
  - Support the workforce



# Budget Process



# Joint Conference Committee

- 71 members of the Senate and House appointed by leadership
  - 47 House Members, 24 Senate
  - 58 Republicans, 13 Democrats
- Reconcile differences between the House and Senate Budgets
- Reach agreement on final budget
- Target date: Mid September

## Big Chairs

### Senate:

Sen. Brent Jackson  
Sen. Kathy Harrington  
Sen. Ralph Hise

### House:

Rep. Dean Arp  
Rep. Donny Lambeth  
Rep. Jason Saine

See Conference Committee List – is your legislator(s) on this committee?

# What's at stake for early childhood education

Item	Senate	House	Coalition Position
Smart Start	\$15M <b><u>non-recurring</u></b> funding	\$15M <b><u>recurring</u></b> funding	<b>Support the House budget</b>
Child Care WAGE\$ expansion	\$0	\$207M includes \$35M for WAGE\$, plus staff bonuses, apprenticeship programs, fast track courses	<b>Support the House Budget</b>
Child Care Subsidy Assistance + waive parent co-pays	Included in \$503M ARPA Not specified	\$200M+ for cc subsidy assistance + \$30M parent co-pays	<b>Support the House Budget</b>
NC Pre-K	\$5.4 M 2% rate increase \$20M start up grants	\$5.4 M 2% rate increase \$10M start up grants	<b>Support the Senate Budget</b>
Better Child Care Subsidy Rates (H574)	\$0	\$0	<b>Add to Final Budget</b>
Lead Abatement in Child Care and Schools	\$150M	\$150M	<b>Include in Final Budget</b>

# What's at stake for Think Babies™ NC priorities

Item	Senate	House	Think Babies NC Alliance Position
Postpartum Medicaid coverage extension from 60 days to 1 year	\$12.3M FY21-22 \$50.8M FY 22-23	\$0	<b>Support the Senate budget</b>
Increase Home Visiting & Parenting Education	\$s for Smart Start, NFP, and MIECHV - nonrecurring	\$s for Smart Start, NFP, and MIECHV - Recurring	<b>Support the House Budget</b>
Child Care WAGE\$	\$0	\$35M	<b>Support the House Budget</b>
Child Care Subsidy Assistance + waive parent co-pays	Included in \$503M ARPA Not specified	\$200M+ for cc subsidy assistance + \$30M parent co-pays	<b>Support the House Budget</b>
Adopt Paid Family Leave	\$0	\$9M recurring for paid parental leave for K12 public school employees	<b>Support the House Budget</b>

# What's Missing Completely!

- Better Child Care Subsidy reimbursement rates (H574)
- NC Pre-K expansion
- Early intervention
- Close the Coverage Gap/Medicaid Expansion
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)



# Our Bottom Line Summary

- Both the House and Senate budgets represent a big missed opportunity!
- Invests too little – not sufficient to address the child care crisis and support babies and families.
- Relies heavily on federal funding instead of an ongoing investment with state funding.
- Read our full statement and budget summary here:
  - <https://nearlyeducationcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/House-Budget-Statement-and-Summary-Final-8.11.21.pdf>





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# Advocacy Tips, Tools and Resources



# Our Early Education Ask

- North Carolina needs a strong early childhood education package in the final budget – one that combines the best parts of both the House and Senate budgets and invests in young children and working families, the early childhood workforce, child care programs, and communities.
  - Invest in young children and working families: Child Care Subsidy Assistance
  - Invest in the early childhood workforce: Child Care WAGE\$
  - Invest in child care programs: improved Child Care Subsidy rates
  - Invest in communities: recurring funding for Smart Start
- Remember – there are no guarantees! It will take a lot of hard work and advocacy to make sure all of these priorities make it into the final budget.



# The Time is Now!

- This is the final push for early education in the budget. This is crunch time!
- Help your policymakers understand the issues. Don't assume they know – they won't unless you tell them.
- [Joint Conference Committee](#) is meeting now. Expect to see a floor vote on the final budget in early to mid-September.



# Advocacy Actions To Take Right Now

- Contact your legislators
  - <https://nearlyeducationcoalition.org/take-action/who-represents-me/>
- Use our Action Center to contact your legislators and the Joint Conference Committee:
  - <https://nearlyeducationcoalition.org/take-action/>
- Keep up the pressure, especially this week and next!



**Take Action By September 3<sup>rd</sup>!**

# Take action now and stay tuned for more

## Action Alerts:

- Early Education Package:
  - <https://ncearlyeducationcoalition.org/take-action/conferencebudget/>
- Think Babies™ NC Package:
  - <https://bit.ly/thinkbabiesconferencebudget>
- Child Care WAGE\$
  - Coming next week!

## Additional Budget Resources:

- Coalition position statement on early education
- Coalition position statement on Child Care WAGE\$
- Think Babies™ NC Alliance position statement on babies and families
- List of Joint Conference Committee members by County
- House and Senate budget comparisons

**Full toolkit of resources can be found here:**

<https://ncearlyeducationcoalition.org/2021-budget-toolkit/>

# Your Turn!



**Answer the poll and let us know in the chat:**

- What action have you taken or will you take?
- What issues are you fighting for?
- Who has legislators on the conference committee?



# Thank you!

[www.NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org](http://www.NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org)

**For more information:**

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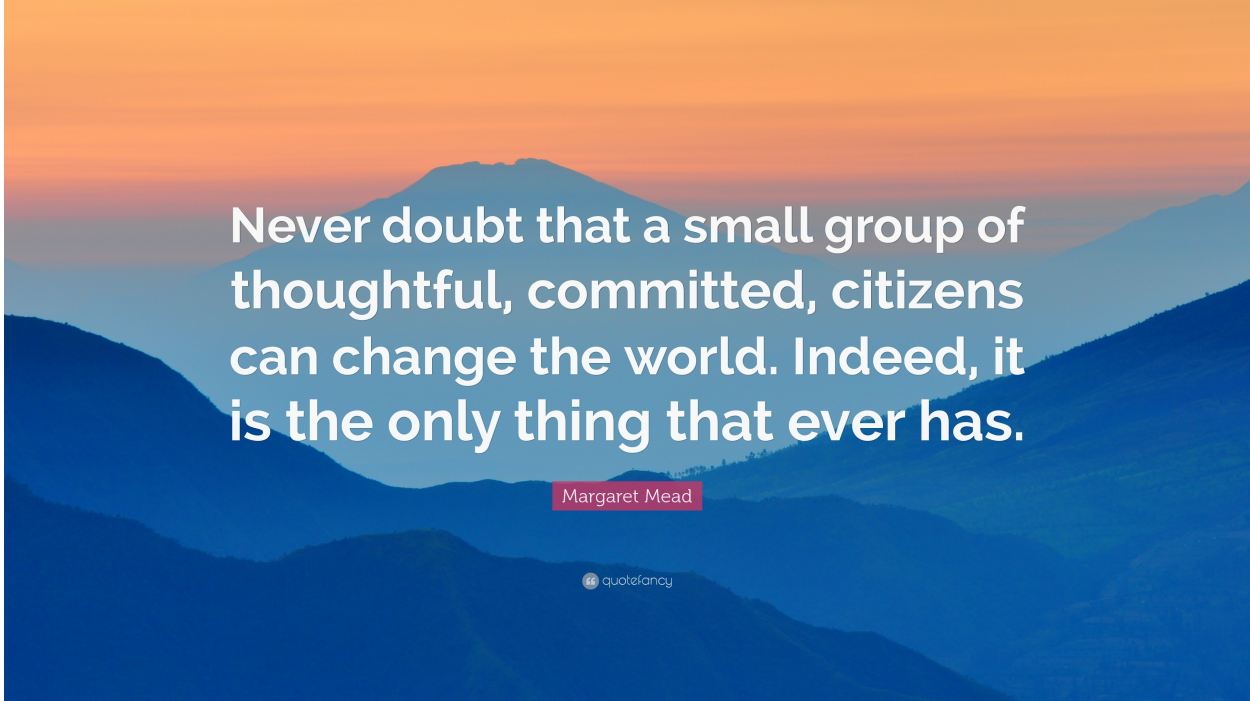
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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

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