

2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

2023 Focus: NC Child is leading with four policy priorities that build family economic security and safeguard youth mental health.

Ensuring Health Coverage for Parents & Caregivers

At least ¼ of the adults in North Carolina's "coverage gap" are parents with children in the home, with no affordable health coverage option.

Recommendation: Close the "coverage gap" by accepting federal funds to expand the NC Medicaid program.

Early Education Opportunity for Children & Child Care Choices for Working Parents

North Carolina has one of the highest rates of working parents with young children. Yet 44% of the state's families live in a child care desert, where there are five children in need of care for each available slot. Improving child care subsidy reimbursement rates can ensure that more children have access to early childhood education that put them on track for school success. Child care is an essential service for thousands of children and families, and it is particularly crucial as we grapple with a labor shortage in many industries.

Recommendation: Improving the child care subsidy rate structure will make it possible for more child care businesses to provide services to low-income families in their communities.

Prevent Youth Suicide & Address the Children's Mental Health Crisis

Suicide is the leading cause of death for youth ages 10-14 in North Carolina. It is crucial that trained professionals can support our children when they are in crisis.

Recommendation: North Carolina can meet children where they are by ensuring that students have access to mental health professionals at school.

Fighting Hunger & Promoting Success in School

In North Carolina, 1 in 6 children go hungry. Providing no-cost school meals can help. No-cost school meals are an investment in academic performance, since kids who eat healthy school meals do better in school.

Recommendation: Ensure that every child has access to free nutritious meals at school.

NC Child also supports the following legislative initiatives:

A Strong Child Care Workforce to Support Our Youngest Learners

To help stabilize the child care workforce and make child care available to more families, increase appropriations for proven programs that boost early educator pay while recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in the classroom. These include the WAGE\$ program, and extending compensation stabilization grants with state investment.

Make Strong Pre-K Programs Available to More Children

NC Pre-K is a high-impact program that prepares young children to succeed in Kindergarten, and develop reading skills that get them on track throughout their school careers. We support strengthening the NC Pre-K program through:

- Administrative rate increase;
- Reimbursement rate increase; and
- Funding additional slots so that more children may attend.

High Quality Early Education Programming Across North Carolina

We support the NC Partnership for Children's recommended funding levels for Smart Start.

Preventing Child Deaths

NC Child supports the legislative recommendations of the Child Fatality Task Force.

ABOUT NC CHILD

Founded in 2014, NC Child works to eliminate the barriers that stand in kids' way.

NC Child is a nonpartisan organization that through public policy, seeks to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their race, socio economic status or geographic location. Each year, we work diligently to present the legislature with evidence-based, community-informed policy proposals.