



# NC CHILD'S STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2026





# *Every child deserves a chance in life.*

They deserve a safe, healthy, and happy childhood and the opportunity to reach their full potential. Yet for far too many children, those dreams are not reality.

## **NC Child is changing that.**

Established in 2014 following the merger of Action for Children North Carolina and the Covenant with North Carolina's Children, NC Child is the independent voice for North Carolina's children.

As the state's only multi-issue child advocacy organization, NC Child's work addresses policies that affect the whole child, including health and well-being, early childhood education, and family economic security. We believe that the voices of youth and families are critical to identifying these specific needs, and NC Child is committed to uplifting those voices in every aspect of our work. We are committed to building and maintaining relationships with elected officials and decision-makers to advance policies that benefit our children.

NC Child is a leading source of state-level research and data on the issues affecting children and families, and we serve as a trusted and reliable resource for policymakers and other child advocates and organizations across the state.

NC Child laid out a path for our organization to meaningfully improve the lives of all of North Carolina's children. Through our work, we will ensure that children and families have sufficient and comprehensive access to the different kinds of resources they need— all with the goal of securing a better future for every North Carolina child.

-Erica Palmer Smith  
Executive Director, NC Child









## *Our Vision*

Every North Carolina child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## *Our Mission*

Advocate for policies that improve the lives of all North Carolina children.



# What We Believe

## ACCESS

Every child deserves equitable access to the resources, opportunities, and infrastructure that allow them to thrive.

## COMMUNITY

The voices of children, families, and communities are critical to the development of fair policies, laws, and decisions.

## RESEARCH

Independent research and data are foundational to making informed policy decisions for improving the lives of children.

## POLICY

Public policy is the critical lever for improving the lives of children and securing their futures.







# Our Goals

## Voice

Be the leading independent voice for NC children.

## Reach

Expand our network of community voices, partners, and advocates to all 100 NC counties.

## Impact

Deliver results that make a difference for children today.



# Strategies

## RESEARCH AND DATA

Use primary and secondary research, including the voices of the Child Advocacy Network, to identify the critical issues impacting NC children.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Develop and vet policy solution options to address the key focus areas of early childhood education, child health and well-being, and family economic security.

## LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Collaborate with legislators and administrators to promote policy solution options that positively impact the lives of NC children.

## COLLABORATION

Expand the Child Advocacy Network to empower communities, ensuring that those most impacted are included in developing the policy agenda and can participate in advocating for that agenda.

## AWARENESS

Develop a comprehensive awareness campaign to increase the statewide impact of NC Child.

## ORGANIZATION

Invest in building the organizational infrastructure and resources needed for fulfilling our mission.









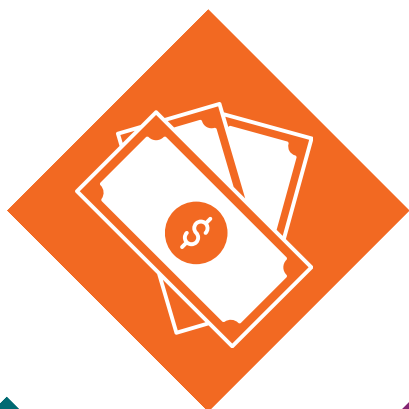
# Focus Areas



**EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**



**CHILD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING**



**FAMILY  
ECONOMIC SECURITY**





# POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

## STEP 1

Identify the critical issues impacting NC children

- Use research and data from NC Child Health Report Card, State Data Card, County Data Cards, and other research projects and products
- Listen to community voices through Child Advocacy Network

## STEP 2

Develop and vet policy solution options

- Research national trends and findings
- Incorporate feedback from community voices
- Evaluate policy solution options by the following:  
Impact - Urgency - Viability

## STEP 3

Create legislative agenda

- Seek Board approval for legislative agenda









# RESEARCH AND DATA

Use primary and secondary research, including the voices of the Child Advocacy Network, to identify the critical issues impacting NC Children.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Create the NC Child Data Center to share current, reliable data that will support advocates and policy makers with decision making.
- ◆ Define and develop a scope of research focused on family economic security.
- ◆ Strengthen research and analysis by adding improved research methods to identify supplementary demographic data.
- ◆ Promote NC Child as a thought leader through increased publications and timely delivery of current research.







# POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Develop and vet policy solution options to address the key focus areas of early childhood education, child health and well-being, and family economic security.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Review each issue area to identify policy solutions that address the highest need and produce the most impact.
- ◆ Establish procedures to monitor and share ongoing research trends connected to NC Child's policy agenda.
- ◆ Host an annual State of the Child Policy Summit.
- ◆ Incorporate qualitative data derived from community engagement efforts to ensure that policy proposals are both community-informed and data-driven.



# LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Collaborate with legislators and administrators to promote policy solution options that positively impact the lives of NC children.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Lobby and advocate for specific policy solutions in the areas of early childhood education, child health and well-being, and family economic security.
- ◆ Cultivate strong relationships with administrative leadership and staff to create a shared understanding of the options that most benefit NC children.
- ◆ Track and promote legislative and administrative engagement efforts and outcomes.
- ◆ Create a portfolio of legislative research that will inform our advocacy strategies.







# COLLABORATION

Expand the Child Advocacy Network to empower communities and ensure that the voices of those most impacted are included in developing the policy agenda.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Evaluate structure and composition of the Child Advocacy Network (CAN).
- ◆ Engage and expand CAN membership among child and family advocates and organizations across all 100 counties.
- ◆ Create diverse engagement opportunities for CAN members, volunteers, and advocates based on interest areas and outcomes.
- ◆ Continue to rebuild the Youth Advocacy Council (YAC) to ensure that NC youth are involved in shaping their own futures.
- ◆ Continue to engage the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to ensure that parent voices are involved in our advocacy efforts.



# AWARENESS

Develop a comprehensive awareness campaign to increase the statewide impact of NC Child.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Create a multi-media branding and marketing campaign to establish NC Child as an authority on child issues.
- ◆ Launch a public relations effort to promote meaningful policy solutions that benefit NC Children.
- ◆ Develop a grass-roots strategy to increase NC Child's presence at civic and community gatherings, elevate its role as a thought leader, and present current research and data.







# ORGANIZATION

Invest in building the organizational infrastructure and resources needed for fulfilling our mission.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Identify, attract, and equip Board and staff leadership with the appropriate skills, experiences, and credentials to execute on NC Child's mission.
- ◆ Develop a plan for identifying, recruiting, training, and recognizing the contributions of volunteers to assist with grassroots efforts.
- ◆ Invest in technology and systems that assist in research and policy development, marketing, and engagement of volunteers, families, and funders.
- ◆ Build a culture of philanthropy within NC Child and the larger community to support strategic goals.
- ◆ Create a comprehensive fundraising plan to include annual, major, and planned giving efforts.



