

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

### 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. 44% of the state's families live in a child care desert where there are more than three times as many children compared to child care slots. Subsidized childcare reimbursement rates creates greater equity in funding across the state for both child care centers and family child care homes, particularly in rural communities.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Provide funding to extend the compensation components of the Child Care Stabilization Grants. Implement a statewide floor for families to access child care close to home and support local businesses.

### 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:

Strengthen suicide prevention education for teachers to recognize and respond to warning signs and risk factors of youth suicide, as well as adding additional funding for suicide prevention resources.

### INTEGRATE THE REACH OUT AND READ PROGRAM INTO PRIMARY CARE

According to the most recent data from NC DHHS, 39% of fourth-grade students in North Carolina are at a "below-basic" level in literacy. Increased exposure to reading has significant cognitive, emotional, and social benefits for children, resulting in a profound positive impact on our communities and society.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Encourage the Reach Out and Read program as a requirement in primary care and allocate recurring funding for the program.

**NC Child continues to advocate for Preventing Child Deaths in partnership with 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 advocates for policies that improve the lives of all North Carolina children. Each year, we work diligently to present the legislature with evidence-based, community-informed policy proposals.