

Annual
REPORT 2025

MAKING NORTH CAROLINA "FIRST IN CHILDREN."



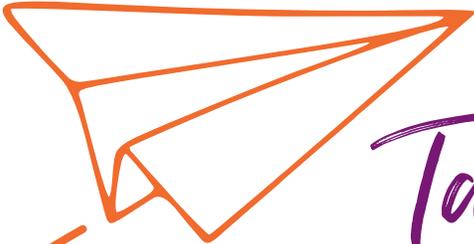
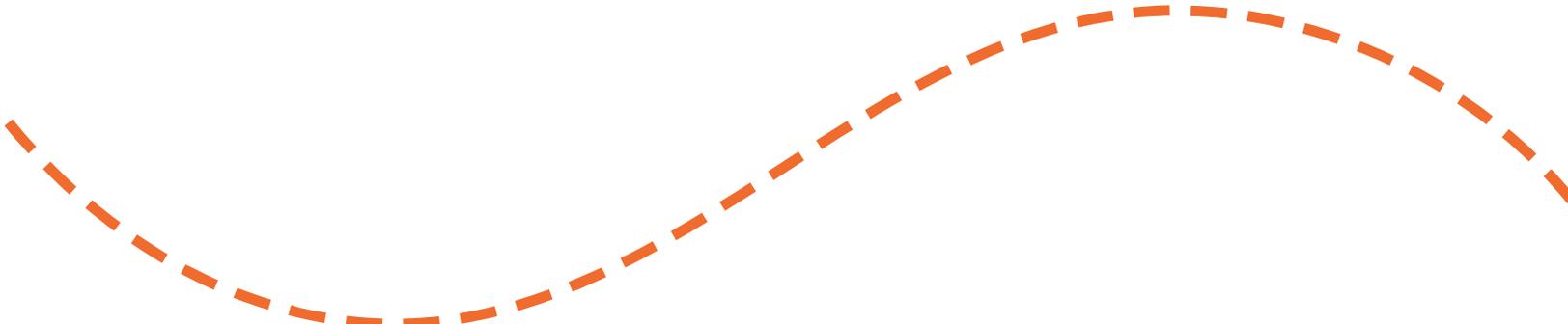


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A LETTER FROM *Our Team*

Dear child advocates,

Over the last year, our state's children and families have encountered extraordinary challenges to their health and well-being. Federal funding cuts threaten SNAP and Medicaid, and state and local leaders are faced with deciding what the future of these essential programs will look like in the months and years ahead.

We know our work has always mattered, because there is nothing more important than ensuring our children have the opportunity to thrive. However, it is in moments like these where our mission becomes all the more critical.

The stakes are high, and the odds are stacked against North Carolina's more than two million children. More than ever, they need a voice and a champion. That's where NC Child, and you, come in.

This year, we've worked together to improve the early childhood education system and address the youth mental health crisis. We've campaigned for interventions that support family economic security and healthcare access. We launched our new NC Child Data Center, expanded the reach and impact of our State of the Child Summit, instituted our ExCEL NC initiative to strengthen early learning, and published new reports that expanded our understanding of the pressing challenges our families face.

Together, we engaged leaders, conducted research, and advocated for policies that give every North Carolina child the opportunity to reach their full potential.

We can build on the momentum and success of this last year and push harder to protect programs like SNAP and Medicaid; we can use the data tools we've developed to inform and guide policymakers; and together, we can build a North Carolina where every child comes first.

Through the dedication of our staff, the strategic leadership of our Board of Directors, through partnerships with other child-serving organizations, and with your continued support, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your dedication to the children and families in your community this past year. Let's continue this good work together.

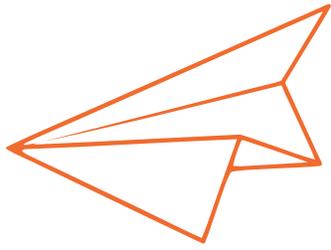
Yours in service,



MANJU KARKARE
Board Chair



ERICA PALMER SMITH
Executive Director



Child Health

We recognize that physical health, mental health, oral health, and social and environmental health all play a part in the overall health and well-being of our children—and our team leads initiatives aimed at substantively addressing each of these areas.

MEDICAID AND SNAP ADVOCACY

We launched a statewide effort urging for action to protect SNAP and NC Medicaid. Our radio and digital campaigns reached more than 500,000 North Carolinians and we assisted more than 400 advocates in contacting their federal elected officials. Additionally, members of our Parent Advisory Council spoke at press conferences hosted by Gov. Stein and local partners.



Listen to
Gregory's story



Listen to
Stacy's story



Listen to
Ashley's story

ORAL HEALTH ACCESS

This year, we published our “Teeth Talk” report, which compiled findings from a 20-stop listening tour that engaged parents, dental care professionals, public health officials, and school district personnel in conversations about local challenges and barriers to oral health access. Our team conducted additional focus groups and interviews this year to dive deeper into themes outlined in “Teeth Talk,” to develop a follow-up report that will be published in 2026.

and Well-Being

REGIONAL STATE OF THE CHILD PRESENTATIONS

Our team traveled throughout North Carolina to share key data and insights on local trends around child health and well-being. In the same spirit as our annual State of the Child Summit, our local State of the Child presentations brought together key community leaders, child advocates, and health providers at the county level to lead essential discussions about the challenges driving trends, uplift local initiatives that are improving outcomes, and identifying opportunities for collaboration.



Youth Mental

Our youth are facing a mental health crisis. As rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation have continued to rise, NC Child is advocating for mental health resources that meet our youth where they are and for solutions that safeguard their health, well-being, and success.

2025 CHILD HEALTH REPORT CARD: SPECIAL FOCUS ON SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH

Published in partnership with the North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM), the Child Health Report Card provides legislators, public health officials, non-profit leaders, and parents with the latest information on child health and well-being. The 2025 Child Health Report Card has a special focus on the need for school-based mental health supports.

There are 1,928 students for each school psychologist in North Carolina, nearly four times the 500:1 ratio recommended by the National Association of School Psychologists.

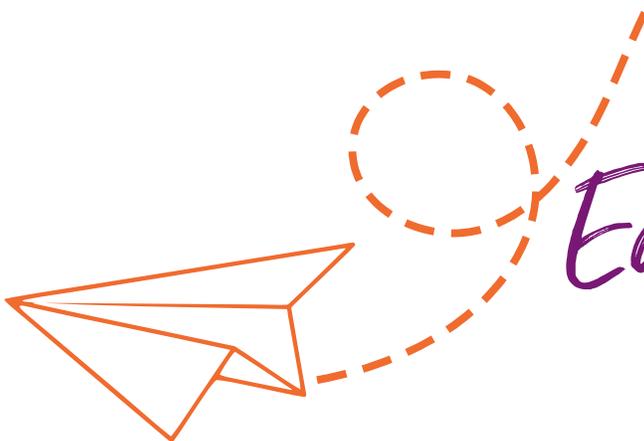


Health

YOUTH ADVOCACY COUNCIL

The NC Child Youth Advocacy Council shaped key conversations around the future of youth mental health in North Carolina. They participated in a Youth Design Day for the development of the North Carolina Youth Mental Health Action Plan, they shared their perspectives and experiences as panelists at the 2025 State of the Child Summit and on the NC Child blog, participated in conversations about loneliness with civic and philanthropic leaders at a round table hosted by Capita and NC Child, and they shared their policy proposals with elected leaders and reporters from North Carolina Health News.



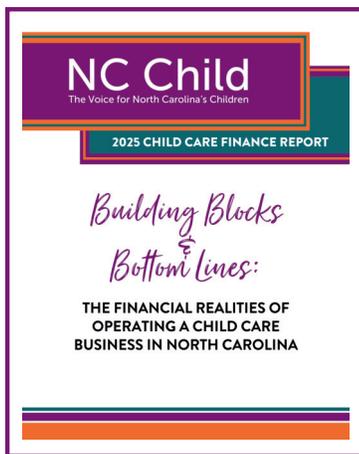


Early Childhood Education

The first 2,000 days of a child’s life have a huge impact on their short- and long-term health and development. NC Child continued leading statewide efforts to advocate for interventions that stabilize and strengthen our early childhood education system and give children and parents the best opportunity to thrive.

NC GOVERNOR’S TASK FORCE ON CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION

NC Child Executive Director Erica Palmer Smith was appointed to serve on the NC Governor’s Task Force on Child Care and Early Education. Throughout the year, NC Child staff were asked to present reports, highlight recommendations and policy solutions, and present data on child care access and affordability. NC Child presented at multiple task force meetings in 2025.



BUILDING BLOCKS AND BOTTOM LINES: THE FINANCIAL REALITIES OF OWNING A CHILD CARE BUSINESS

The “Building Blocks” report explores how private child care programs, including center-based, family child care homes, and faith-based providers are working to sustain their programs amid rising tuition pressures, workforce shortages, and inadequate public funding. NC Child conducted interviews with providers across the state to develop this report, and NC Child staff was asked to present this report at a meeting of the Governor’s Task Force on Child Care and Early Education in August 2025.

ExCEL NC

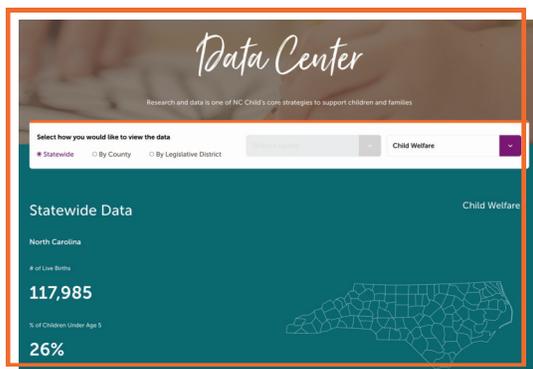
NC Child launched a new project, ExCEL NC, geared at engaging the state’s business community around solutions to address the child care crisis. ExCEL NC, or Executives Championing Early Learning in North Carolina, is a coalition of business owners, entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, and business ecosystem champions who are advocating for solutions that stabilize the state’s child care options, strengthen our workforce, and create a more prosperous economy. Learn more at [excelnc.org](https://www.excelnc.org).



Data Center & Family Field Day

DATA CENTER

This year, we launched our NC Child Data Center, which provides advocates with information on more than 35 metrics assessing demography, child welfare, early childhood, elementary and secondary education, health, and family economic security. Advocates can filter the data by county and by legislative district.



Visit the [Data Center](#) here

FAMILY FIELD DAY

We hosted hundreds of local families at Laurel Hills Park for our second Family Field Day. Hosted in partnership with Raleigh Parks, Field Day is an event that encourages play and community connections. Between relay races, dance parties, obstacle courses, and arts and crafts, Field Day is a day to celebrate kids and to remember what it's like to be one.



State of the

PRESENTED BY



In partnership with the North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM) and presented by TowneBank, NC Child hosted our second annual State of the Child Summit at the Raleigh Convention Center on April 15, 2025.

The Summit brought together more than 500 lawmakers, parents and caregivers, health professionals, and representatives from the business community, state and local governments, and other child-serving organizations.

In addition to learning from our 40 speakers and panelists, Summit attendees heard keynotes from North Carolina Governor Josh Stein, Lt. Governor Rachel Hunt, and NC DHHS Secretary Dev Sangvai.

In our second year hosting this event, we were able to double our attendee size, add more breakout and plenary sessions, and have more than 65 of North Carolina's 100 counties represented throughout the day.



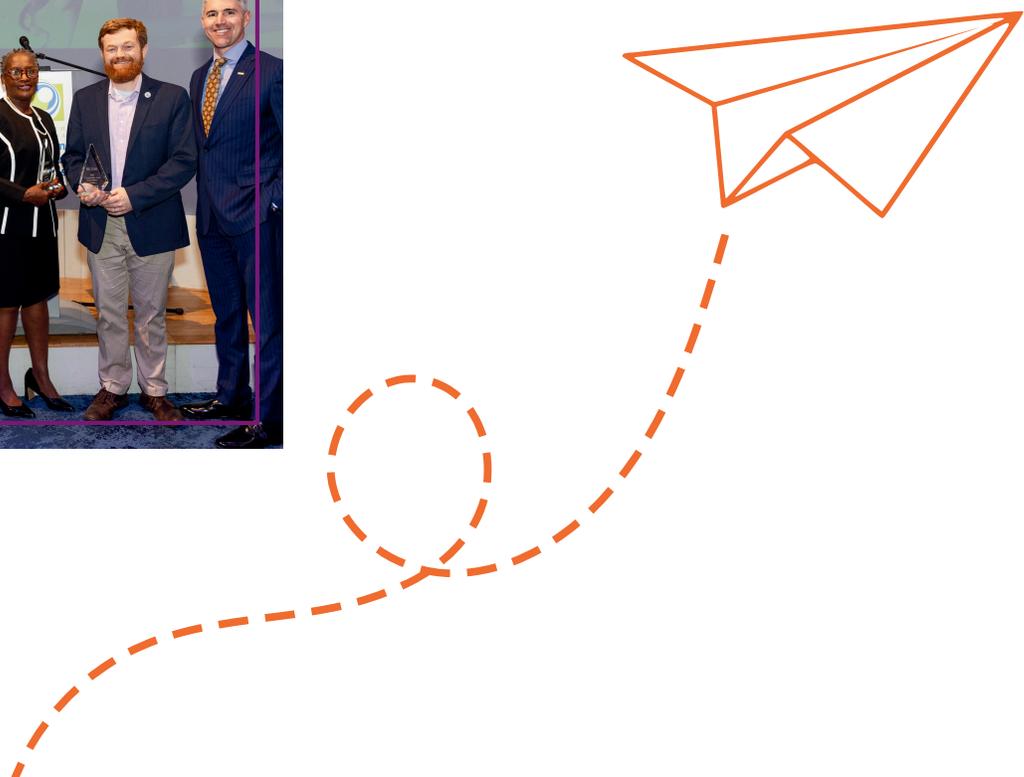
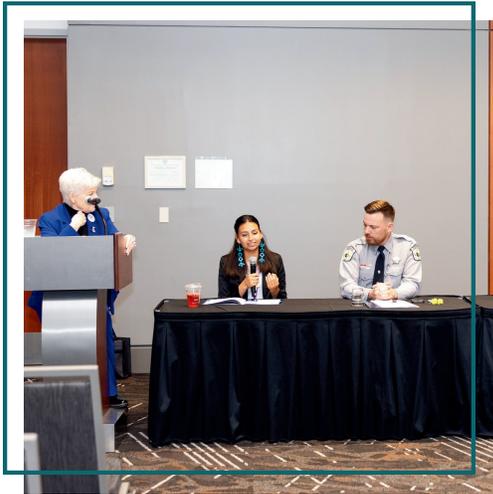
Save the date for our next State of the Child Summit, which will be in Raleigh on April 16, 2025.



Child Summit



Watch the 2025 recap video here!



**NC CHILD TAKES A
NONPARTISAN APPROACH.**

**POLICY IS HOW WE
ENACT THE CHANGE.**



2025 Partners, Sponsors, and Funders

Alliance for Early Success
Alliance Health
AmeriHealth Caritas NC
Annie E. Casey Foundation
AppHealthCare
Arts Together
Atrium Health
Aurrera Health Group
Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation
Blue Cross NC
Blue Ridge Pediatrics
BSN Sports
Bumble Brews Play Cafe
Camber Foundation
Capita
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
Carolina Complete Health
Charlie's Heart Foundation
Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority
ChildTrust Foundation
Communities in Schools of Robeson County
Community Conversations
Crossnore Communities for Children
Custom Ink
Delta Dental
Dogwood Health Trust
ECU Health
Family Support Network of North Carolina
Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation
Georgetown University Center for Children and Families
Goodberry's Frozen Custard
Google
Healthy Blue of NC
HopeStar Foundation
Humana
Invest Early NC
J-NOTT-GTT
John Rex Endowment
Loftis Partners
Lumin Strategies
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
moss+ross
NC Alliance for Health
NC Alliance of YMCAs
NC Child Abuse Studies (NCCAST)
NC Community Schools Coalition via the U.S. Dept. Of Education
NC Early Childhood Foundation
NC Healthcare Association
NC Pediatric Society
NC Providers Council
NC Rural Center
New Hanover County Resiliency Task Force
New Venture Fund
North Carolina Child Care Health Consultant Association
North Carolina Foundation for Public School Children
North Carolina Housing Coalition
North Carolina Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Association
North Carolina Institute of Medicine
Novant Health
Partnership for America's Children
Perkinson Law Firm
Positive Childhood Alliance NC
Providence Preparatory School
Raleigh Parks
Riccobene Associates Family Dentistry
Smart Start & North Carolina Partnership for Children
Smart Start of Brunswick County
Smart Start of Mecklenburg County
SwingPals
The Children's Alliance
The David and Lucille Packard Foundation
The Duke Endowment
The Green Chair Project
The Hope Center at Pullen
The Leon Levine Foundation
TowneBank
Triad Women's Center
Trillium Health Resources
UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
WAGES
Wake Forest University School of Medicine
WakeMed Children's Hospital
Wegmans
WellCare
YMCA of Greensboro
Youth Villages
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

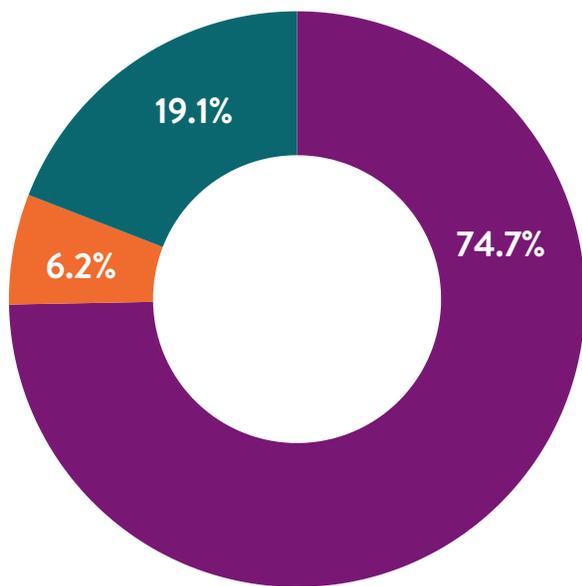
2024 Financials

NET ASSETS: \$4,637,231

TOTAL REVENUE

● GRANTS AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT	\$1,721,850
● INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE GIVING	\$142,886
● OTHER INCOME	\$441,043

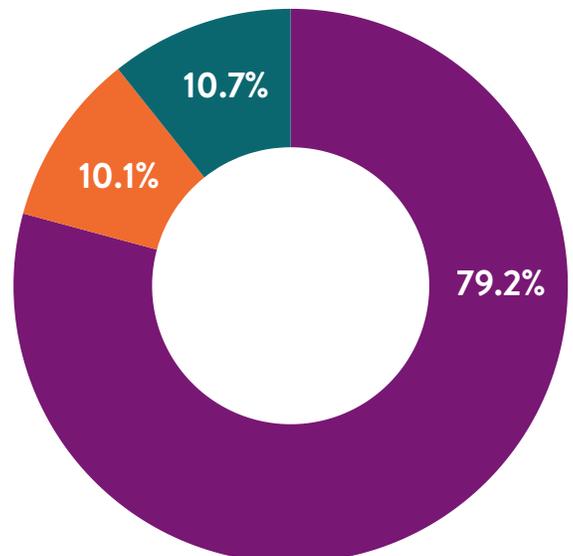
	\$2,305,779
● GRANT CARYOVER:	\$1,056,228



TOTAL EXPENSES

● PROGRAM SERVICES	\$2,255,213
● FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT	\$287,845
● GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE	\$303,698

	\$2,846,756
● ADJUSTED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT):	\$538,668



Board of Directors

Officers

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Board Chair
President and CEO, Nutritionally Yours LLC

PEG O'CONNELL

Board Vice Chair
Safe Kids NC Steering Committee
Chair of Tobacco 21 Campaign

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Secretary/Governance Chair
Retired OBGYN at Triad
Women's Health and Wellness

JOSH DAVIS

Treasurer
Financial Planning and Analysis
Manager at Aspida

VELVA JENKINS

Equity Chair
CEO at YWCA Lower Cape Fear

SALLY LOFTIS

Fundraising Chair
Managing Director at Loftis Partners

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EDWARD BROOKS

Assistant Attorney for Robeson County

CASEY COOPER

CEO at Cherokee Indian Hospital
Authority

AMANDA DOLE

Attorney at Moore & Van Allen

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Carolina Board of Education Corps, Board
of Governors

DR. KIMBERLY MONTEZ

Associate Professor, Pediatrics and Public
Health Sciences at Wake Forest University
School of Medicine

CHRIS PATERSON

CEO at Carolina Complete Health

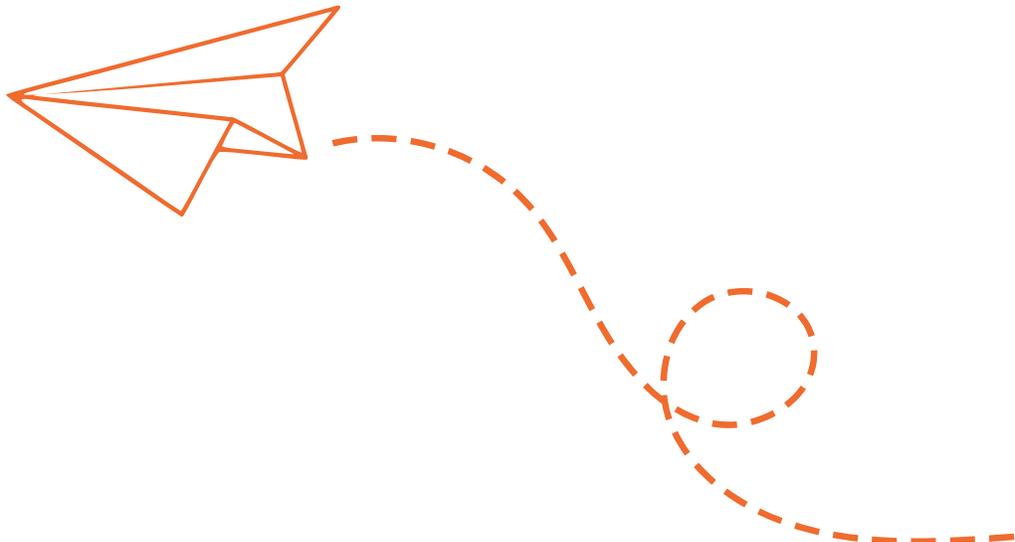
NATHAN RAMSEY

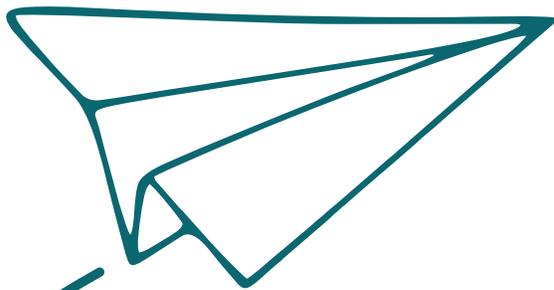
Executive Director at Land of Sky
Regional Council

CHRISTOPHER WATKINS

People Consulting, Strategy and
Operations Leader at Cisco Systems

*outgoing Board member





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NC Child

The Voice for North Carolina's Children

1101 Haynes Street, Suite 103
Raleigh, NC 27604