

# It's Time to *Think Babies*™!



## The first three years shape all the rest.

The science is clear that our brains grow faster between the ages of 0 and 3 than at any later point in our lives, forming more than one million new neural connections every second. These early connections have a lifelong impact on how babies learn and grow. Providing families with the social and economic resources to give their babies the nurturing experiences they need benefits all of us. Building this early support for all families increases graduation rates, enhances the quality of the workforce, improves health, and reduces crime.

## It's time to invest in the future.

**We need to invest in the first three years of life to give all of our babies the best chance to succeed in life.** Key areas of investment include:

- **Healthy beginnings:** We need to ensure young children have access to early health and development screenings, good nutrition and other health services to support their physical health and social-emotional development.
- **Supporting parents:** We need to reach parents with resources and services they want to become the best support for their baby's healthy development and early learning.
- **Quality, affordable child care:** We need to make sure every family who needs it has access to quality, affordable child care for their infants and toddlers that offers one-on-one relationships with qualified teachers and positive early learning experiences.

**It's time to bring attention to what babies - and families - in North Carolina need to thrive.**

## About babies in North Carolina:

- 120,779 babies were born in North Carolina in 2016 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- 54% of children under age 3 live in poor or low-income families (National Center for Children in Poverty)
- 56% of children under age 6 have had developmental screenings (ZERO TO THREE)
- 62% of mothers with infants are working (ZERO TO THREE)
- The annual cost of center-based infant child care is \$9,254, more than 41% of the median income for a single parent (Child Care Aware)
- 61% of children under age 3 experience one or more risk factors known to increase the chance of poor health, school, and developmental outcomes (National Center for Children in Poverty)

**Learn more at: [www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org/think-babies.html](http://www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org/think-babies.html)**

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The NC Early Education Coalition is a proud partner in the national ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ campaign and in the Pritzker Children's Initiative's National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.