



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2018

**Communities in NC receive funding to support young children and families
NC Early Education Coalition announces eight recipients of mini-grants for community
advocacy activities**

Chapel Hill, NC – The NC Early Education Coalition (the Coalition) announced today that eight communities in North Carolina will receive Think Babies™ Community Advocacy Activity Mini-Grants in order to support community advocacy efforts focused on infants, toddlers, their educators, and their families. This funding is provided by the Coalition, with support from the national ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ campaign and the Pritzker Children’s Initiative’s National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.

The mini-grants are a component of Think Babies™ NC. This statewide initiative seeks to ensure that North Carolina’s young children, ages 0- 3, benefit from effective public policies, programs and funding to promote a solid foundation for what they need to thrive: healthy beginnings, supported families, and quality early care and learning experiences.

Communities were invited to apply for a mini-grant to design a local activity to increase public awareness and policymaker support to address issues facing the state’s youngest children, ages 0-3, their educators, and their families. The Coalition received 24 applications from organizations across the state.

“We are very excited about the opportunity to bring the Think Babies™ NC initiative to a local level,” says Michele Rivest, Policy Director of the Coalition. “We know that these committed advocates will raise awareness of the issues facing infants and toddlers, and together we will build a stronger network to help advance solutions in local communities and throughout North Carolina.”

The following organizations are the recipients of the Think Babies™ Community Advocacy Activity Mini-Grants:

Alliance for Children will address issues impacting young children and families through a public awareness and media campaign, as well as a series of community forums to engage community leaders, business leaders, parents, grandparents, early childhood educators, social workers, direct service providers and other stakeholders.

Ashe County Partnership for Children will hold two community forums to engage and educate community leaders, elected officials, business leaders, parents and early child educators about early childhood policies, while also addressing current and emerging issues in the community that impact the lives of infants and toddlers.

Montgomery County Partnership for Children, in collaboration with the Montgomery THRIVE Task Force, will hold a community screening of the documentary *Resilience*. This screening will take place as part of a community resource fair and will be followed by a guided panel discussion of the film.

Partnership for Children of Johnston County will invite state-level policymakers, local businesses, civic, education and government leaders to take part in a Think Babies™ Bus Tour, lunch, and conversation with parents and early childhood educators to highlight the disparities in accessibility to high-quality child care throughout the county.

Randolph County Partnership for Children, serving as the lead agency for the county's KidsReadyNC Initiative, will hold roundtable events at local libraries for policymakers, parents and the general public to discuss issues impacting young children and families. A tour for policymakers and community leaders will also be coordinated to showcase high-quality child care programs and facilitate conversations with parents and educators.

Rockingham County Partnership for Children, as part of the STRIVE Initiative, will conduct a Family Perceptions Study to engage community members and learn about their experiences with early education and family support. This assessment will be shared with policymakers and community leaders at the 3rd Annual Eggs and Issues breakfast, which will serve as the launch for a county-wide campaign to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education.

University of North Carolina at Greensboro will increase awareness of the needs of the early education workforce by facilitating a range of activities, including focus groups with infant and toddler teachers, a public awareness and advocacy campaign, and a strategic job shadowing event that will allow policymakers and other leaders to learn about infant/toddler development and gain first-hand experience in high-quality infant and toddler classrooms.

UNC Pembroke Foundation will increase public awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among policymakers and key stakeholders through a community forum and conversation with policymakers and local leaders about how to address the prevalence of ACEs in their community.

For more information about the mini-grants and the Think Babies™ NC initiative, please visit www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org/think-babies.html.

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About the North Carolina Early Education Coalition

The North Carolina Early Education Coalition works to ensure that all children have access to high quality early care and learning experiences. Since 1990, the organization has highlighted the proven power of quality early childhood education by sharing information and resources with parents, professionals and policymakers. 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. For more information, please visit www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org, facebook.com/nearlyedcoalition or follow [@NCEarlyEdCo](#) on Twitter.