



**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**



Think Babies™ Advocacy Academy Toolkit

Fall 2018



PRITZKER

Children's Initiative

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.

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**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**



SECTION 1

Facts about Infants, Toddlers, and Families



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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 our 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

Contact: Michele Rivest, Policy Director, NC Early Education Coalition
(919) 218-0224 | michele.rivest@nearlyeducationcoalition.org



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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.



Raise the Banner for Infants, Toddlers and their Families

Join us as we work to create the change that American families want and need.



Written by Matthew Melmed, Executive Director of ZERO TO THREE, and Janet Froetscher, President of Pritzker Children's Initiative

More than [2.3 million infants and toddlers live in poverty](#) in our country today. Many more struggle just to meet their children's basic needs, let alone provide their infants and toddlers with the high-quality early experiences that they need to become confident, empathetic, contributing members of society. One million children start kindergarten each year unready to succeed in school. While many data points tell this story, behind each number is the real story of a real American family. Their collective stories demonstrate the need for a much greater focus by our policymakers on children birth to age 3.

The Spieker family from Iowa is just one example. Their story is similar to the story of many families today. Both parents have had to work full-time to provide the best opportunities possible for their children. Sara works at a community college, and her husband has worked in advanced manufacturing for 13 years. With the birth of their third child, Sara made a difficult decision. She left her job because health insurance and child care cost more than her income.

Families like the Spiekers are the driving force behind our work at the Pritzker Children's Initiative and ZERO TO THREE. We share a commitment to improving outcomes for infants and toddlers and ensuring all families can support their child's healthy development. We work tirelessly to provide greater opportunities for hard-working parents who simply want to give their young children the healthiest, best possible start. Our challenge is that millions of our youngest citizens are not getting the support that they need at the most critical time in their cognitive, social and emotional growth. The U.S. cannot continue to fail these children who hold the key to our future.

In 2018, the Pritzker Children's Initiative and ZERO TO THREE are combining our voices and partnering to raise the volume on this critical conversation. We believe that all babies should get healthy starts, and their parents should have the support they need to make this happen. The research is clear: the most rapid period of brain development is in the first years of life, when a baby's brain forms more than a million new neural connections every second. That is why we are collaborating to advance the banner for a common cause: babies, toddlers, and families. All families with young children should be strengthened and feel supported. High-quality child care and positive early learning experiences should be affordable and accessible for everyone. Children and families with additional challenges, such as those living in poverty or experiencing trauma, should have access to the services they need to buffer those experiences and get a healthy start. Simply put, all babies should have the opportunity for success in school and life.

The Pritzker Children's Initiative and ZERO TO THREE are working with state partners to help advance solutions. Together, we will engage networks of parents, providers, and advocates. We will engage and inform public sector partners and policymakers, providing them with the tools they need to effect change in their states and communities, and ultimately our entire nation.

Join us as we work to create the change that American families want and need. Learn more about our work. Share our resources. Get engaged. Spread the word and raise the banner with us. Together, we can do so much more than any one of us can do on our own; we can demonstrate that the U.S. truly values babies and young children.

North Carolina

Do you know what lies ahead for North Carolina? No need to consult a crystal ball. The clearest way to envision what the future holds is to take a look at the babies. They tell us an important story of what it is currently like to be a very young child in this state and the important resources that can change the future life course for the many children who are not getting off to the best start.

A baby's early experiences shape the brain's architecture into a strong—or fragile—foundation for learning, health, and success in the workplace. Adverse early experiences, such as poverty, can weaken babies' brain development and follow them their entire lives. A state's ability to build a strong, competitive economy in an increasingly global marketplace is jeopardized when the future of so many young children is compromised. By evaluating these facts and using them to improve relevant programs and services, North Carolina can re-prioritize infants, toddlers, and their families and change the future for all of us.

All babies in North Carolina, and across the United States, need **good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences** to foster healthy brain development and realize their full potential. How does North Carolina compare with the United States in providing these supports?

The Basics about Infants and Toddlers in North Carolina

| | STATE | NATIONAL |
|--|---------|------------|
| Total population under age 3 | 362,108 | 11,886,860 |
| Percentage of children under age 18 who are infants and toddlers | 16% | 16% |
| Live in families with parents who are unemployed | 13% | 11% |
| Live with an unmarried parent | 36% | 34% |
| Mothers in the labor force with infants | 62% | 62% |

KIDS COUNT RANKING:

34

STATE RANKING FOR CHILDREN 0-18 WELL-BEING

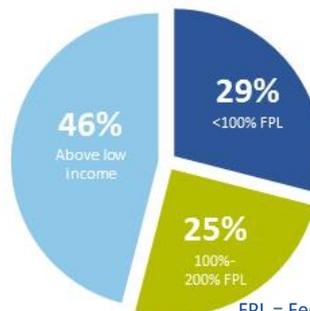


BABIES AT RISK:

Infants and toddlers by family income level

In North Carolina, a significant percentage of infants and toddlers live in low-income families, leaving them particularly vulnerable. Research shows that poverty at an early age can be especially harmful, affecting later achievement and employment.

North Carolina



National



FPL = Federal Poverty Level

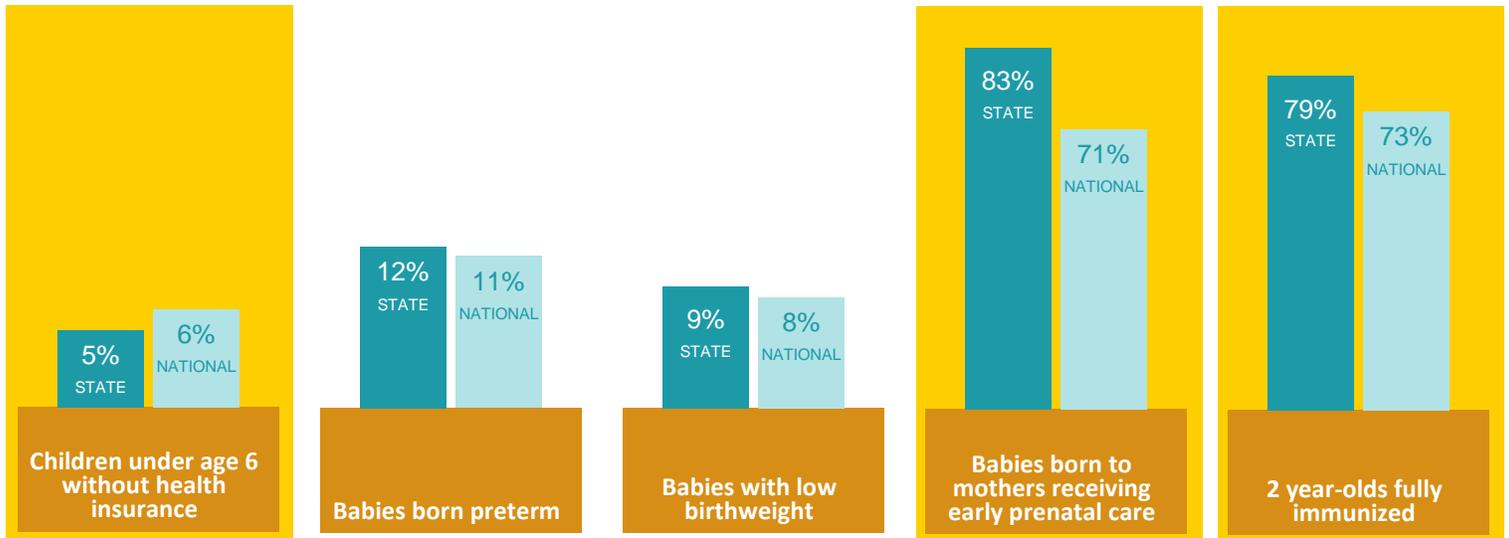
SOURCE: National Center for Children in Poverty

NORTH CAROLINA'S GOOD HEALTH



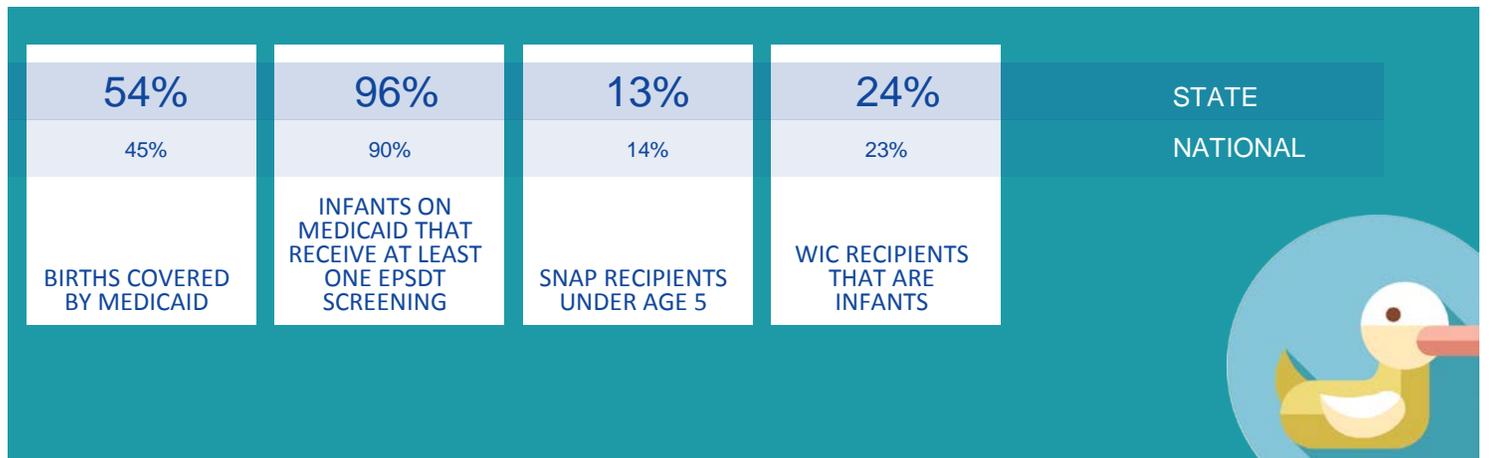
Good health is the foundation from which young children grow and develop physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. The need for high-quality medical care and adequate nutrition before birth and during a child's earliest years is more crucial than at most other times in life. Preventive care and screening can catch problems early and are key building blocks for healthy early development.

HOW DOES NORTH CAROLINA'S GOOD HEALTH COMPARE WITH U.S.?



HOW CAN WE SUPPORT GOOD HEALTH?

Programs can help ensure that North Carolina's babies get a healthy start in life, as health and nutrition programs play a key role in protecting the health of the most vulnerable infants and toddlers. These programs include **Medicaid**, the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, and the **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**. For more information on these programs, go to www.zerotothree.org/goodhealth.

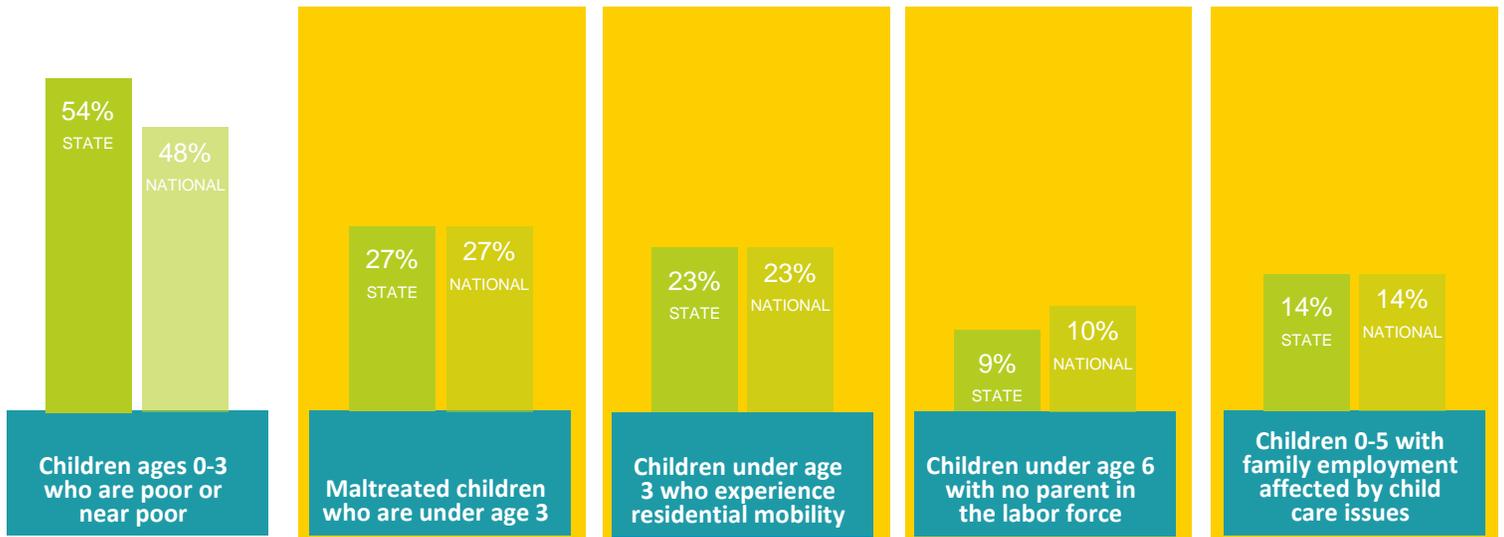


NORTH CAROLINA'S STRONG FAMILIES



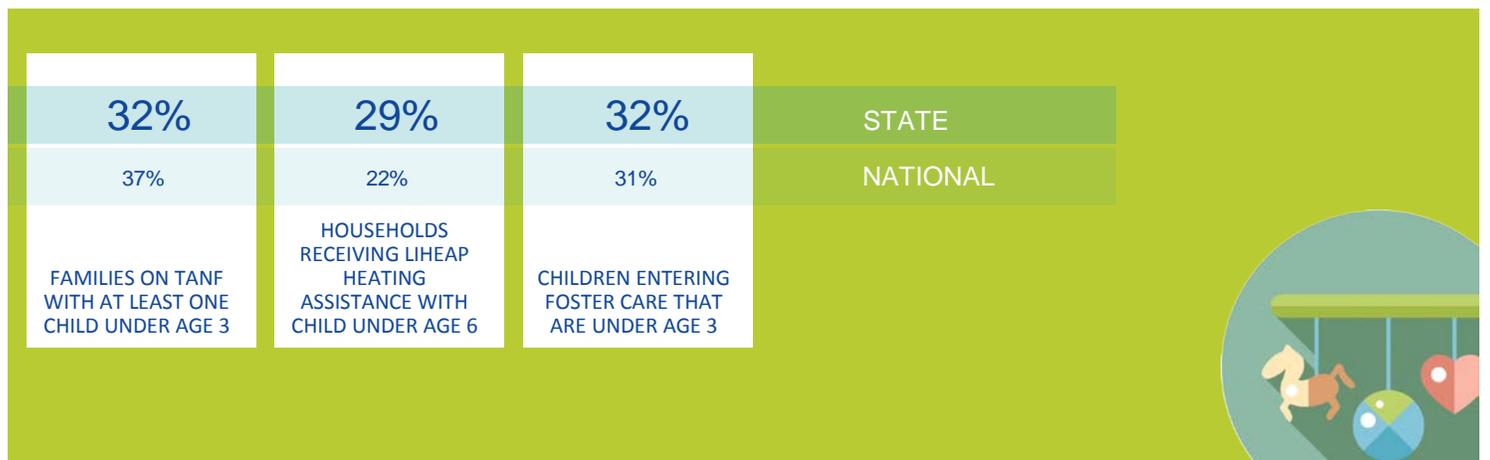
Young children develop in the context of their families, where supportive relationships nurture their growth. Especially during an economic downturn, it can be challenging for parents to provide their children the necessities of life. During these early years, factors like family stress, multiple moves, fluctuating family structure, difficult economic situations, negative environmental effects, and abuse and neglect can impair the development of infants and toddlers.

HOW DO NORTH CAROLINA'S STRONG FAMILIES COMPARE TO THE U.S.?



HOW CAN WE SUPPORT STRONG FAMILIES?

Programs like **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**, **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**, **Home Visiting**, **Child Welfare**, and **Paid Family Leave** play an important role in helping North Carolina's families support their child's healthy growth and development. For more information on these programs, go to www.zerotothree.org/strongfamilies.

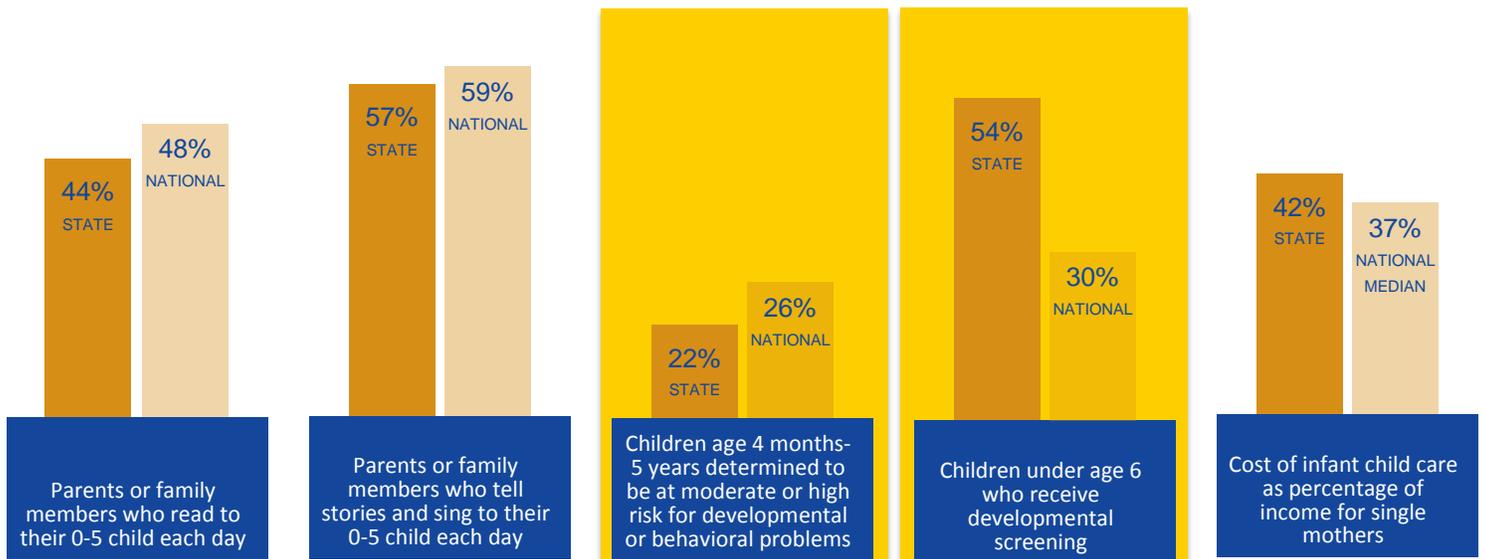


NORTH CAROLINA'S POSITIVE EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES



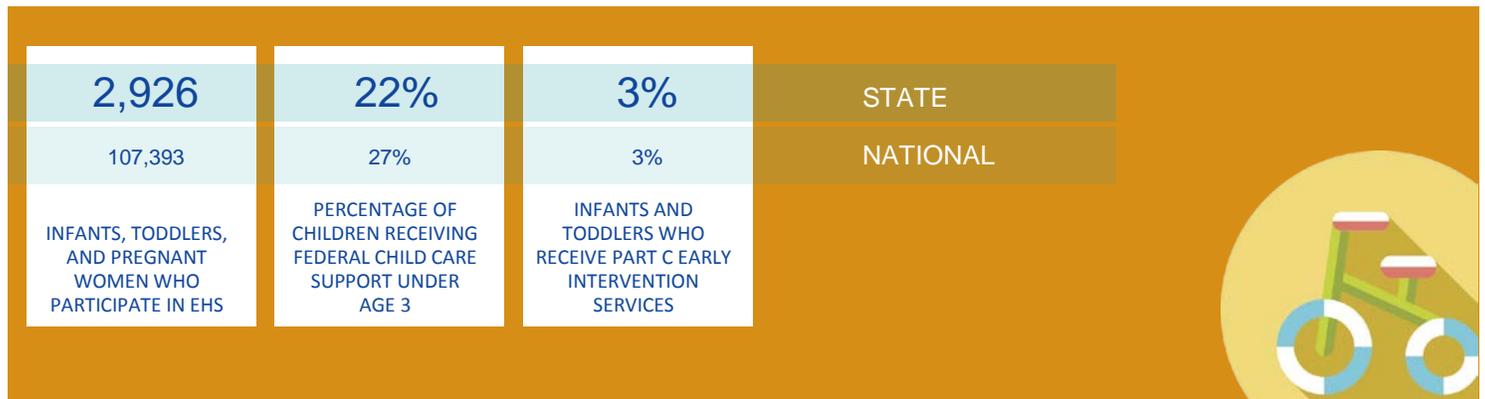
For very young children, learning takes place through play, the active exploration of their environment, and, most importantly, through positive interactions with the significant adults in their lives. Gaps between children of different income levels in the amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction appear early and widen long before a child enters school. Relationships with parents, early childhood professionals, and caregivers are critical as the brain forms the complex web of visual, language, motor, and social-emotional connections essential for later learning.

HOW DO NORTH CAROLINA'S POSITIVE EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES COMPARE TO THE U.S.?



HOW CAN WE SUPPORT POSITIVE EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES?

For infants and toddlers, learning unfolds in many settings, including the home, **child care centers**, **Early Head Start (EHS)**, **family child care homes**, and **family, friend, and neighbor care**. High-quality care that promotes positive early learning can have lasting effects into adulthood, particularly for children who are at risk for starting school behind their peers. For more information on these programs, go to www.zerotothree.org/earlylearning.



| NC Early Education Coalition | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------|----|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| County-Level Infant-Toddler Data Indicators | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Demographics | | | | | | Healthy Beginnings | | | Early Care and Learning | | | Supported Families | | |
| | Number of Live Births | Child Population, 0-3 | Child Population by Race, 0-3 | | | | Babies Born at a Low Birthweight | Children Receiving Early Intervention Services, 0-3 | Children in Food Insecure Households, 0-18 | Number of Children Eligible for Subsidy, 0-3 | Percent of Eligible Children Served, 0-3 | Total Number of 4- and 5-Star Programs Serving Infants and Toddlers | Children Age 0-5 Living in Families Below 200% FPL | Children Age 0-5 with All Parents Working | Children Age 0-5 Living in Single Parent Families |
| African-American | | | White | Hispanic | Other | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alamance | 1,856 | 5,398 | 23% | 53% | 24% | 2% | 9% | 6% | 23% | 1,616 | 16% | 30 | 40% | 72% | 44% |
| Alexander | 343 | 1,055 | 7% | 86% | 10% | 2% | 10% | 5% | 24% | 330 | 12% | 5 | 40% | 72% | 34% |
| Alleghany | 95 | 300 | 3% | 63% | 23% | 0% | 7% | 18% | 25% | 136 | 21% | 1 | 59% | 74% | 45% |
| Anson | 266 | 723 | 54% | 39% | 7% | 1% | 11% | 4% | 25% | 285 | 18% | 16 | 54% | 67% | 65% |
| Ashe | 209 | 674 | 2% | 91% | 13% | 0% | 11% | 6% | 26% | 269 | 22% | 6 | 53% | 69% | 45% |
| Avery | 149 | 412 | 2% | 83% | 12% | 2% | 15% | 10% | 22% | 160 | 12% | 3 | 54% | 65% | 35% |
| Beaufort | 431 | 1,371 | 32% | 53% | 20% | 1% | 9% | 8% | 23% | 503 | 32% | 17 | 53% | 64% | 44% |
| Bertie | 190 | 513 | 67% | 29% | 7% | 0% | 11% | 5% | 25% | 262 | 6% | 8 | 61% | 64% | 50% |
| Bladen | 333 | 1,055 | 38% | 43% | 16% | 4% | 13% | 6% | 28% | 431 | 13% | 13 | 61% | 61% | 66% |
| Brunswick | 978 | 3,175 | 15% | 74% | 12% | 2% | 11% | 5% | 26% | 1,229 | 9% | 13 | 54% | 67% | 38% |
| Buncombe | 2,595 | 7,858 | 9% | 75% | 14% | 2% | 9% | 5% | 22% | 2,352 | 20% | 38 | 43% | 68% | 32% |
| Burke | 900 | 2,645 | 7% | 69% | 15% | 6% | 9% | 6% | 26% | 864 | 20% | 19 | 44% | 73% | 49% |
| Cabarrus | 2,477 | 7,230 | 20% | 62% | 21% | 6% | 9% | 6% | 19% | 1,580 | 17% | 27 | 28% | 70% | 28% |
| Caldwell | 822 | 2,436 | 7% | 82% | 12% | 1% | 12% | 8% | 25% | 846 | 20% | 26 | 47% | 72% | 39% |
| Camden | 90 | 289 | 17% | 94% | 5% | 4% | 4% | 8% | 21% | 75 | 9% | 2 | 34% | 69% | 27% |
| Carteret | 546 | 1,806 | 8% | 78% | 11% | 3% | 7% | 4% | 24% | 581 | 10% | 9 | 45% | 69% | 35% |
| Caswell | 203 | 617 | 30% | 60% | 12% | 0% | 13% | 6% | 25% | 201 | 8% | 2 | 44% | 66% | 45% |
| Catawba | 1,664 | 5,222 | 12% | 63% | 21% | 7% | 8% | 5% | 23% | 1,514 | 29% | 28 | 39% | 73% | 36% |
| Chatham | 640 | 1,908 | 14% | 61% | 31% | 2% | 10% | 5% | 20% | 499 | 15% | 20 | 34% | 70% | 27% |
| Cherokee | 257 | 689 | 3% | 90% | 8% | 3% | 10% | 10% | 26% | 275 | 27% | 3 | 53% | 67% | 30% |
| Chowan | 113 | 430 | 43% | 48% | 8% | 0% | 11% | 5% | 28% | 185 | 8% | 6 | 54% | 70% | 50% |
| Clay | 101 | 264 | 3% | 83% | 17% | 0% | 7% | 9% | 27% | 121 | 29% | 3 | 64% | 65% | 51% |
| Cleveland | 1,059 | 3,197 | 26% | 66% | 7% | 1% | 10% | 7% | 25% | 1,099 | 11% | 31 | 47% | 70% | 55% |
| Columbus | 593 | 1,813 | 33% | 49% | 14% | 4% | 13% | 5% | 26% | 714 | 9% | 13 | 64% | 58% | 56% |
| Craven | 1,439 | 4,421 | 21% | 55% | 11% | 4% | 8% | 5% | 24% | 1,399 | 15% | 39 | 49% | 65% | 35% |
| Cumberland | 5,446 | 16,276 | 35% | 38% | 16% | 4% | 10% | 4% | 23% | 4,908 | 14% | 113 | 49% | 64% | 41% |
| Currituck | 262 | 798 | 8% | 88% | 6% | 1% | 6% | 7% | 21% | 270 | 4% | 3 | 47% | 64% | 22% |
| Dare | 319 | 1,035 | 5% | 76% | 18% | 1% | 6% | 7% | 21% | 342 | 7% | 8 | 40% | 72% | 25% |
| Davidson | 1771 | 5,249 | 12% | 73% | 15% | 2% | 10% | 6% | 23% | 1,699 | 14% | 33 | 41% | 73% | 37% |
| Davie | 420 | 1,148 | 9% | 82% | 16% | 4% | 10% | 8% | 21% | 307 | 17% | 7 | 35% | 67% | 39% |
| Duplin | 706 | 2,221 | 24% | 37% | 41% | 1% | 9% | 6% | 25% | 822 | 24% | 18 | 56% | 63% | 51% |
| Durham | 4,346 | 13,051 | 32% | 33% | 24% | 5% | 9% | 5% | 20% | 3,894 | 17% | 145 | 40% | 71% | 42% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Edgecombe | 567 | 1,770 | 67% | 29% | 11% | 1% | 13% | 4% | 29% | 712 | 12% | 28 | 56% | 69% | 75% |
| Forsyth | 4,495 | 13,452 | 29% | 45% | 24% | 3% | 10% | 6% | 23% | 3,839 | 23% | 91 | 39% | 70% | 42% |
| Franklin | 683 | 2,082 | 28% | 59% | 14% | 1% | 9% | 6% | 21% | 616 | 16% | 13 | 42% | 65% | 37% |
| Gaston | 2,524 | 7,571 | 21% | 67% | 12% | 2% | 9% | 6% | 24% | 2,099 | 17% | 45 | 40% | 68% | 43% |
| Gates | 111 | 317 | 27% | 70% | 5% | 0% | 9% | 4% | 23% | 107 | 17% | 4 | 45% | 64% | 34% |
| Graham | 84 | 260 | 0% | 82% | 5% | 13% | 5% | 7% | 30% | 81 | 31% | 4 | 53% | 53% | 8% |
| Granville | 570 | 1,678 | 31% | 53% | 17% | 1% | 10% | 4% | 20% | 531 | 18% | 14 | 43% | 68% | 43% |
| Greene | 207 | 632 | 32% | 38% | 28% | 1% | 13% | 3% | 24% | 239 | 7% | 3 | 54% | 67% | 54% |
| Guilford | 6,258 | 18,393 | 40% | 38% | 16% | 7% | 9% | 5% | 22% | 5,105 | 24% | 137 | 38% | 71% | 41% |
| Halifax | 559 | 1,697 | 57% | 30% | 7% | 5% | 10% | 6% | 27% | 679 | 15% | 14 | 61% | 63% | 68% |
| Harnett | 1,861 | 5,686 | 21% | 60% | 20% | 3% | 9% | 4% | 23% | 1,921 | 6% | 34 | 51% | 67% | 31% |
| Haywood | 616 | 1,743 | 3% | 90% | 9% | 1% | 9% | 9% | 25% | 632 | 32% | 16 | 52% | 66% | 41% |
| Henderson | 1,089 | 3,249 | 6% | 74% | 21% | 2% | 9% | 5% | 21% | 995 | 16% | 28 | 44% | 66% | 31% |
| Hertford | 223 | 676 | 68% | 28% | 8% | 2% | 10% | 6% | 26% | 327 | 10% | 10 | 64% | 69% | 61% |
| Hoke | 935 | 2,823 | 27% | 43% | 20% | 9% | 9% | 5% | 25% | 1,035 | 14% | 10 | 56% | 66% | 37% |
| Hyde | 39 | 136 | 23% | 69% | 17% | 0% | 3% | 7% | 23% | 59 | 2% | 0 | 59% | 67% | 27% |
| Iredell | 1,924 | 5,550 | 16% | 70% | 13% | 4% | 8% | 7% | 21% | 1,358 | 17% | 26 | 33% | 69% | 36% |
| Jackson | 392 | 1,181 | 3% | 65% | 16% | 15% | 10% | 7% | 26% | 409 | 21% | 12 | 50% | 69% | 41% |
| Johnston | 2,336 | 6,817 | 18% | 63% | 26% | 1% | 9% | 6% | 21% | 1,926 | 14% | 40 | 38% | 65% | 33% |
| Jones | 83 | 287 | 27% | 55% | 10% | 0% | 5% | 7% | 27% | 132 | 11% | 2 | 55% | 66% | 41% |
| Lee | 810 | 2,315 | 21% | 45% | 30% | 2% | 9% | 7% | 23% | 731 | 14% | 21 | 44% | 69% | 44% |
| Lenoir | 647 | 1,906 | 46% | 39% | 17% | 1% | 11% | 8% | 25% | 815 | 12% | 13 | 56% | 68% | 50% |
| Lincoln | 809 | 2,398 | 7% | 84% | 12% | 2% | 10% | 5% | 23% | 618 | 20% | 17 | 36% | 67% | 30% |
| Macon | 333 | 1,027 | 2% | 80% | 18% | 2% | 9% | 9% | 26% | 379 | 22% | 6 | 51% | 65% | 32% |
| Madison | 196 | 622 | 1% | 96% | 4% | 0% | 10% | 5% | 25% | 194 | 14% | 4 | 51% | 64% | 41% |
| Martin | 237 | 737 | 43% | 48% | 11% | 1% | 13% | 7% | 25% | 353 | 9% | 4 | 61% | 68% | 32% |
| McDowell | 444 | 1,383 | 6% | 79% | 14% | 1% | 13% | 9% | 26% | 491 | 16% | 9 | 52% | 69% | 56% |
| Mecklenburg | 14,876 | 43,704 | 32% | 37% | 22% | 8% | 10% | 5% | 20% | 9,132 | 22% | 290 | 31% | 65% | 35% |
| Mitchell | 141 | 437 | 1% | 82% | 16% | 2% | 8% | 10% | 27% | 176 | 18% | 2 | 53% | 66% | 32% |
| Montgomery | 296 | 922 | 20% | 46% | 34% | 2% | 10% | 3% | 25% | 361 | 14% | 5 | 54% | 68% | 36% |
| Moore | 1,132 | 3,148 | 16% | 72% | 13% | 2% | 10% | 7% | 23% | 956 | 20% | 21 | 43% | 67% | 37% |
| Nash | 1,016 | 3,080 | 45% | 41% | 15% | 2% | 9% | 5% | 23% | 880 | 21% | 23 | 41% | 65% | 54% |
| New Hanover | 2,241 | 6,869 | 19% | 65% | 12% | 2% | 8% | 5% | 22% | 1,907 | 16% | 31 | 40% | 67% | 36% |
| Northampton | 200 | 520 | 63% | 32% | 9% | 0% | 14% | 8% | 30% | 244 | 8% | 5 | 61% | 60% | 74% |
| Onslow | 3,959 | 12,505 | 13% | 54% | 14% | 2% | 6% | 5% | 22% | 3,783 | 13% | 24 | 54% | 61% | 26% |
| Orange | 1,166 | 3,606 | 16% | 64% | 18% | 12% | 9% | 6% | 18% | 791 | 24% | 33 | 29% | 70% | 25% |
| Pamlico | 98 | 269 | 20% | 68% | 7% | 0% | 9% | 6% | 24% | 113 | 20% | 6 | 52% | 63% | 33% |
| Pasquotank | 479 | 1,518 | 37% | 47% | 9% | 2% | 8% | 7% | 25% | 652 | 16% | 13 | 60% | 74% | 47% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|--|-----|-----|-----|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Pender | 651 | 1,876 | 17% | 71% | 18% | 1% | 9% | 6% | 23% | 621 | 12% | 16 | 47% | 65% | 32% |
| Perquimans | 122 | 372 | 23% | 70% | 5% | 0% | 13% | 8% | 26% | 153 | 5% | 5 | 55% | 64% | 36% |
| Person | 401 | 1,257 | 30% | 59% | 8% | 1% | 8% | 5% | 24% | 421 | 13% | 12 | 43% | 69% | 50% |
| Pitt | 2,023 | 6,327 | 41% | 43% | 11% | 3% | 10% | 5% | 23% | 2,088 | 13% | 41 | 50% | 67% | 45% |
| Polk | 140 | 453 | 7% | 79% | 13% | 0% | 7% | 7% | 23% | 118 | 5% | 1 | 37% | 60% | 34% |
| Randolph | 1,600 | 4,754 | 9% | 69% | 23% | 3% | 9% | 6% | 24% | 1,448 | 19% | 18 | 43% | 69% | 40% |
| Richmond | 518 | 1,540 | 38% | 49% | 13% | 5% | 11% | 6% | 28% | 623 | 24% | 9 | 56% | 70% | 56% |
| Robeson | 1,775 | 5,163 | 23% | 17% | 23% | 41% | 12% | 5% | 30% | 2,019 | 18% | 30 | 62% | 62% | 62% |
| Rockingham | 937 | 2,810 | 22% | 64% | 13% | 1% | 10% | 5% | 24% | 1,019 | 17% | 10 | 49% | 68% | 46% |
| Rowan | 1,650 | 4,730 | 20% | 63% | 17% | 2% | 10% | 5% | 24% | 1,393 | 21% | 24 | 42% | 71% | 46% |
| Rutherford | 659 | 2,025 | 13% | 75% | 9% | 3% | 10% | 7% | 27% | 825 | 18% | 15 | 53% | 67% | 40% |
| Sampson | 831 | 2,458 | 23% | 34% | 39% | 2% | 10% | 4% | 24% | 842 | 18% | 13 | 51% | 67% | 37% |
| Scotland | 455 | 1,316 | 46% | 32% | 5% | 18% | 11% | 4% | 32% | 555 | 11% | 15 | 60% | 64% | 64% |
| Stanly | 690 | 2,056 | 17% | 70% | 9% | 3% | 11% | 5% | 24% | 601 | 14% | 19 | 42% | 71% | 43% |
| Stokes | 380 | 1,200 | 7% | 92% | 5% | 1% | 8% | 6% | 24% | 364 | 11% | 6 | 36% | 71% | 37% |
| Surry | 723 | 2,227 | 5% | 73% | 24% | 1% | 7% | 6% | 24% | 761 | 16% | 3 | 48% | 68% | 34% |
| Swain | 169 | 610 | 3% | 41% | 14% | 38% | 12% | 9% | 32% | 266 | 16% | 4 | 56% | 67% | 56% |
| Transylvania | 263 | 839 | 8% | 83% | 9% | 2% | 10% | 5% | 24% | 246 | 18% | 7 | 38% | 65% | 31% |
| Tyrrell | 51 | 129 | 32% | 47% | 22% | 0% | 2% | 10% | 27% | 50 | 0% | 0 | 53% | 71% | 50% |
| Union | 2,416 | 7,102 | 15% | 70% | 22% | 4% | 8% | 6% | 18% | 1,648 | 17% | 38 | 28% | 64% | 24% |
| Vance | 530 | 1,641 | 58% | 28% | 17% | 1% | 13% | 5% | 26% | 689 | 18% | 21 | 62% | 62% | 65% |
| Wake | 13,019 | 38,427 | 23% | 54% | 18% | 9% | 8% | 7% | 18% | 6,256 | 20% | 258 | 24% | 66% | 26% |
| Warren | 177 | 551 | 56% | 29% | 8% | 6% | 14% | 7% | 26% | 233 | 18% | 4 | 58% | 62% | 66% |
| Washington | 126 | 369 | 54% | 30% | 17% | 0% | 15% | 8% | 25% | 190 | 22% | 2 | 62% | 65% | 85% |
| Watauga | 367 | 1,098 | 2% | 83% | 8% | 4% | 8% | 6% | 23% | 323 | 15% | 10 | 40% | 69% | 25% |
| Wayne | 1,636 | 4,995 | 32% | 43% | 23% | 2% | 8% | 5% | 25% | 1,728 | 15% | 29 | 51% | 66% | 47% |
| Wilkes | 691 | 2,077 | 7% | 78% | 16% | 1% | 11% | 7% | 26% | 670 | 19% | 10 | 45% | 67% | 39% |
| Wilson | 964 | 2,845 | 42% | 34% | 22% | 2% | 12% | 5% | 28% | 1,105 | 25% | 13 | 54% | 68% | 52% |
| Yadkin | 392 | 1,116 | 5% | 74% | 27% | 0% | 8% | 6% | 25% | 363 | 3% | 2 | 41% | 71% | 29% |
| Yancey | 154 | 512 | 2% | 83% | 15% | 0% | 8% | 5% | 27% | 210 | 7% | 1 | 58% | 61% | 43% |
| North Carolina | 120,765 | 361,120 | 24% | 53% | 18% | 5% | 9% | 5% | 23% | 102,971 | 18% | 2,004 | 46% | 65% | 38% |
| Source | Kids Count, 2016 | U.S. Census, 2016 | Kids Count, 2016 (Estimated using the quintile approach with 0-5 data) | | | | Kids Count, 2016 | Kids Count, 2016 | Kids Count, 2015 | DCDEE, 2000 | DCDEE, 2000 | DCDEE, 2018 | DCDEE, 2000; Kids Count, 2016 | DCDEE, 2000; Kids Count, 2016 | U.S. Census, 2016 |

September 2018

Maltreatment Rate by County
Age: 0-3
SFY 2016-2017

| County | Population 0-3 | Maltreatment count | Maltreatment Rate |
|------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Alamance | 7,292 | 96 | 13.17 |
| Alexander | 1,422 | 48 | 33.76 |
| Alleghany | 396 | 24 | 60.61 |
| Anson | 982 | 25 | 25.46 |
| Ashe | 900 | 30 | 33.33 |
| Avery | 560 | 22 | 39.29 |
| Beaufort | 1,829 | 70 | 38.27 |
| Bertie | 718 | 3 | 4.18 |
| Bladen | 1,410 | 23 | 16.31 |
| Brunswick | 4,262 | 121 | 28.39 |
| Buncombe | 10,523 | 245 | 23.28 |
| Burke | 3,550 | 133 | 37.46 |
| Cabarrus | 9,851 | 83 | 8.43 |
| Caldwell | 3,273 | 98 | 29.94 |
| Camden | 390 | 4 | 10.26 |
| Carteret | 2,396 | 37 | 15.44 |
| Caswell | 831 | 20 | 24.07 |
| Catawba | 6,948 | 145 | 20.87 |
| Chatham | 2,584 | 31 | 12.00 |
| Cherokee | 966 | 67 | 69.36 |
| Chowan | 565 | 3 | 5.31 |
| Clay | 370 | 21 | 56.76 |
| Cleveland | 4,284 | 186 | 43.42 |
| Columbus | 2,413 | 40 | 16.58 |
| Craven | 5,875 | 85 | 14.47 |
| Cumberland | 21,474 | 807 | 37.58 |
| Currituck | 1,079 | 13 | 12.05 |
| Dare | 1,395 | 27 | 19.35 |
| Davidson | 7,089 | 183 | 25.81 |
| Davie | 1,579 | 70 | 44.33 |
| Duplin | 2,943 | 100 | 33.98 |
| Durham | 17,490 | 147 | 8.40 |
| Edgecombe | 2,321 | 84 | 36.19 |
| Forsyth | 18,095 | 248 | 13.71 |
| Franklin | 2,821 | 86 | 30.49 |
| Gaston | 10,161 | 136 | 13.38 |
| Gates | 439 | - | 0.00 |
| Graham | 348 | 19 | 54.60 |
| Granville | 2,267 | 40 | 17.64 |
| Greene | 848 | 2 | 2.36 |
| Guilford | 24,705 | 222 | 8.99 |

| | | | |
|--------------|--------|-----|-------|
| Halifax | 2,270 | 78 | 34.36 |
| Harnett | 7,621 | 77 | 10.10 |
| Haywood | 2,370 | 91 | 38.40 |
| Henderson | 4,374 | 91 | 20.80 |
| Hertford | 909 | 3 | 3.30 |
| Hoke | 3,768 | 40 | 10.62 |
| Hyde | 178 | 1 | 5.62 |
| Iredell | 7,533 | 304 | 40.36 |
| Jackson | 1,579 | 53 | 33.57 |
| Johnston | 9,313 | 156 | 16.75 |
| Jones | 387 | 8 | 20.67 |
| Lee | 3,119 | 30 | 9.62 |
| Lenoir | 2,567 | 58 | 22.59 |
| Lincoln | 3,235 | 146 | 45.13 |
| Macon | 1,382 | 35 | 25.33 |
| Madison | 833 | 20 | 24.01 |
| Martin | 996 | 22 | 22.09 |
| McDowell | 1,834 | 83 | 45.26 |
| Mecklenburg | 58,775 | 754 | 12.83 |
| Mitchell | 584 | 28 | 47.95 |
| Montgomery | 1,229 | 22 | 17.90 |
| Moore | 4,292 | 54 | 12.58 |
| Nash | 4,116 | 67 | 16.28 |
| New Hanover | 9,181 | 455 | 49.56 |
| Northampton | 731 | 23 | 31.46 |
| Onslow | 16,305 | 498 | 30.54 |
| Orange | 4,833 | 86 | 17.79 |
| Pamlico | 372 | 13 | 34.95 |
| Pasquotank | 2,009 | 27 | 13.44 |
| Pender | 2,545 | 69 | 27.11 |
| Perquimans | 500 | 3 | 6.00 |
| Person | 1,695 | 74 | 43.66 |
| Pitt | 8,386 | 142 | 16.93 |
| Polk | 618 | 16 | 25.89 |
| Randolph | 6,370 | 108 | 16.95 |
| Richmond | 2,061 | 39 | 18.92 |
| Robeson | 6,770 | 285 | 42.10 |
| Rockingham | 3,800 | 126 | 33.16 |
| Rowan | 6,363 | 84 | 13.20 |
| Rutherford | 2,744 | 111 | 40.45 |
| Sampson | 3,240 | 69 | 21.30 |
| Scotland | 1,774 | 82 | 46.22 |
| Stanly | 2,743 | 99 | 36.09 |
| Stokes | 1,628 | 50 | 30.71 |
| Surry | 2,972 | 98 | 32.97 |
| Swain | 812 | 31 | 38.18 |
| Transylvania | 1,141 | 41 | 35.93 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Tyrrell | 173 | 1 | 5.78 |
| Union | 9,834 | 76 | 7.73 |
| Vance | 2,186 | 65 | 29.73 |
| Wake | 51,644 | 527 | 10.20 |
| Warren | 745 | 8 | 10.74 |
| Washington | 507 | 10 | 19.72 |
| Watauga | 1,495 | 26 | 17.39 |
| Wayne | 6,645 | 152 | 22.87 |
| Wilkes | 2,809 | 105 | 37.38 |
| Wilson | 3,824 | 30 | 7.85 |
| Yadkin | 1,520 | 23 | 15.13 |
| Yancey | 686 | 38 | 55.39 |
| State Total | 484,569 | 9,755 | 20.13 |

Source: NC Department of Health and Human Services (2016-2017)

YOUR COUNTY:

Demographics



Number of Live Births

Child Population, Age 0-3

Child Population by Race, Age 0-3

African American: ____
White: ____
Hispanic: ____
Other: ____

Healthy Beginnings



Babies Born at a Low Birthweight

Children Receiving Early Intervention Services, Age 0-3

Children in Food Insecure Households, Age 0-18

Quality Early Care and Learning



Children Eligible for Subsidy, Age 0-3

Percent of Eligible Children Served, Age 0-3

Number of 4- and 5-Star Programs-Serving Infants and Toddlers

Supported Families



Children Below 200% Federal Poverty Level, Age 0-5

Children with All Parents Working, Age 0-5

Children Living in Single Parent Families, Age 0-5

North Carolina Statewide Demographics

Number of live births: 120,765

Child Population, Age 0-3: 361,120

Population by Race/Ethnicity, Age 0-3

African American: 24% White: 53%
Hispanic: 18% Other: 5%

NC Early Education Coalition

Annotated List of Additional Data and Resources

September 2018

As you continue to advocate for infants, toddlers, and their families, utilize the data, fact sheets, and resources included below to gain additional knowledge and build your case as to why legislators should support infants, toddlers, and their families in your community.

Census Data

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217>

- Anyone can access U.S. Census data to find information on basic demographic information. You can create custom reports with whichever data points you choose and can aggregate data at the state, county, city, or town level. Topics include population, housing, education, health, and economic factors. These QuickFacts statistics are available at the link above.

<https://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/nc-census-data/nc-census-lookup>

- You can also access North Carolina's specific Census data on the NC Office of Budget and Management website. The State Data Center provides access to data on population, commuting, migration, occupation, households, and social and economic characteristics. When running a report you can choose your geographic area and the data indicators in which you're interested.

Young Child Risk Calculator—National Center for Children in Poverty

<http://www.nccp.org/tools/risk/>

- The National Center for Children in Poverty's website has a Young Child Risk Calculator. Using this tool, you can calculate the number of young children in your state that are in a certain age range, under a certain income level, and meet certain risk factors. Use the calculator to find relevant statistics about North Carolina's youngest children at the link above.

Measures of Child Well-Being—Brandeis University

<http://www.diversitydatakids.org/>

- Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management manages diversitydatakids.org. The website includes hundreds of measures of child wellbeing at the national, state, and local level. You can run your own reports, examine child well-being indicators for your county, compare data across states, or view rankings.

Child Care Fact Sheets—Child Care Aware of America

<http://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/research/statefactsheets/>

- Child Care Aware of America's *Checking In: A Snapshot of the Child Care Landscape—2018 Report* provides an overview of the nationwide child care landscape. At the link above you can access the full report as well as the 2018 Share Toolkit, with relevant social media content. You can also download state-specific fact sheets on child care issues closer to home.

Child Care Fact Sheets—Child Care Services Association

<https://www.childcareservices.org/research/research-reports/nc-ece-data-repository/>

- Child Care Services Association has fact sheets on child care in each county from 2012 to present. Each fact sheet includes information about the number of each children who need care, the number of child care programs, the amount of funding to assist families with child care, and the size of the early childhood workforce in the county. Each county's fact sheet as well as a state-level fact sheet can be found at the link above.

Child Care Fact Sheets—NC Child Care Resource and Referral Network

<http://childcarerrnc.org/s.php?subpage=2017NCRegionalCCRRFactSheets>

- The North Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral Council creates regional fact sheets on demographics, including population, children with working parents, number of early care programs, number of four- and five-star early care programs, number of children served, and workforce data. The fact sheets also include CCR&R services data and contact information.

Child Care Fact Sheets—NC Division of Child Development and Early Education

<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/DCDEE-Sections/Subsidy-Services/Fact-Sheets>

- The Division of Child Development and Early Education within the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services produces yearly fact sheets about child care subsidy. The fact sheets are available at the state level and for each 100 counties. They include information about the county's population, subsidized child care assistance, and benefits to families and communities.

North Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System

<https://www.ecids.nc.gov/ecids/>

- The North Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System (NC ECIDS) contains data related to early childhood programs and services in the state. Users from the public can download standard reports of frequently asked questions from past years or create custom reports. These custom reports can include county-level data. Researchers can make data requests to NC ECIDS for more detailed information.

NC Child County Data Center

<http://www.ncchild.org/what-we-do/data/kids-count-data-center/>

- NC Child's website houses North Carolina's KIDS COUNT Data Center. The KIDS COUNT Data Center has information at the national, state, county, city, school district, and congressional district level. You can search existing indicators or create custom reports using KIDS COUNT and NC Child data. Click the North Carolina icon on the map to find state and county data.

<http://www.ncchild.org/publication/2018-county-data-cards/>

- NC Child also produces yearly County Data Cards. These data cards provide an overview of child well-being in each county and include a description of why this data is important. Finally, the cards include questions for each county's legislators or candidates for office. The state-level data card and each county-level data card for 2018 can be accessed at the link above.

NC Institute of Medicine Health Data

<http://nciom.org/map/>

- The North Carolina Institute of Medicine's website includes an interactive map in which you can explore health data for each county in the state. The map compares counties on the measures of uninsured adults, poverty, infant mortality, and heart disease. On the same page, you can also download the raw data to view the complete data for each county in the state.

<http://nciom.org/nc-health-data/north-carolina-child-and-womens-health-report-cards/>

- The North Carolina Institute of Medicine, in collaboration with NC Child, produces Child Health Report Cards. While this data is not broken down to the county level, the statewide information on key health indicators is crucial to understanding the state of child health in North Carolina. The 2018 report card as well as report cards from 1997 to 2017 can be found at the link above.

NC County Health Rankings

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2018/overview>

- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings allow you to select a state and view how each county's health within that state compares. The rankings include measures on length of life, quality of life, health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, physical environment, and demographics.

Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Data Book—NC Early Childhood Foundation

<https://files.buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Pathways-Data-ESSA-Handout-Final.pdf>

- The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation's Pathways to Grade-Level Reading initiative has the goal of all North Carolina children reading on grade level by the end of third grade. To track progress toward that goal, they have compiled a Pathways Data Book with indicators related to health, education, family support, economic support, and other topics by county.

County Economic Snapshots—NC Justice Center

<http://www.ncjustice.org/?q=budget-and-tax/btc-brief-county-economic-snapshots-2018>

- The NC Justice Center’s Budget & Tax Center published County Economic Snapshots in 2018. Each snapshot provides an overview of unemployment, poverty, housing, health, education, and working family data. Each county snapshot can be found at the link above.

County Data Sheets—United Way

<http://www.unitedwaync.org/county-data-sheets>

- United Way of North Carolina’s website has data sheets for each county in the state. Each data sheet includes information on self-sufficiency standards. Specifically, each data sheet shows the average monthly costs of an individual or family in each county, and the wage required to reach self-sufficiency.

County Housing Profiles

<https://nchousing.org/county-fact-sheets/>

- The North Carolina Housing Coalition has County Profiles for each of North Carolina’s 100 counties on their website. While this data isn’t specific to infants and toddlers, affordable housing is critical to families caring for young children and impacts all aspects of family support. The county profiles, as well as a summary of the original data sources, can be found at the link above.

Early Childhood Homelessness-ACF

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/e cd/homelessness_profile_north_carolina.pdf

- The Administration for Children and Families compiled a report entitled “Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50 State Profiles.” Each profile provides a snapshot of early childhood data available for children who are experiencing homelessness. Access North Carolina’s report at the link above.

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Data

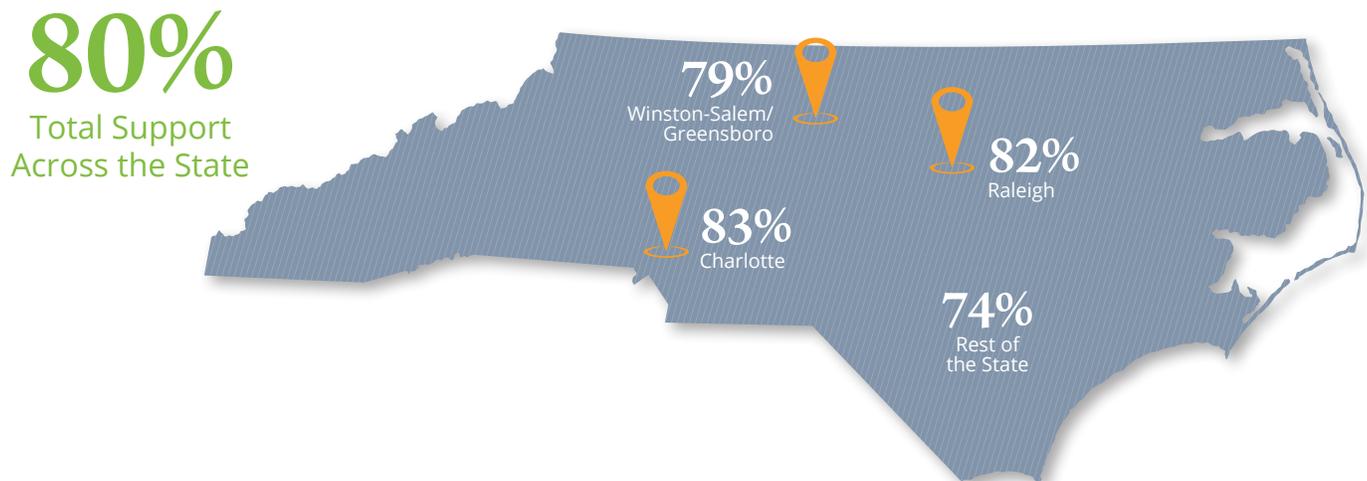
<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/MaternalChildHealthInitiatives/HomeVisiting/pdf/nc.pdf>

- The Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) website has state profiles on the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. The state-level profile explains the North Carolina home visiting program, the families served by the program, and performance highlights in the state. The profile also provides a list of counties participating in the program.

North Carolina voters want to double state investment in early child development.

A new, bipartisan poll commissioned by the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation shows that voters across the political spectrum are united on making quality, birth-to-age-eight early education a top priority for the state.¹ **80% of voters support doubling investment in early education—an annual increase in state general funding from 1% to 2%.** Republicans, Independents and Democrats alike favor a wide range of state investments in young children’s healthy development beginning at birth to ensure their success in school and life.

80% of North Carolina voters support increasing annual state general funding for early child development programs to \$400 million.² This support is seen across the state.

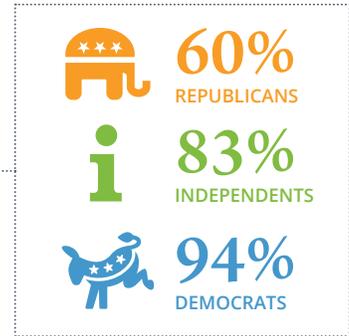


Quality early childhood education is a top priority issue along with improving the quality of public education. 88% of North Carolina voters say it is extremely or very important to them personally to make sure that our children get a strong start in life through quality early childhood education.

¹ **Methodology:** Public Opinion Strategies (R) and Hart Research (D) conducted a telephone survey of N=500 voters in North Carolina on both landline and cell phones. The survey was conducted July 25-29, 2018 and has an overall margin of error of +/- 4.38%. The sample was distributed proportionally throughout the state and is demographically representative of the electorate.

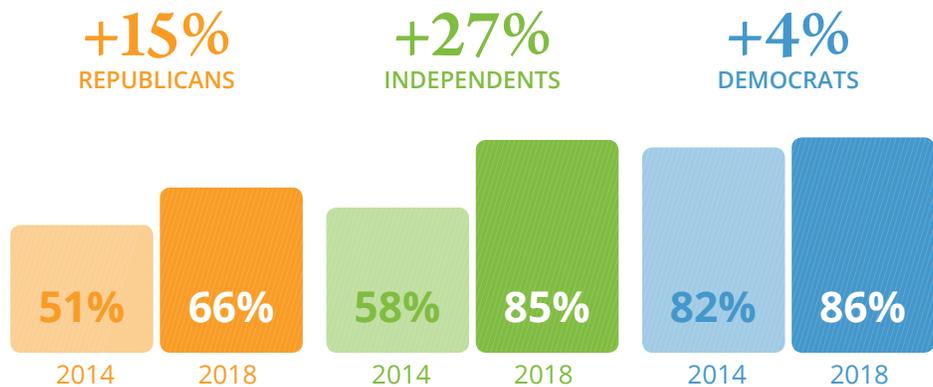
² The survey question asked voters if they supported increasing the budget by \$400 million. It should have been read as support increasing the budget to \$400 million.

80% of North Carolina voters say early education should be a higher priority than reducing business taxes in the state. Majorities across all parties agree.



Voters throughout the state say there is a lack of affordable and quality early education programs. 65% of North Carolina voters say that half or fewer early childhood programs in their area meet both criteria. In fact, respondents making over \$100,000 per year are virtually just as likely (51%) as those who earn less than \$40,000 per year (53%) to say that only some or few programs near them are affordable and high-quality.

North Carolina voters overwhelmingly agree that we should be doing more to ensure children get a strong start prior to kindergarten. In fact, this desire to do more has increased substantially across every party in the last four years.



NC voters recognize that families need more support in the early years. 81% of North Carolinians support the state providing more families with voluntary home visiting and parent education programs that help parents improve their child's healthy development. 87% believe that parents should be able to take paid leave after the birth or adoption of a child. 72% of Republicans, 88% of Independents and 96% of Democrats support increasing access to the state's early childhood programs, Smart Start and NC Pre-K.

Voters agree: North Carolina should invest more in early child development now.

Learn more at www.buildthefoundation.org



**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**



SECTION 2

Core Policies and Programs for Infants and Toddlers



PRITZKER

Children's Initiative

Core Policies for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

CLASP and ZERO TO THREE's *Building Strong Foundations: Advancing Comprehensive Policies for Infants, Toddlers, and Families* project seeks to promote federal and state policies that comprehensively address the wellbeing of infants, toddlers, and families. In the first phase of *Building Strong Foundations*, ZERO TO THREE and CLASP identified 13 policies core to advancing infant-toddler wellbeing, recognizing that all babies need...



Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, and Healthy Parents

- Low-income infants, toddlers, parents, and pregnant women should have **quality, affordable, publicly financed health insurance**.
- Infants, toddlers, parents, and pregnant women should receive appropriate **health screenings, preventive primary care, and medically necessary treatment services**.
- Infants, toddlers, and parents should receive appropriate **screening, diagnosis, and treatment services** to meet their **mental health needs**.
- Low-income families with infants and toddlers and pregnant women should have access to **nutrition support programs**.



Economically Stable Families

- Low-income parents of infants and toddlers should have access to **affordable education and training** to improve their employment opportunities.
- Families in poverty with infants and toddlers should get **cash assistance and refundable tax credits** to supplement their earnings.
- Parents with infants and toddlers should have **paid sick leave** from work when they are ill, when their child or a family member is ill, or to obtain preventive care for themselves or their families. Parents should have **paid family and medical leave** when a child is born, adopted, or newly fostered.
- Low-income families with infants and toddlers should have **affordable, safe, and stable housing**.



Strong Parents

- Families of infants and toddlers should have access to a continuum of **parent support services and resources** to support their child's development.
- Infants and toddlers in the **child welfare system** should receive **developmentally appropriate supports** responsive to the needs of the child and family.



High-Quality Child Care and Early Education Opportunities

- Low-income families with infants and toddlers should get **child care assistance** to afford safe, stable, high-quality child care that promotes children's development and parents' education, training, and work.
- Vulnerable infants, toddlers, pregnant women, and families should have access to **comprehensive early childhood services through Early Head Start**.
- Infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities should be **identified** and receive **early intervention services** in a timely manner.

NC Early Education Coalition

Federal Policies Impacting Infants and Toddlers

September 2018

| Federal Policy | Description |
|--|--|
| Early Learning | |
| Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C | IDEA Part C funds the creation and implementation of statewide systems of early intervention services for eligible infants and toddlers. Infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities, or those with a high risk of developmental delays or disabilities, receive services such as early screening, home visits, counseling, medical care, and speech, occupational, and physical therapy. The policy aims to provide coordinated, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary intervention and care to infants, toddlers, and their families. |
| Early Head Start (EHS) | EHS supports infants, toddlers, and pregnant women living in poverty by offering child development and parenting support services in early childhood education settings or at home visits, referring children and families to additional supportive services, and conducting community assessments to target families in need. EHS's goal is to promote school readiness by ensuring healthy social and cognitive development for infants and toddlers, and by providing educational, health, and socio-emotional supports for families. Funding limitations mean EHS reaches only about six percent of eligible children. |
| Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) | CCDBG provides states with funding to build child care programs and policies that best serve the needs of their population. States can use funding to help working parents find high-quality child care, improve child care systems and safety, or provide subsidy funds to eligible families and providers. Infants and toddlers benefit from CCDBG funding through the direct subsidies to parents and providers, a special set-aside to improve the quality of infant-toddler care, and statewide implementation of safety, health, and licensing standards. |
| Supported Families | |
| Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) | TANF is a time-limited cash assistance program aimed at low-income families with children. Funds can be distributed through cash assistance to families as well as used for job preparation programs, parenting education, crisis intervention, and child care quality improvement. TANF funds help families become self-sufficient, assist families in caring for children in their own homes, and improve the quality of child care for working parents. North Carolina spends less than 10 percent on cash assistance and work activities, using more than half of TANF dollars on child care and pre-k. |
| Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) | MIECHV funds evidence-based, voluntary home visiting programs. These programs include preventive and prenatal health supports, breastfeeding and infant care support, child development information, positive parenting techniques, maternal goal-setting, and linkage to child care, employment services, and other supports. Infants, toddlers, and their families benefit from home visiting through improved maternal and child health, decreased rates of abuse and neglect, and increased healthy development and school readiness. |
| Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) | SSBG provides funding to states to support social service programs. The programs are targeted to low-income individuals, families, and children, though specific eligibility is decided at the state level. Families and children benefit from the SSBG programs that promote self-sufficiency, prevent abuse and neglect, make referrals to services, and provide child care. |
| Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) | CAPTA provides funding and technical assistance in three areas related to child abuse and neglect. Child Protective Services Grants assist states in preventing child abuse and |

| | |
|---|---|
| | neglect, intervening in cases of abuse and neglect, and strengthening the child protective services system. CAPTA Discretionary Grants fund research on prevention, treatment, and evidence-based programs. Community-Based Grants for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect develop or expand community-based programs focused on strengthening families. Each of these funding sources promote strong and stable families and child safety. |
| Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) | Effective October 1, 2019, FFPSA will allow funds previously only available for foster care payments to be used to keep families together by funding evidence-based substance abuse prevention and treatment services, mental health services, and in-home parenting skill services. FFPSA aims to keep children safely with their families and prevent children from having to enter the foster care system. Funding supports children in their own homes or with relatives and settings for pregnant and parenting teens. It also allows IV-E payments for children with parents in residential substance abuse treatment programs. |
| Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) | FVPSA funds organizations and programs that have demonstrated effectiveness in the field of domestic violence prevention or services. These programs may provide shelter, safety planning, counseling, information, legal services, or other support services to victims of domestic or dating violence and their children. |
| Title IV-B of the Social Security Act | Title IV-B provides funding to support children and families through two programs. Part 1 provides grants to states for child welfare services. These services may include prevention, placement into permanent homes, and reunification services. Part 2 provides grants focused on family preservation, reunification, adoption, and family support services. |
| Title IV-E of the Social Security Act | Title IV-E provides funding to support children. Funding goes toward foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, independent living services, kinship care placements, and training for foster parents and staff. |
| Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) | FMLA allows eligible employees of covered employers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for specific family and medical reasons, including childbirth, adoption, a child's serious health condition, and caring for seriously ill family members, including themselves. Employees retain their health coverage during their leave under the same conditions as if they had not taken leave. FMLA allows parents time to build strong relationships with their infants, promotes economic and job security for families, and contributes to strong maternal and child health. |
| Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937 | Section 8 provides housing for low-income families through two programs. The Housing Choice Voucher Program provides vouchers to low-income families to help pay for private housing. Project-Based Rental Assistance contracts with private housing development owners to rent their units to low-income families. This policy aims to help low-income families afford safe and stable housing. |
| Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) | LIHEAP helps households afford energy costs in order to keep families safe and healthy, especially through the winter. Block grants provide funding to states to help low-income households manage the costs of energy bills, energy crises, and energy-related home repairs. Low-income families spend a disproportionately large amount of their budget on energy costs, thus energy assistance allows families with infants and toddlers to allocate that money elsewhere. |
| Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit | The Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit allows individuals to claim a tax credit if they paid for child or dependent care in order to either work or look for work. The credit equals a percentage of the work-related expenses paid to a care provider. This tax credit supports families with infants and toddlers by helping to cover the cost of their care. |
| Earned Income Tax Credit | The Earned Income Tax Credit provides support to working individuals with a low to moderate income. The credit reduces the amount of taxes owed and may provide a refund for those who earned income from working for someone else or themselves. This tax credit provides economic support and security to working parents. This is particularly beneficial to parents of infants and toddlers who tend to have lower incomes than parents of older children. |

| Healthy Beginnings | |
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| Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) | SNAP provides eligible low-income households with a monthly allotment of benefits with which to buy food. The amount is equal to the maximum allotment corresponding to one's household size, less 30 percent of the household's net income. Individuals and families receiving SNAP benefits use an electronic debit card to purchase food. As families with infants and toddlers tend to have lower incomes than families with older children, SNAP benefits are particularly beneficial. |
| Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) | WIC provides supplemental food, nutrition and breastfeeding education, and health, welfare, and social service referrals to low-income pregnant women and low-income children. Women receive services through pregnancy and up to 6 weeks after, breastfeeding women receive services up to their infant's first birthday, non-breastfeeding postpartum women receive services up to 6 months after the end of pregnancy, and children receive services up to age 5. WIC aims to improve maternal, child, and infant health and nutrition. |
| Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) | CACFP reimburses care providers for nutritious food served to eligible children. Training for staff on nutrition, implementation, and child development as relates to food are also reimbursed. CACFP contributes to the growth, wellness, and healthy development of young children in child care centers, child care homes, Head Start, Early Head Start, and afterschool programs. |
| Medicaid | Medicaid pays medical costs for low-income individuals. Although states may set higher coverage levels, Medicaid covers certain individuals below the federal minimum income of 138 percent of the federal poverty level, including children under nineteen, pregnant women, people over 65, people with disabilities, and in states that choose the expansion option, non-aged adults. Medicaid provides over 36 million children with the medically necessary services they need to grow, develop, and thrive. |
| Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) | CHIP is a joint federal-state program that expands health coverage to low-income children. States can expand eligibility for children under Medicaid, create a separate children's health insurance program, or a combination of both. CHIP ensures that children have access to child-appropriate medical services and providers. |
| Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) | Under Medicaid, EPSDT requires states to fund well-child health care, diagnostic services, and treatment services to all Medicaid-eligible children from birth to age 21. EPSDT provides physical, vision, dental, and hearing services and comprehensive health care to treat problems identified in screenings. EPSDT benefits infants and toddlers through the early diagnosis and treatment of health issues and timely immunizations. |
| Community Mental Health Service Block Grant (MHBG) | MHBG provides financial assistance to states to serve children and families with or at-risk of mental health disorders. States use the funding to develop and implement a plan for providing comprehensive community mental health services to adults, children, and families. Infants, toddlers, and families benefit from MHBG through infant and maternal mental health initiatives. |
| Maternal and Child Health Block Grant (MCHBG) | MCHBG provides funding to state public health agencies to serve low-income children, pregnant women, and mothers. The purpose of the funding is to reduce infant mortality, increase immunization rates, provide perinatal care for pregnant women, increase comprehensive care for children with special needs, develop coordinated systems of care, and increase the number of children receiving assessment, diagnoses, and treatment services. |

Sources:

ZERO TO THREE: <https://www.zerotothree.org/>
 Children's Defense Fund: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/>
 Administration for Children and Families: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/>
 Health Resources and Services Administration: <https://www.hrsa.gov/>
 Department of Housing and Urban Development: <https://www.hud.gov/>

NC Early Education Coalition

Programs that Work for Infants, Toddlers, and their Families

September 2018

Each of the programs listed below utilizes evidence-based or evidence-informed practices to create change for infants, toddlers, and their families. With increasing national focus on evidence-based programs, organizations in North Carolina have worked to ensure that funded programs are based in research. The programs listed below meet the definitions of “evidence-based” or “evidence-informed” adopted by The North Carolina Partnership for Children:

- “Evidence-based programs or practices are those that have repeatedly and consistently demonstrated desirable outcomes through application of scientific research methods (replicated experimental, experimental, and quasi experimental).”
- “An evidence-informed practice is one that is guided by child development theory, and practitioner wisdom, and qualitative studies, and findings from basic research and has written guidelines, and a strong logic model, and a history of demonstrating positive results. They may be rated “Promising” or “Emerging” by at least one source that rates evidence-based programs.”

Smoky Mountain Research Institute & The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (2015). “The Smart Start Resource Guide of Evidence-Based and Evidence-Informed Programs and Practices: A Summary of Research Evidence.”

This document is not an exhaustive list of all effective programs in North Carolina, as many programs do not yet have sufficient data or available information to have been assessed. However, the 30 programs listed below show the work that is already taking place in North Carolina to support infants, toddlers, and their families.

| Program | Description |
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| Early Learning | |
| Child Care Health Consultants Additional information: http://www.healthychildcarenc.org/PDFs/cchc_brochure.pdf | Child Care Health Consultants work with child care providers to improve the health and safety of child care programs. Consultants may assess current health and safety practices, review health records and procedures, train providers in appropriate safety practices, or provide additional resources to providers. Research has shown that Child Care Health Consultants positively impact health and safety policies and standards within child care centers. |
| Child Care WAGE\$ Program Additional information: https://www.childcareservices.org/wages-nc/ | The Child Care WAGE\$ Program provides education-based salary supplements to child care providers. The program is a funded collaboration between local Smart Start partnerships and the Division of Child Development and Early Education and is administered by Child Care Services Association (CCSA). Eligible providers work at least 10 hours per week in a licensed child care program in a participating county, earn below the income cap, and have a child care credential or education beyond a high school diploma. Evidence shows that teacher compensation predicts quality, financial incentives reduce turnover, and financial incentives induce participants to complete further education. |
| Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) | DPIL is an early literacy program. Sponsoring organizations select a geographic area to target for book distribution or parents can |

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| <p>Additional information: https://imaginationlibrary.com/</p> | <p>register their children online. Children then receive an age-appropriate book in the mail each month from birth until the child turns five, regardless of family income. Studies have shown that participation in DPIL corresponds to parents reading more with their children, children enjoying reading, and increased parent-child discussion of books read.</p> |
| <p>Early Head Start (EHS)</p> <p>Additional information: https://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1929</p> | <p>EHS supports infants, toddlers, and pregnant women living in poverty by offering child development and parenting support services in early childhood education settings or at home visits, referring children and families to additional supportive services, and conducting community assessments to target families in need. EHS's goal is to promote school readiness by ensuring healthy social and cognitive development for infants and toddlers, and by providing educational, health, and socio-emotional supports for families.</p> |
| <p>Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships</p> <p>Additional information: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/early-learning/ehs-cc-partnerships</p> | <p>Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships bring together the strengths of child care and EHS programs through layering of federal funding (Early Head Start and Child Care Subsidies) to provide comprehensive and continuous high-quality services to low-income infants, toddlers, and their families. Integrating EHS comprehensive services into the array of traditional child care and family child care settings creates new opportunities to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, and their families. Child care centers and family child care providers respond to the needs of working families by offering flexible and convenient full-day and full-year services.</p> |
| <p>Healthy Social Behaviors Initiative</p> <p>Additional information: http://childcarerrnc.org/s.php?subpage=HealthySocialBehaviorsInitiative</p> | <p>The Healthy Social Behaviors Initiative promotes healthy behavior and addresses behavioral issues in child care centers serving young children. Healthy Social Behavior Specialists assist teachers and technical assistance specialists in ensuring children develop healthy social-emotional competencies. Specialists are housed in regional Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and serve every county.</p> |
| <p>Infant Toddler Educator AWARD\$</p> <p>Additional information: https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Whats-New/exciting-infant-toddlernews?mc_cid=a8166430ca&mc_eid=7ba773cf02</p> | <p>Infant Toddler Educator AWARD\$ is a new project beginning in Fall 2018 that will provide education-based salary supplements to address the compensation gap between infant-toddler teachers and preschool teachers. The salary supplements aim to incentivize teachers to stay in the field and further develop their skills, education, and knowledge. The program will be administered by CCSA.</p> |
| <p>Infant Toddler Enhancement Project</p> <p>Additional information: http://childcarerrnc.org/s.php?subpage=InfantToddlerQualityEnhancement</p> | <p>The Infant and Toddler Enhancement Project is administered by CCSA and aims to improve the quality and availability of infant/toddler care in North Carolina. Infant/Toddler Specialists provide technical assistance for child care programs and training specific to infant and toddler care best practices in all 100 counties. Specialists are trained and the project is rigorously monitored to ensure consistency, equitability, and quality of services delivered, and the impact is evaluated by several measurable outcomes.</p> |
| <p>Motheread and Motheread Story Exploring</p> <p>Additional information: http://www.motheread.org</p> | <p>Motheread combines literacy instruction, child development, adult empowerment, and employment skills. Story Exploring classes provide parents and teachers with strategies to increase children's reading skills. The resources and curriculum allow parents to extend the Story Exploring experience into their own homes. Research has found that participation in Motheread correlates with increases in</p> |

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| | adult reading levels, increased confidence reading to children, increased bonding with children, and increased child literacy. |
| Raising a Reader (RAR) Additional information: https://www.raisingareader.org/ | RAR programs can be started in child care centers, libraries, or community agencies and aim to improve the reading readiness of children between birth and third grade. For 0-5-year-olds, RAR sends a weekly bag of books to children's homes. Parents also receive training on language, literacy, and book sharing techniques, as well as linkage to their local library. Evidence shows that participation in Raising a Reader increases children's enjoyment of shared reading, children's vocabulary and literacy skills, parent's awareness of the importance of shared reading, and family use of libraries. |
| Reach Out and Read Additional information: http://www.reachoutandread.org/ | Reach Out and Read aims to promote early literacy by partnering with medical providers to distribute books to children beginning at their six-month checkup. Medical providers also speak with parents about the importance of reading to their children and early reading skills. Research has shown that Reach Out and Read has a positive impact on child language and literacy outcomes, as well as the amount of time parents spend reading aloud with their children. |
| T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Additional information: https://www.childcareservices.org/teach-nc/ | T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® is administered by CCSA and provides a wide array of scholarships to early childhood professionals to increase their education levels. Scholarships for infant/toddler early educators are very generous. T.E.A.C.H. addresses three issues: the education, compensation, and retention of the early childhood workforce. Research has found that all three positively affect the quality of care for young children. |
| Supported Families | |
| Adolescent Parenting Program (APP) Additional information: https://www.teenpregnancy.ncdhhs.gov/app.htm | APP works with young parents and with their babies in a two-generational approach. APP works with parents to increase self-sufficiency, delay subsequent pregnancies, and increase high school graduation. APP benefits children through increased positive parenting among participants, creating safer home environments, and connection to a medical home. Programming is delivered through home visits, individualized goal creation, case management, and group education. |
| Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up (ABC) Additional information: https://www.nctsn.org/interventions/attachment-and-biobehavioral-catch | ABC supports parents and children by working with caregivers to interpret their children's behavior signals, nurture infant development, and engage in healthy relationships. The program provides coaching to low-income families who have experienced neglect, abuse, domestic violence, or placement instability and have a child under 2. Studies of the program have found positive impacts on the children's maturity, self-regulation, attachment, and inhibitory control. |
| Child First Additional information: http://www.childfirst.org/ | Child First uses a two-generation approach to work with parents and children through psychotherapy, home visits, and connection to services. Child First fosters healthy brain development in young children by working with whole families to heal from trauma, receive needed resources, build strong relationships, and create healthy home environments. |
| Circle of Parents Additional information: http://circleofparents.org/ | Circle of Parents is a prevention-focused program. Parents at risk of child abuse or neglect attend free, confidential support groups. The groups utilize a shared leadership model, provide child care, and promote open discussion and sharing of resources. Evidence shows |

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| | that participation in Circle of Parents leads to parents having more appropriate expectations for their children, more knowledge of support systems and services, and better self-management skills. |
| <p>Family Connects/Durham Connects</p> <p>Additional information: https://www.durhamconnects.org/</p> | Durham Connects provides no-cost, nurse home visits to all postpartum families in Durham County. Nurses check on infant and maternal health, provide breastfeeding assistance, help parents locate child care and parenting classes, and connect families to additional resources. Modeled after Durham Connects, Family Connects International provides the same services to families outside of Durham County, serving families in Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, Forsyth, Guilford, and Hyde counties, as well as in four other states. |
| <p>Healthy Families America</p> <p>Additional information: https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/</p> | Healthy Families America provides home visiting services to families with histories of trauma, domestic violence, mental health issues, or substance abuse. Services begin either prenatally or immediately after birth and are provided for three to five years. Service providers are selected based on their ability to establish relationships with families, are trained in cultural competency, and receive ongoing supervision. Research shows that Healthy Families America positively impacts child development, school readiness, child health, family economic self-sufficiency, positive parenting practices, and reductions in child maltreatment. |
| <p>Incredible Years Toddler Basic Program</p> <p>Additional information: http://www.incredibleyears.com/programs/parent/toddler-curriculum/</p> | The Incredible Years Toddler Basic Program uses a group format to foster peer-to-peer support and learning. In the program, parents learn how to ensure their toddlers feel safe and loved, develop appropriately, and handle separations. The program also works with parents on establishing clear routines and using positive discipline. Research shows that the program positively increases parent self-confidence, affect, and communication and reduces parental depression, child conduct problems, and the use of harsh discipline. |
| <p>Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)</p> <p>Additional information: https://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/</p> | NFP provides home visits by nurses beginning at pregnancy and ending when a child is two. Nurses focus on prenatal care, birthing education, parent coaching, and future planning. Research has found positive impacts on mother and child outcomes, including a reduction in measures of child abuse and neglect, reduction in prenatal smoking, and improvement in children’s cognitive and academic outcomes. |
| <p>Nurturing Parenting Program</p> <p>Additional information: https://www.nurturingparenting.com/</p> | The Nurturing Parenting Program provides parenting education programs, parenting intervention programs, and parenting treatment programs. The programs are offered in either group or home visiting settings and range from five to 25 sessions. Research shows that participating parents were more familiar with positive parenting strategies, had increased self-esteem, and experienced less recidivism of child abuse. |
| <p>Parents as Teachers</p> <p>Additional information: https://parentsasteachers.org/</p> | Parents as Teachers is a home-visiting program for vulnerable families focused on parenting education and family support. One-on-one home visits focus on parenting skills and family well-being while group parent meetings provide a resource network for families. The program also includes health and developmental screenings for children. Research shows positive impacts of the program on child development, school readiness, and positive |

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| | parenting practices, especially for children from low-income households. |
| Project Enlightenment Additional information: https://www.wcpss.net/domain/13953 | Project Enlightenment is administered by the Wake County Public School System and provides workshops, resources, prevention, consultation, and education to both teachers and parents of children 0-5. The evidence-based programs implemented by Project Enlightenment strengthen parent-child relationships and promote the skills necessary to work with young children. |
| SafeCare Additional information: https://safecare.publichealth.gsu.edu/files/2015/04/Overview-of-SafeCare-brochure-3-16-15.pdf | SafeCare is a parenting education program that works with families of children 0-5 to improve parent-child interactions, health care, and home safety. SafeCare provides training through weekly home visits. Research shows that SafeCare participation corresponds to increased parenting skills, reduced parental depression, and reduced likelihood of child maltreatment. |
| Triple P-Positive Parenting Program Additional information: http://www.triplep.net/glo-en/home/ | The Triple P-Positive Parenting Program gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong relationships, confidently manage their children's behavior, and prevent problems from developing. The program includes both home visiting and parent education components. In North Carolina, the Triple P system is currently being scaled up in 36 counties. Research shows that the program leads to positive changes in parenting skills, child behavior, and parental well-being. |
| Healthy Beginnings | |
| Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) Additional information: https://nashp.org/abcd-history/ | ABCD interventions, administered by the National Academy for State Health Policy, take place in primary care offices and provide technical assistance to medical providers to encourage them to use standardized developmental screening tools. If a disability or delay is identified during the screening process, a referral is made to connect the family to the necessary services for their child. Research shows that after ABCD was implemented, screening rates increased, parents found the program helpful, and parents appreciated the increased time spent on discussing child development. |
| Early Intervention Infant-Toddler Program (ITP) Additional information: https://beearly.nc.gov/ | ITP provides support to families of infants and toddlers with special needs through the Division of Public Health. ITP offers service coordination, family support, special instruction, assistive technology, and physical, occupational, and speech therapies. Services can take place at home, at a child care program, at the park, or in other community locations. The goal of the program is for families to be able to help children with developmental delays reach their maximum potential. |
| Healthy Steps Additional information: https://www.healthysteps.org/ | Healthy Steps is a primary care program committed to healthy early childhood development and effective parenting. The program aims to effectively prepare all children for kindergarten and success. Healthy Steps broadens primary pediatric care teams, connects families to community resources and social services, and provides parenting education and guidance. |
| NC Child Treatment Program (NCCTP) Additional information: https://ncchildtreatmentprogram.org/ | NCCTP offers evidence-based trauma treatment programs designed to improve the health and functioning of infants, children, and families coping with attachment difficulties, trauma symptoms, and significant behavioral-emotional challenges. NCCTP provides training, coaching, and monitoring to clinicians serving children in |

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| | homes, schools, mental health clinics, residential treatment settings, juvenile justice, and other restricted facilities. |
| <p>Shape NC: Healthy Starts for Young Children</p> <p>Additional information: http://www.smartstart.org/shape-nc-home/</p> | <p>Shape NC is a collaboration between the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, the North Carolina Partnership for Children, and the Corporation for Community and National Service. The program implements three programs focused on health, nutrition, and active play: Be Active Kids, Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, and Outdoor Learning Environments. Shape NC promotes healthy weight and development of children 0-5 in child care settings.</p> |

Sources

NC Early Education Coalition. (2018). "Programs that Work for Babies!"

Smoky Mountain Research Institute & The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (2015). "The Smart Start Resource Guide of Evidence-Based and Evidence-Informed Programs and Practices: A Summary of Research Evidence."



**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**



SECTION 3

Effective Advocacy for Working with Policymakers



PRITZKER

Children's Initiative

NC Early Education Coalition Resources

CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATORS

There are so many different ways that you can communicate with your legislators to let them know what matters to you about early education. Here are some tips about how to get started. You can –

- Meet with legislators back home in the district as an individual or in a group
- Meet with legislators or their staff in Raleigh
- Make a phone call
- Write a letter or send an email

Visiting a Legislator At Home

Having a conversation with your legislators back in the district away from the distraction and demands they have in Raleigh is the probably the best way to discuss early education. Having at-home meetings can happen in several ways:

- Schedule a meeting with your legislator by calling their office to set up a time to meet over a cup of coffee, at a library or another convenient location.
- Invite legislators to come to visit you at your child care program or organization so they can learn firsthand about what you do to support young children and family. This will provide a comfortable time to talk and help your legislator gain a better understanding of the important work you do.
- Take advantage of events that are scheduled in the district to stay in touch with local legislators. Check their website or Facebook Page to see where they are hosting or attending events in your community.

Best times for meetings locally are just before or after a legislative session, or when they are not in session in Raleigh, or on the weekends when they are likely to be back in their districts.

Bring along three or four friends or co-workers and parents of the families you serve.

Visiting a Legislator's Office in Raleigh

Legislators are inundated with people who may or may not be the legislator's constituent (those who live in their home district) like paid lobbyists and people representing different organizations and groups. The legislator's schedule may vary quite a bit day to day, so call their office prior to your visit if possible and talk with their legislative assistance to determine a good time to meet. Please understand that this can change on a short notice if the legislative calendar changes. You may be able to meet with them in their office or you may have to talk with them as they are on their way to a meeting. Regardless of the circumstances, legislators will try very hard to find the time to speak

Communication Tips

- **Seek to build a relationship.** Find out something about your legislator – where they live in your community, if they have children, what type of work they do. View this as a chance to get to know them and learn more about them. Visit their website or Facebook Page to learn more.
- **Introduce yourself as a constituent.** Tell them your name, where you live and work so that they know you live in their district. Tell them something about yourself or family.
- **Be friendly and courteous at all times.** You want the legislator to listen to your point of view so stay positive and don't make it personal.
- **Be respectful and polite.** Even if your legislator disagrees with you, don't argue with them. Simply let them know what your experience is and why you wanted to talk with them. Listen as much as you speak.
- **Be brief.** You may only have 3 minutes for a phone call, or 15 minutes for a meeting. So be sure to plan ahead and have talking points to help you convey your message.
- **Let them know why you care about this issue!** How does early education affect you, or the children and families in your community? Share stories and photos and even videos.

with you because you are a constituent. If you arrive for a meeting and the legislator is unavailable, be sure to talk with the legislative assistant as they will likely communicate your message to the legislator.

Calling a Legislator

A well-timed telephone call to your legislator is very effective, especially in relation to impending votes on specific legislation. Often the time between knowing when an issue is coming up for a vote and the actual vote is a matter of one or two days, so the Coalition will often send an email action alert with a request to contact your legislator about one of our legislative issues. However, you can call your legislator's office at any time on your own as well. You can look up your legislators' phone numbers at www.ncleg.net. When you call, ask to speak to the legislator. If he or she is not available, leave a message with their legislative assistant. Include the bill number or issue you are calling about, and your position if you are seeking support or stating opposition to a particular bill. Because you are a constituent, be sure to leave your name and phone number if you leave a message, or when you speak to the staff person.

Writing or Emailing a Legislator

The power of email is not what it once was because of the volume of emails legislators often receive, but it can still be an effective way to communicate quickly with your legislator. It is more powerful when a legislator receives hundreds of emails from constituents about a specific issue, so make sure to respond to email action alerts with emails as well as phone calls, and share them with your friends! Be sure and put your message in the subject line, and keep your email as short as possible with your key points in the body of the email. Generally, do not ask them to read or download an attachment as they may not have the time to print out and read your document.

A written letter may be most helpful in describing an issue and the solution to address that issue rather than an immediate request to support or oppose a specific bill or issue. You can also include more information and resources via traditional mail. Just be sure your information is not time limited.

You can find your legislators' email and mailing addresses at www.ncleg.net. When writing a letter, use their title, Senator or Representative, and address the letter in the following way:

The Honorable (legislator's name)
North Carolina (House of Representatives or Senate)
(Office Number and Building)
Raleigh, N.C. (zip code)

Communication Tips

- **Offer to be a resource.** Don't assume your legislator knows what you do about early education. Bring or send them information to help them learn about the issues.
- **Follow up and send a thank you note.** Send a personal note thanking them for the visit and their time. It's also a good chance to include any additional materials you offered to send or provide answers to their questions. Remember many people want to talk with your legislator and you want to be sure you get to meet again.
- **Follow your legislators.** Follow them on Facebook or Twitter, sign up for their newsletters, visit their websites, and look up what Committee's they serve on, or bills that they sponsor. This will let you be more effective in your communications, and let's them know you care about their work.

Find Your Legislator

Not sure who represents you? Need an email or phone number?

Visit the NC General Assembly website
www.ncleg.net

Do's and Don'ts for Working with State Policymakers

| BE POSITIVE | |  |
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| DO | DON'T | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciate legislative support for early education funding, policies, etc.• Keep policymaker's attention focused on values and principles that benefit everyone.• Share your organization's accomplishments: the programs, policies, and practices it helped bring about.• Present opportunities and solutions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Criticize legislator's track record or lack of funding.• Argue or challenge contradict legislator directly.• Focus only on the problem – always include a solution. | |

| BE PREPARED | |  |
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| DO | DON'T | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know your legislator – establish a connection.• Rehearse what you are going to say in advance – tight 2-3 minute elevator speech.• Designate a spokesperson to start conversation.• Bring resources –<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fact sheets, brochures, stories, photos, media stories.• Have constituent information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overlook a legislator's previous support or knowledge of early education.• Assume legislator knows anything about early education.• Lecture the legislator with your expertise. | |

BE PASSIONATE



DO

- Share why this issue matters to you and your community.
- Explain positive changes you have seen occur for young children and families who benefit from early education.
- Share a stories or examples.
- Bring letters from parents or other child care providers.

DON'T

- Be overwhelming.
- Quote research or statistics without a local impact.
- Use jargon or acronyms.
- Use an angry or argumentative tone.

BE PROFESSIONAL



DO

- Wear Business/Nice dress.
- Prepare materials and presentation – in folders, well organized, clear, correct.
- One speaker at a time.
- Speak respectfully.
- Be aware of legislator constraints and time.
- Ask legislators for their opinion and what you can do to provide more information.

DON'T

- Wear casual dress – flip flops, shorts, short skirts, etc.
- Be unorganized in presentation – get to the point.
- Keep talking when legislator tells you he/she only has 5 minutes.
- Forget to thank legislator for meeting with you.
- Forget to follow up when you get back home.

BE PERSISTENT

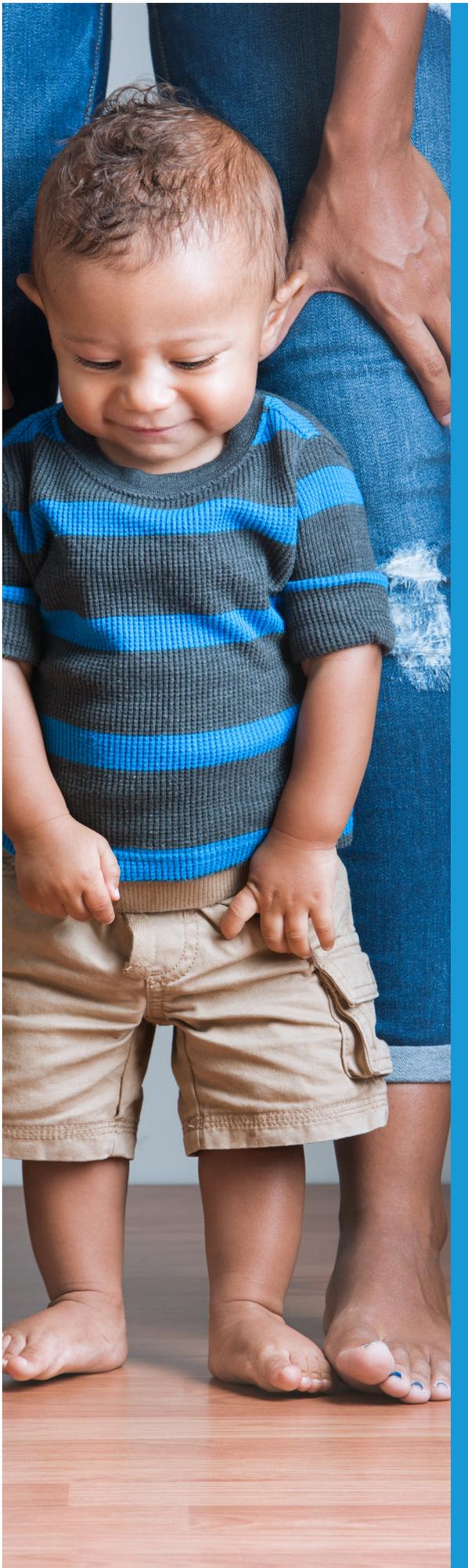


DO

- Build a relationship.
- Follow up
 - Send thank you
 - More information
- Create another opportunity to communicate.
- Visit legislators at home or participate in local forum or event with policymakers.
- Thank publicly for their support.

DON'T

- Make it a one time only event.
- Ignore legislator when you see them in public.
- Criticize them in the media or in writing.
- Forget to support the legislator in home district.



Take Action in Your Community

ZERO TO THREE knows how important it is for babies and toddlers to have enriching early experiences that provide a strong foundation for brain development. So we've created the *Think Babies* campaign for the Policy Network to build support for policies that promote these experiences. Now we need your help to bring the campaign to your community and to our leaders in Congress. Members of the Policy Network have always been a **Big Voice for Little Kids™**, and now that voice will carry a clear and powerful message: Investing in the early years and giving families the support they want and need will give all our babies the best chance to succeed in life.

This toolkit was designed to help you connect with the *Think Babies* campaign, engage your community, and reach out directly to your members of Congress. Feel free to adapt the strategies and materials we've provided for use with your state and local leaders or to better advocate for the issues that matter most to you and the families you support.

Thank you for being a part of this important effort. With your help, we can make sure the potential of babies is a national priority.

Get Connected Before You Start

Go to www.thinkbabies.org to sign up for campaign email updates. And follow ZERO TO THREE on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to see the latest *Think Babies* news.

Let us know how you've used this toolkit to promote the *Think Babies* campaign or reach out with questions at policycenter@zerotothree.org.



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Engage Your Elected Officials

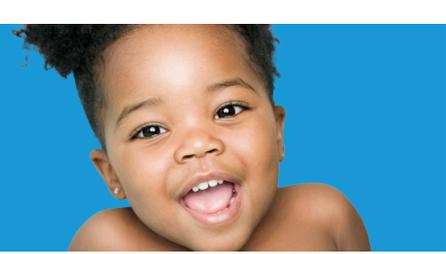
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Share the *Think Babies* Message



Tell Congress to #ThinkBabies on Facebook and Twitter

Use our Facebook and Twitter post generator at www.thinkbabies.org/tellcongress to share the *Think Babies* message directly with your members of Congress. You can include a personal message about why Congress should #ThinkBabies. You can also use the sample messages below to create your own posts.

Sample Social Media Messages

- Babies form more than one million new neural connections every second. That's a whole lot of brainpower. #ThinkBabies
- #ThinkBabies can only eat, sleep, and cry? Think again. Infants can feel joy, interest, and excitement at 3 months old.
- The greatest opportunity to influence a child's life happens between the ages of 0 and 3. Just one more reason to #ThinkBabies.
- When we #ThinkBabies, graduation rates climb, earnings go up, and crime goes down.
- We must make the potential of babies a national priority. It's time for Congress to #ThinkBabies.

Social Media Graphics



Go to www.thinkbabies.org/take-action/tell-congress-thinkbabies-facebook-twitter/ to download these graphics.



Share the *Think Babies* Message



Publish a Blog Post

Your organization's blog or personal blog can be a great way to share the *Think Babies* message. Check out this sample post for inspiration and adapt it based on your network, experiences, and expertise. The more you can personalize the blog post, the more it will resonate with readers.

Sample Blog Post

The first three years of a baby's life shape all the rest. In that short time period, babies form more than one million new neural connections every second. That's a whole lot of brainpower.

[INSERT AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU KNOW THIS STATISTIC IS TRUE FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, SUCH AS HOW EARLY A BABY RESPONDS TO LOVED ONES AROUND HER.]

That's why ZERO TO THREE created the *Think Babies* campaign: to make their potential our national priority.

When babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges. Every minute we waste risks another child missing out on her full potential. That's not good for families, and that's not good for our future.

We need to give parents the time to bond with their babies in the earliest months, when so much of their development is at stake. We need to make sure families have the information they want and need to nurture and nourish their babies. And we need to make sure every family who needs it has access to quality, affordable child care that offers strong early learning experiences.

[INSERT A BRIEF STORY TO EXPLAIN HOW ONE OF THESE SUPPORTS HAS HELPED A FAMILY YOU KNOW.]

Be part of the team that's fighting for their future. Check out www.thinkbabies.org to learn more about the campaign and how you can get involved.



Share the *Think Babies* Message



Promote the Campaign in Newsletters

You can share the *Think Babies* message through newsletters for your program, or those that reach parents in your community, professionals in your field, or even general interest newsletters for your community. Most newsletters and e-newsletters will include a link or email address to get in touch with the editor. Send a note introducing yourself and offering to contribute. You can use or adapt the sample newsletter language below to reach others who might help further our cause.

Sample Newsletter Language

Our brains grow faster between the ages of 0 and 3 than at any later point in our lives. We need to invest in the first three years of life to give all our babies the best chance to succeed in school and in life. That's why ZERO TO THREE created the *Think Babies* campaign: to make their potential our national priority.

We need to give parents the time to bond with their babies in the earliest months, when so much of their development is at stake. We need to make sure families have the information they want and need to nurture and nourish their babies. And we need to make sure every family who needs it has access to quality, affordable child care that offers strong early learning experiences.

The science is clear: We must act now to ensure a positive future for generations to come. And with your help, we can make sure that Congress makes babies a priority. We have a chance to create a world in which babies and parents have what they need to not only thrive, but also reach their fullest potential.

Check out www.thinkbabies.org to learn more about the campaign and see how you can get involved.



Share the *Think Babies* Message



Send an Email to Your Network

The more people you engage in *Think Babies*, the stronger our voice will be. Sending an email to colleagues and others in your network is a quick and easy way to introduce more people to the campaign.

Sample Email

Subject: Baby Brain Development Campaign

Dear [NAME],

Have you seen ZERO TO THREE's new campaign for infants and toddlers? It's called *Think Babies*. They are bringing national attention to what babies and families need to thrive. This includes making sure parents and babies have time to bond in the earliest months, getting parents information and resources to help nurture and nourish their babies, and access to quality, affordable child care for those who need it.

There are lots opportunities to get involved—from sharing messages with our network to meeting with our elected officials. There's even a fun tool to send messages on Twitter and Facebook to our members of Congress! Do you have time to connect and talk about ways to get involved in the *Think Babies* campaign?

Thank you,

[NAME]



Spread the Word in Your Community



Talk with Parents about Joining the *Think Babies* Team

ZERO TO THREE's **Tuning In** National Parent Survey found that parents want advice about nurturing their babies, but they are overwhelmed by sources of help and underwhelmed by the quality of what they're getting. By sharing information with parents about the science behind their baby's brain development—and urging them to share what they need to help their own children thrive—you can help them be their own advocate. It's important to let parents know about the *Think Babies* campaign and how they can get involved in fighting for babies.

Jump to the last pages of this toolkit for **talking points** you can use in these conversations and a **handout** you can print and share with parents, post on a bulletin board, or include in a mailing.



Spread the Word in Your Community



Connect with Advocates in Your Community

By working with other individuals and organizations, you can share the importance of addressing babies' needs from different perspectives and provide a holistic picture to advance the policies and programs that support them. Consider co-authoring an op-ed in the local newspaper, attending a Congressional town hall meeting together, or scheduling a joint meeting with your member of Congress or their staff.

Here are some advocates and allies you may want to connect with:

- Medical providers, including pediatricians
- State and local children's advocacy organizations ([Find an organization near you.](#))
- Parent organizations, such as the PTA or the Policy Council for your local Head Start program
- Child care centers, Early Head Start programs, home visiting programs, and child welfare services
- Business leaders or business groups like the Chamber of Commerce
- Faith-based organizations
- Academic groups focused on early education—local colleges or universities

The sample email below could help with your initial outreach, but any way you reach out to build relationships can help further the campaign.

Sample Email

Subject: Reaching Out – Baby/Toddler Brain Development Campaign

Dear [NAME],

As someone who is focused on issues affecting babies and toddlers [INSERT MORE SPECIFICITY IF NECESSARY], I am reaching out about a new initiative in which you may be interested.

As you likely know, the first three years of a baby's life have an enormous impact on how she learns and grows throughout her lifetime, with more than one million new neural connections forming every second. And you know what's at stake: When babies have nurturing relationships, early learning experiences, and good nutrition, those neural connections are stimulated and strengthened, laying a strong foundation for the rest of



Connect with Advocates in Your Community *Continued*

their lives. But when babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges.

Given [YOUR/YOUR ORGANIZATION'S FOCUS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD ISSUES], I am reaching out to let you know that ZERO TO THREE developed a campaign called *Think Babies*, to bring national attention to what babies and families need to thrive—and the implications for the country.

Every day, Congress makes decisions that affect our work and the children and families we serve. Our babies need a big voice, and we can help! There are many opportunities to get involved—from sharing messages with your network to meeting with our members of Congress. I would like to speak with you more about the campaign and see if there are ways we can work together. [INSERT RELEVANT CONNECTION POINTS].

Thank you,

[NAME]



Spread the Word in Your Community



Write a Letter to the Editor

Members of Congress and their staff pay close attention to their local newspapers. Keep an eye out for news that relates to babies and respond with a letter to the editor. Topics may include the lack of quality, affordable child care in your community or the long-term outcomes of investing in babies and toddlers. Referencing a specific article, editorial, or column can increase your chances of getting your letter published. Be sure to share the brain science to support your arguments. And try to find a local news hook that brings home the importance of investing in babies and toddlers.

We've included a sample letter to the editor that you can adapt to the news in your area. Also, check out the [talking points](#) for key messages you can incorporate into your own letter.

Sample Letter to the Editor

The [INSERT DATE] article ["INSERT ARTICLE NAME"] addressed [INSERT TOPIC RELATED TO INFANT-TODDLER ISSUES]. As a [INSERT YOUR PROFESSIONAL TITLE OR RELATIONSHIP TO THE ISSUE], I am writing to add some important information to the discussion. The article did not touch on a very important factor—baby brain development.

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. The latest science shows us that healthy relationships with trusted adults, as well as quality nutrition, nurture babies' developing brains; teach them who they are and how the world works; affect how they trust and interact with people; and give them the confidence to explore and learn—laying a strong foundation for the rest of their lives. When babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges.

Giving all babies a strong start in life must be a priority in our community and among our elected leaders. When babies thrive, we all benefit.

For more tips, check out ZERO TO THREE's [How to Write a Letter to the Editor and an Opinion Editorial guide](#).



Spread the Word in Your Community



Submit an Opinion Editorial

An op-ed is a great way to show your passion, persuade readers to care about the issue, and encourage policymakers to take action. Your op-ed should provide steps people can take to make a difference. Make sure to include references to your professional and/or personal experience to lend credibility.

Sample Op-ed

As a [JOB TITLE/JOB DESCRIPTION/ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY], I meet a lot of new moms and dads adjusting to the joys and new routines of parenthood, including figuring out how to have dedicated time with their baby during the first weeks and months without compromising their economic security and finding quality, affordable child care when they need to head back to work.

They all feel the immense responsibility for their child's future, and know that the early years shape a child's life. But it can be hard to fully grasp what that means when it comes to brain development.

Babies' brains grow at warp speed—forming more than one million new neural connections every second. That's amazing when you think about it. In fact, between the ages of 0 and 3, a child's brain will grow faster than at any other point in their life.

[INSERT ANECDOTE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE SUPPORTING BABIES AND FAMILIES IN SERVICE OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND/OR REFERENCE RECENT NEWS STORY.]

As a community, we can do more to support babies and families. When babies thrive, we all benefit. And, when babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop in ways they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges that we all end up paying for in the long run.

[INSERT ANECDOTE ABOUT A CHILD OR FAMILY YOU HAVE WORKED WITH AND HOW THEY HAVE BENEFITTED FROM SUPPORTS IN THE COMMUNITY.]

That's why it's time that our elected leaders *Think Babies*. They need to understand that investing in our littlest ones is one of the most important things we can do as a nation to make sure all our kids grow into healthy, well-rounded adults who reach their fullest potential.



Submit an Opinion Editorial *Continued*

In fact, every dollar we invest in infant and early childhood programs returns great benefits for our children and our country. Giving babies a strong start in life increases graduation rates, improves the quality of the workforce, improves health, and reduces crime.

So how can we assure that babies get the support they need to thrive?

First, we need to give parents time to bond with their babies in the earliest months, when so much of their development is at stake.

Second, we need to make sure families have access to the resources and information they want and need to nurture and nourish their babies.

And finally, we need to make sure every family who needs it has access to quality, affordable child care that offers strong early learning experiences.

Congress [OR SENATOR X/REPRESENTATIVE Y] must make the potential of America's babies a national priority. All [HE/SHE/THEY HAVE/HAS] to do is *Think Babies* and remember that investing early in policies that support babies' growth and development will make a difference in their lives forever.

For more tips, check out ZERO TO THREE's [How to Write a Letter to the Editor and an Opinion Editorial guide](#).



Engage Your Elected Officials



Call or Email Your Members of Congress

Your voice matters to the members who represent you. Believe it or not, calling them is one of the most effective ways to be heard.

1. **Find your members** using ZERO TO THREE's [Find Your Elected Officials Tool](#).
2. **Mention that you're a constituent** and note the town or city where you live. Offices prioritize calls from the people they represent.
3. **Ask to speak to the staffer** in charge of early childhood issues. You may not get them, but you can always ask the person you do speak with to pass the information along.
4. **Leave a message** if you get a voicemail. Offices regularly listen to voicemails. To increase the chances that you will speak with someone, call during regular business hours.

Use the [talking points](#) on the last page of this toolkit to guide your conversation. Introduce facts about baby brain development and why they must *Think Babies*.

Share why it's important to you—personally or professionally—that your member of Congress *Think Babies*. Offer yourself as a resource and share your areas of expertise.

- **Be a storyteller.** Share an example of why it's important to invest in the early years, such as a program that has benefitted families you work with or a program that has helped your family. A real-world example can drive home why it's so critical to continue to support families.
- **Ask to meet with the staff member** in person or invite them and the member of Congress to visit your program (see additional tips in this toolkit).
- **Remember that you're having a conversation!** Ask questions—about the issues, but also about the personal connection the staff of member of Congress may have with issues affecting families and babies.

If you're reaching out by email, you'll likely need to use the online form on the Congress member's website. Use the sample email below to get started. Make sure to personalize your story and put a face to the challenges families face and the benefits of supportive policies.

Sample Email to Member of Congress

Senator/Representative [\[INSERT LAST NAME\]](#) –

I'm writing to you on behalf of babies and parents in [\[YOUR STATE/DISTRICT\]](#).



Engage Your Elected Officials

Call or Email Your Members of Congress *Continued*

The first three years of a baby's life shape all the rest. During this time, our brains grow faster than at any later point in our lives, forming more than one million new neural connections every second.

When babies have nurturing relationships, early learning experiences, and good nutrition, those neural connections are stimulated and strengthened, laying a strong foundation for the rest of their lives. But when babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges.

That's why we must *Think Babies* and make their potential our priority.

Every day, you make decisions that impact the lives of babies in our [COMMUNITY/STATE]. We need to give parents the time to bond with their babies in the earliest months, when so much of their development is at stake. We need to reach parents and babies where they are—from pediatricians' offices to home visits—to make sure they have the information they want and need to nurture and nourish their babies. And we need to make sure every family who needs it has access to quality, affordable child care that offers strong early learning experiences.

These are the ingredients to give babies enriching early experiences, promote healthy brain development from the start, and create a better future for our nation.

As your constituent, I am asking for your commitment to fight for those who so often can't fight for themselves. Our future literally depends on it.

Thank you—and I look forward to hearing from you,

[NAME]



Engage Your Elected Officials



Attend Town Hall Meetings

Most members of Congress hold “town hall” meetings with constituents to hear their concerns. They are held in the member’s district and are open to the public. They usually include a question-and-answer session—giving you the opportunity to share the *Think Babies* message and ask about infant-toddler issues.

1. **Find your members** using ZERO TO THREE’s [Find Your Elected Officials Tool](#).
2. **Find the dates and location of the town hall** on your member’s official website. Sign up for their listserv or newsletter to get updates and check back to learn when your member of Congress is home on recess.
3. **Prepare a statement or question** before the town hall. As you prep, review the *Think Babies* [talking points](#) on the last page of this toolkit and print out relevant materials. You can also coordinate with other advocates in your community to make a stronger impact. Remember to practice what you want to say and be specific with questions. Here’s a sample of an opening statement and some questions to get you started.

“My name is **[NAME]** and I work with families and children in our community. My hope is that when you think about the future of **[STATE/DISTRICT]**, you think of families with infants and toddlers—because when babies thrive, we all benefit. My question for you is. . .” Here are a few sample questions to get you thinking:

- How will you ensure families have access to quality and affordable child care in **[STATE/DISTRICT]**?
- How will you ensure families have the time they need to bond with their babies in the earliest months when so much of their development is at stake?
- How you can help families connect to information and resources in the community?

4. **Be sure to follow up.** Give the campaign [handout](#) at the end of this toolkit to staff members at the event. After the event, you can call or email the member’s local office to reinforce your message. Don’t forget to provide your contact information and remind them about your areas of expertise—they may want to follow up with you down the road!



Engage Your Elected Officials



Visit Congressional Offices in Your State or District

Making the trip to Washington, DC to meet with your members of Congress isn't always feasible. But all members have "district work periods" when they meet with constituents in their home state or district. These "recess" periods can last days or weeks, but even when your members aren't back home, their district offices have full-time staff who work directly with the staff in DC. The district staff serve as key advisors for members of Congress and we encourage you to meet with them as well. All of these meetings provide an important venue to share your story.

Prepare for the Meeting

1. **Find your member** using ZERO TO THREE's [Find Your Elected Officials Tool](#).
2. **Schedule a meeting** by phone or online. To determine when your member will be home, review the House and Senate calendars. Note that they likely won't be available for meetings around holidays. Make an appointment 2-4 weeks in advance as their district calendars will fill up quickly. If the member is not available, don't hesitate to meet with a staff member instead. Let them know up front what issues you'd like to discuss so they can pair you with the appropriate staffer.
3. **Use the *Think Babies* talking points** on the last page of this toolkit as a guide for your conversation. It's also important to do some background research on their existing policy positions regarding babies and families. There's good information on a variety of related topics available on the ZERO TO THREE website:
 - [Our Infant-Toddler Agenda](#)
 - [Child Care](#)
 - [Paid Family Leave](#)
 - [Social and Emotional Health](#)
 - [Early Head Start](#)
 - [Physical Health](#)
4. **Bring copies of the *Think Babies* handout** at the end of this toolkit to leave with staff.

During the Meeting

1. **Introduce yourself** and provide some background on where you live and work in the district.
2. **Focus on facts** and what you want the member of Congress to do, but don't be afraid to include personal reasons for supporting an issue (i.e., "I work with a lot of families where both parents work and still can't afford a quality child care program.").



Visit Congressional Offices in Your State or District

Continued

3. **Be considerate of their time.** If you were allotted 20 minutes, practice ahead to make sure you can get your message across without running over.
4. **If you don't know the answer to a question, say so, but offer to get an answer.**
5. **Thank the member and/or staff.**

After the Visit

Write or call to thank the member/staff for meeting with you. Let them know you'll be in touch next time the issue comes up in Congress, and follow up regularly with updates. Don't forget to provide your contact information and remind them about your areas of expertise—they may want to follow up with you down the road!

Engage Your Elected Officials



Invite Your Members of Congress to Visit Your Program

Members of Congress don't have the firsthand experience working with babies and families that you do. So invite them for a site visit to experience the work you do with infants and toddlers for themselves. It's an opportunity for you to talk about the challenges families face and directly ask your member of Congress to lend their support. We've outlined some tips to help you prepare for a successful visit.

1. **Plan ahead.** Find out when your member of Congress will be in your home state or district and extend an invitation at least 4-6 weeks before.
2. **Be specific, but flexible.** Be sure to mention that you are a constituent and explain the when, where, and why of your invitation. Members of Congress are busy, so you may want to offer multiple dates or open the invitation to their staff. Be sure to confirm prior to the day of the visit.
3. **Prepare for the day.** Think about how you'd like to welcome your guest and line up an activity that showcases your work and its importance. Remember to let your staff and families know ahead of time, so they can help during the visit.
4. **Follow up.** Send your guest home with information about your program or the *Think Babies* [handout](#) at the end of this toolkit. And get in touch soon after the visit to recap and reinforce your message.

For more information and a sample invitation, check out ZERO TO THREE's [How to Plan a Site Visit for Your Policy Makers](#).





Think Babies Talking Points

Talk about the science.

- 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.
- Investing in babies' brain development is one of the most important things we can do to raise healthy, well-rounded adults.
- Children who are healthy—socially, emotionally, and physically—have a greater chance of becoming economically productive and engaged citizens.
- When babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges.

Introduce *Think Babies*.

- ZERO TO THREE created the *Think Babies* campaign to promote enriching early experiences and a strong foundation for development from the start, and to make sure our elected officials *Think Babies*.
- *Think Babies* will bring national attention to what babies and families need to thrive—and the implications for the country.

When talking to parents . . . tell them how they can make a big difference.

- Parents are the strongest advocates for babies. They know from experience the importance of the first years of a child's life—and the support that's needed to help a child thrive. Their stories will help our nation's leaders better understand why they must *Think Babies*.
- Our elected officials can make a big difference in the lives of families. We want to be sure that when they are thinking about families, they are thinking of families like yours—with infants and toddlers.

When talking to elected officials . . . tell them why it's important they *Think Babies*.

- When babies thrive, we all benefit. Giving all babies a strong start in life increases graduation rates, improves the quality of the workforce, improves health, and reduces crime.
- We need to give parents the time to bond with their babies in the earliest months, when so much of their development is at stake.
- We need to reach parents where they are—from pediatricians' offices to home visits—to make sure they have the information they want and need to nurture and nourish their babies.
- And we need to make sure every family who needs it has access to quality, affordable child care that offers strong early learning experiences.



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. And 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 can increase graduation rates, enhance the quality of the workforce, improve health, and reduce crime.

It's time to invest in the future.

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

- **Time for parents to bond with their babies:** Parents and their babies need dedicated time together after birth or adoption to develop strong relationships that are fundamental to a child's healthy development.
- **Nurturing healthy development from the start:** Parents want and need resources and support that help them to set their babies up for a healthy life. Services such as home visits, parenting education efforts through health care providers, and early intervention can make the difference between a strong start and a fragile beginning.
- **Quality, affordable child care:** In 33 states and the District of Columbia, the cost of infant care exceeded the cost of in-state public college tuition. Families need access to affordable child care that provides infants and toddlers with one-on-one relationships with caring adults and strong early learning experiences.
- **Comprehensive support for low-income families:** Nearly half of American babies and toddlers live in families that are poor or near poor. Comprehensive programs that provide medical, mental health, nutrition, and developmental/early learning services for these most vulnerable children can promote later success in school and life.

It's time to bring national attention to what babies—and families—need to thrive. Be part of the team that's fighting for our future. Learn more about our campaign and sign up for updates at thinkbabies.org.



HOW TO PLAN A SITE VISIT: INVITING POLICYMAKERS TO SEE YOUR WORK WITH INFANTS, TODDLERS & THEIR FAMILIES

Some say that a picture is worth a thousand words, but showing someone your work firsthand can be worth many more. One of the most effective ways to *Be a Big Voice for Little Kids™* is to invite policymakers to experience your work with infants and toddlers for themselves. A site visit gives policymakers the opportunity to connect the decisions they make to the faces of infants, toddlers, and families in their community, and is a great strategy that can create a lasting impression. Use the guidance below to plan and implement a site visit with your local, state and federal policymakers.

INVITING YOUR POLICYMAKERS

Whether policymakers work in Washington, D.C., your state capitol, or in your hometown, they all make decisions that impact the young children you serve. Consider organizing site visits with policymakers such as your Members of Congress, state legislators, mayor, city council members or state and local agency administrators. When you invite them to visit your program, your organization, or your research project, you are giving policymakers a valuable opportunity to get to know your work with infants and toddlers.

To help you invite the policymaker to visit your site, here are a few tips:

- **Find out when your policymaker will be in your home state or district.**
 - To find out the times **federal** lawmakers are on recess, visit www.house.gov or www.senate.gov and click on the calendar feature. In addition to Congressional recesses, Members of Congress are often home on Fridays and weekends.
 - To find out the session calendar for your **state legislators**, visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website at <http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=18630>.
 - To find out the schedules of your **local policymakers**, visit your city or town's website.
- **Schedule the visit.** Call your policymaker's office at least 4-6 weeks in advance and ask to set up a time for the visit. Contact information for policymakers is often readily available on their websites.
 - If you are calling a Member of Congress' office, ask to speak with the scheduler when you call. They may request that you send a written request for the site visit. If so, feel free to use our sample as a guide:
http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/SampleInvitation_BM_5_29_07.pdf?docID=3481.
 - To find contact information for your **state legislators** and **state agency administrators**, visit your state's website. Most state websites follow the same

format: www.STATENAME.gov or www.STATEABBREVIATION.gov. For example, you would visit www.maine.gov or www.ny.gov. To learn more about your state legislature, read ZERO TO THREE's article entitled "State Policy Processes" at http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/StatePolicyProcesses_BM_5_29_07.pdf?docID=3461.

- To find contact information for your local policymakers, visit your city or town's website.
- **Be specific, yet flexible.** When you call, identify yourself as a constituent, and be specific about the dates and times you would like to schedule the visit. Policymakers often have very full schedules, and at the state and community levels, they might even have other part-time careers. Be as flexible as you can when scheduling the visit. If possible, have multiple dates to suggest.
- **Invite staff.** If you cannot arrange a time to have your policymaker visit your site, consider hosting their staff. They serve as advisors to policymakers, and it is equally important that they understand your work with infants and toddlers in the communities they represent.
- **Confirm.** Call your policymaker's office one week before the scheduled visit to confirm. Ask who will be attending along with the policymaker, so that you know how many to expect. Fax them a copy of the schedule for their visit, and be sure to let them know if the media will be in attendance.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Planning a site visit does not need to be an overwhelming task that creates a large amount of extra work for you and your staff. The point of a site visit is for your policymakers to see your work *in action*, so schedule the visit for a typical day or during an activity that you would already be planning. While hosting a site visit will take some preparation, your daily work will also speak for itself!

- **Prepare a brief introduction or welcome for your policymaker.** This is a great time to let your policymaker know what issues are important to infants and toddlers in his or her community. Include details about how many infants and toddlers you serve, the impact your program has on the community, and the challenges you face. Remember, early childhood development can be a complicated subject for someone outside the field. Be sure to frame your messages so that policymakers and the public can understand the needs of babies and the solutions that best support families raising young children. Think about which people from your organization could best convey these messages. For more information on how to frame your communications with policymakers, read ZERO TO THREE's articles on framing at: http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_pub_framing.
- **Plan an activity.** Try to schedule the site visit on a day or during an activity that really showcases your work with infants, toddlers and their families. Consider having the

policymaker sit-in during an early learning activity with the children or observe a group meeting with parents. Think about an activity that your program organizes which involves a lot of interaction between the staff, the children, and the parents or one that would help him/her understand the impact your program has on infants and toddlers. Use this activity as the basis for your site visit, and strategize about how a visitor could participate.

- **Prepare your staff and families.** It is important to ensure that your staff and parents are comfortable with a policymaker visiting and observing your program. Give advance notice to anyone who will be involved in the site visit, so they have time to plan accordingly, and allow time for them to ask questions before the visit. Let them know that the purpose of the policymaker's visit is to learn more about your work, not to judge or watch, and that it could result in increased support for your program or project. Remind them that they do not need to prepare for the visit – they can dress and act as they would any other day.
- **Give the policymaker something to take home.** Your policymaker will learn a lot about your work on the day of the site visit, and they should have materials to reinforce your message when they leave. Provide them with a brochure or fact sheet about your program to refer to after the visit. Make sure they know that they can contact you as a resource on infant-toddler issues.
- **Invite Program Supporters.** Consider inviting your supporters, such as your Board of Directors, local funders, and parents to participate in the day's activities. Having them present will send an effective message to the policymaker that your work impacts upon, and is supported by, the larger community.
- **Consider Inviting the Media.** A visit from a policymaker is a great way to garner media attention for your program or site. Send a press release or call to let them know the details of the policymaker's visit, and follow up before the visit to ensure a better media turnout. Work with the policymaker's office on any media activities that you plan. They may have requests or press contacts they would like present. Finally, if press will be attending your site visit, make sure that the children and their parents know that they might be part of a news story and photographed. Check with your program administrator to learn more about your organization's policy about the media and interviewing families.

WAYS TO MAKE THE SITE VISIT A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

- **Make it interactive.** Encourage your policymaker to take part in the day's activity and interact with the children and families. Allow time for questions or an informal "meet and greet" when people can introduce themselves to the policymaker and talk about the impact of your program for them personally.
- **Take photos.** Remember your camera to document the day! Photos of the visit will be a great complement to a press release or your program's newsletter. You will need to

obtain a written photo release from each person who is photographed. For children under the age of 18, the release must be signed by the parent or guardian.

- **Follow-up.** Continue the momentum built during the site visit and follow-up with a thank you note to the policymaker immediately after the visit. Recap your main messages in the note, mention specific ways that the policymaker could support infants and toddlers in your community, and share the photographs from the visit! If you have a mailing list, be sure to add them to it so they begin to regularly receive updates from your program. You have established a great foundation with the site visit, and now you can build on this relationship throughout the year.



Email Advocacy

By: Representative Chuck McGrady

May 18, 2015



Representative Chuck McGrady

Being an effective advocate or lobbyist on any issue involves two things. First, one needs to communicate substance and, second, one needs to build a relationship with the policymakers. Having been a citizen advocate on a range of issues long before I was elected to public office, I know that anyone who is effective as an advocate hopes to get critical information to policymakers at the right time and their ability to do that correlates to what kind of relationship the advocate has to the policymaker.

Upon becoming a legislator, one of the first things that I recognized was that some people and groups believe that sending mass emails to legislators is an effective way of communicating. For the most part, it isn't.

On an average day, I receive hundreds of emails — occasionally over a thousand emails. Every email comes to my email account, but a copy is also sent to my legislative assistant, Laura Bone. Some of those emails I respond to personally, and my legislative assistant sends standard responses to some of them. However, most of them are immediately put in the trash.

Why is that?

Well, emails coming to me from people who aren't my constituents typically don't merit a response, unless the person clearly has a special understanding of whatever the topic of the email is or is representing a group. Some number of emails also relate to bills or subjects that I can do nothing about, for example, writing to me about a bill that has already passed the House.

What always amazes me is that people seem to think if they've signed on a computer-generated letter to a legislator that they've done something to effectively communicate their views. They haven't. When one gets a few hundred of the same, exactly-worded emails, one doesn't pay much attention to them. Conversely, if I get an email in which a constituent has personally stated his or her views, I almost always give that email attention.

My view is that if a person has taken less than a minute to generate a computer-generated communication, then the best they deserve from me is a canned response, if that. On the other

hand, a constituent who has actually taken the time to personally communicate their views to me, generally deserves a response, at least if the constituent hasn't been abusive.

A review of the mass emails I received recently may give one a better sense of what I'm describing. What follows are some examples of not-particularly-good email campaigns:

[Senate Bill 456](#) [Charter School Modifications]. Got dozens of these emails pitching funding for charter schools. The emails started "I live in your district" — but almost none of the emails came from people in my district. Someone writing who says that they live in my district (when they actually don't) aren't likely to get a response.

"We NEED our Medical Deductions ([HB46](#) with full restoration amendment)." This email is being generated by [AARP](#). Again, the emails aren't coming from my district, and they get no response. [House Bill 450](#) [Appropriate Funds for Tobacco Use Prevention]. This one is generated by the [American Lung Association](#). Again, the emails are from folks across the state, but none are from my district. No need to respond to those.

"2016 PRIMARY MESSAGE — [H562](#) Is On You." This one is generated by [GrassrootsNC](#), a gun advocacy group. First, almost none of the emails came from my district. Second, threatening a legislator is not an effective strategy. Persuade, don't threaten. GrassrootsNC's earlier efforts generated well-over a thousand emails on the same subject. Less than five of those emails came from my district. I responded to the emails from my district, but trashed the rest. Conversely, some constituents wrote their own emails on the same subject. I personally responded to each of those.

"Please vote no on [H289](#) — N.C. Anti-Bitcoin Act." While almost none of the emails on this subject came from North Carolina, the emails were also badly timed. I was getting emails about a bill that the House had already passed. What is the point of that? Another set of emails in the trash.

"Oppose [S.B. 433/H.B. 405](#)" [Property Protection Act]. This email is generated by the [Humane Society of the United States](#). While the email was well-targeted in that I only got emails from people in my district, the emails have continued after HB405 passed the House. What is the point of continuing to generate emails on a bill that has already passed the House? I continue to respond to these emails by responding with a copy of an earlier newsletter where I specifically discuss the bill. For me, this email is counter-productive. I'm a lead sponsor of legislation pushed by the Humane Society, yet the group is generating emails from my constituents against a position I've taken — not a very good way to build a relationship.

I could give another dozen examples of bad email blasts, but I'll summarize some key points:

- Email blasts are okay, but they are not as effective as personalized emails. Legislators are much more likely to respond to a constituent who has clearly written a personal message based on his or her experience. A form email that is being sent to every legislator almost always gets trashed.
- Legislators respond to emails from their constituents; they don't respond often to emails coming from people from across the state who don't live in their respective

districts. Groups that generate these emails would be best served if they directed emails from constituents only to their own legislators.

- Any communications should be timed so that one is asking for support or opposition to some bill when that is actually being considered. Writing to ask a legislator to support or oppose a bill that has already passed isn't effective. It also isn't effective to write a House member about a Senate bill that hasn't gotten to the House and vice versa.
- Keep adjectives and adverbs to a minimum. Make arguments based on facts, not based on adjectives and adverbs.

Most email writers probably think that their emails don't mean anything, since they don't have any relationship with a legislator or don't represent some large, powerful organization. That is wrong. *Everyone* is the constituent of one House member and one senator. A legislator may not know the person who is writing, but he or she can usually tell if the person who is writing lives in his or her district. In other words, if you're a legislator's constituent, you have a relationship to that legislator.

Obviously, if one actually knows a legislator or has some sort of relationship other than being a constituent, one has the ability to be particularly effective in advocating for some position, or for or against some bill.

One thing that has consistently surprised me is when a person who I know really well sends me a form email. That person could write a two sentence note that would have greater impact than the email blast that I might not even see. If you know your legislator on a first-name basis, you've got a relationship that you should use when communicating.

Another thing that has surprised me is how rarely groups work to build a relationship with a legislator by thanking legislators when they do what was asked in an earlier email blast. People are always asking for things, but rarely do legislators get thanked when the legislators do exactly what they were asked to do.

Years ago, legislators received letters from their constituents. Today we don't receive many letters from constituents. What we do receive are emails and, unfortunately, far too many of those are emails generated by a person pushing a button and sending a form email to legislators.

Emails can be an effective way of communicating with legislators if one remembers that one should primarily communicate only with one's own senator or House member, that one should communicate in a timely fashion on a subject that the legislator can affect, and that personalized emails are more effective than form emails.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck McDermott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

National and Statewide Early Childhood Organizations and Resources

National Organizations

- 1000 Days (<https://thousanddays.org/>)
- Alliance for Early Success (<http://earlysuccess.org/>)
- America for Early Ed (<http://americaforearlyed.org/>)
- Bipartisan Policy Center (<https://bipartisanpolicy.org>)
- BUILD Initiative (<http://www.buildinitiative.org/>)
- Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (<http://cscce.berkeley.edu/>)
- Center on the Developing Child (<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/>)
- Child Care Aware of America (www.childcareaware.org)
- Child Care Works (<https://childcareworks.org/>)
- Child Trends (<https://www.childtrends.org/>)
- Children’s Defense Fund (<https://www.childrensdefense.org/>)
- Council for a Strong America (<https://www.strongnation.org/>)
- First Five Years Fund (www.ffyf.org)
- Food Research and Action Center (<http://frac.org/>)
- Georgetown Center for Children and Families (<https://ccf.georgetown.edu/>)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (www.naeyc.com)
- National Black Child Development Institute (<https://www.nbcdi.org/>)
- National Partnership for Women and Families (<http://www.nationalpartnership.org/>)
- National Women’s Law Center (<https://nwlc.org/>)
- Ounce of Prevention (<https://www.theounce.org/>)
- The Heckman Foundation (<http://www.heckmanequation.org>)
- ZERO TO THREE (www.zerotothree.org)

North Carolina Organizations

- BEST NC (<http://best-nc.org/>)*
- Center for Child and Family Health (<https://www.ccfhnc.org/>)
- Center for Child and Family Policy (<https://childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/>)
- Child Care Services Association (<https://www.childcareservices.org/>)*
- First 2000 Days (www.first2000days.org)
- Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (<https://fpg.unc.edu/>)
- Jordan Institute for Families (<https://jordaninstituteforfamilies.org/>)
- MomsRising (<https://www.momsrising.org/>)*
- NC Association for the Education of Young Children (www.ncaeyc.org)*
- NC Association of County Commissioners (<https://www.ncacc.org/>)*
- NC Child (<http://www.ncchild.org/>)*
- NC Child Care Resource and Referral Council (www.childcarerrnc.org)*
- NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/>)*
- NC Early Childhood Foundation (<https://buildthefoundation.org/>)*
- NC Early Childhood Funders Collaborative*



- NC Governor's Office (<https://governor.nc.gov/>)*
- NC Head Start Collaboration Office
(<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/earlylearning/hssco/>)*
- NC Infant Mental Health Association (<https://www.ncimha.org/>)*
- NC Institute for Child Development Professionals (<http://ncicdp.org/>)
- NC Institute of Medicine (<http://nciom.org/>)*
- NC Partnership for Children (<http://www.smartstart.org/>)*
- NC Pediatric Society (<https://www.ncpeds.org/default.aspx>)*
- Prevent Child Abuse NC (<https://www.preventchildabusenc.org/>)*
- The Hunt Institute (<http://www.hunt-institute.org/>)

**Member of the Think Babies™ NC Leadership Team*



**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**



SECTION 4

Effective Messaging and Communication Strategies



PRITZKER

Children's Initiative

Template Op-Ed

As a [JOB TITLE/JOB DESCRIPTION/ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY], I [INDICATE YOUR INTERACTION WITH BABIES/TODDLERS/FAMILIES] adjusting to the joys and routines of being parents, including [HIGHLIGHT CHALLENGES RELATED TO YOUR PRIORITY AREA(S)].

These parents all feel the immense responsibility for their child's future, and know that the early years shape a child's life. But it can be hard to fully grasp what that means when it comes to brain development.

Babies' brains grow at warp speed—forming more than one million new neural connections every second. That's amazing when you think about it. In fact, between the ages of 0 and 3, a child's brain will grow faster than at any other point in their life.

[INSERT ANECDOTE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE SUPPORTING BABIES AND FAMILIES IN SERVICE OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND/OR REFERENCE RECENT NEWS STORY.]

As a community, we can do more to support babies and families. When babies thrive, we all benefit. And, when babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop in ways they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges that we all end up paying for in the long run.

[INSERT ANECDOTE ABOUT A CHILD OR FAMILY YOU HAVE WORKED WITH AND HOW THEY HAVE BENEFITTED FROM SUPPORTS IN THE COMMUNITY.]

That's why it's time that our elected leaders *Think Babies*™. They need to understand that investing in our littlest ones is one of the most important things we can do as a nation to make sure all our kids grow into healthy, well-rounded adults who reach their fullest potential.

In fact, every dollar we invest in infant and early childhood programs returns great benefits for our children and our country, including more years of education, more employment, and better health as adults.

So how can we assure that babies get the support they need to thrive?

[INSERT POLICY ANSWERS BASED ON YOUR FOCUS AREA(S)]:

- [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 CARING ADULTS AND STRONG EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES.]
- [GIVE PARENTS DEDICATED TIME TO BOND WITH THEIR BABIES IN THE EARLIEST MONTHS, WHEN SO MUCH OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT IS AT STAKE.]
- [REACH PARENTS WITH VOLUNTARY, EVIDENCE-BASED HOME VISITING RESOURCES THEY SAY THEY WANT AND NEED TO TEACH THEM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND HOW THEY CAN NURTURE THEIR BABIES TO SET THEM UP FOR A HEALTHY LIFE.]
- [GIVE FAMILIES BETTER ACCESS TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.]
- [PROVIDE PARENTS WITH INCREASED ACCESS TO CHILD AND FAMILY SCREENINGS, SUPPORTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GET HELP FROM NEEDED SERVICES.]



- [ENSURE FAMILIES HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY NUTRITION AND OBESITY PREVENTION PROGRAMS THAT CAN GIVE THEIR INFANTS AND TODDLERS A HEALTHY START IN LIFE.]

Our elected officials must make the potential of America’s babies a national priority. All they have to do is *Think Babies*™ and remember that investing early in policies that support babies’ growth and development will make a difference in their lives forever.

Template Letter-to-the-Editor

The [INSERT DATE] article [“INSERT ARTICLE NAME”] addressed [INSERT TOPIC RELATED TO INFANT-TODDLER ISSUES]. As a [INSERT YOUR PROFESSIONAL TITLE OR ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERTISE], I am writing to add some important information to the discussion. The article did not touch on a very important factor—baby brain development.

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. The latest science shows us that, when babies have nurturing relationships, early learning experiences, and good nutrition, those neural connections are stimulated and strengthened, laying a strong foundation for the rest of their lives. But when babies don’t get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don’t develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges.

Giving all babies a strong start in life must be a priority in our community and among our elected leaders. Investing in programs and policies that support early brain development yields significant returns in the long run through more years of education, more employment, and better health as an adult. When babies thrive, we all benefit.

Template Blog

The first three years of a baby's life shape all the rest. In that short time period, babies form more than one million new neural connections every second. That's a whole lot of brainpower.

[INSERT AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU KNOW THIS STATISTIC IS TRUE FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, SUCH AS HOW EARLY A BABY RESPONDS TO LOVED ONES AROUND HIM/HER.]

That's why [STATE ORGANIZATION] is working with ZERO TO THREE to bring *Think Babies*™ to [STATE/CAPITAL] and make babies' potential our national priority.

When babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don't develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges. Every minute we waste risks another child missing out on their full potential. That's not good for families, and that's not good for our future.

We need to [INSERT SPECIFIC PRIORITIES BASED ON STATE PRIORITIES]:

- [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 CARING ADULTS AND STRONG EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES.]
- [GIVE PARENTS DEDICATED TIME TO BOND WITH THEIR BABIES IN THE EARLIEST MONTHS, WHEN SO MUCH OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT IS AT STAKE.]
- [REACH PARENTS WITH VOLUNTARY, EVIDENCE-BASED HOME VISITING RESOURCES THEY SAY THEY WANT AND NEED TO TEACH THEM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND HOW THEY CAN NURTURE THEIR BABIES TO SET THEM UP FOR A HEALTHY LIFE.]
- [GIVE FAMILIES BETTER ACCESS TO INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.]
- [PROVIDE PARENTS WITH INCREASED ACCESS TO CHILD AND FAMILY SCREENINGS, SUPPORTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GET HELP FROM NEEDED SERVICES.]
- [ENSURE FAMILIES HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY NUTRITION AND OBESITY PREVENTION PROGRAMS THAT CAN GIVE THEIR INFANTS AND TODDLERS A HEALTHY START IN LIFE.]

[INSERT A BRIEF STORY TO EXPLAIN HOW ONE OF THESE SUPPORTS HAS HELPED A FAMILY YOU KNOW.]

Be part of the team that's fighting for their future. Check out www.thinkbabies.org to learn more about the campaign and how you can get involved.

Social Media Posts

- In the first few years #babies brains form more than one million new neural connections every second. That's a whole lot of brainpower. #ThinkBabiesNC
- The greatest opportunity to give our children the best chance to succeed starts early. Just one more reason to #ThinkBabiesNC .
- When we #ThinkBabies and help parents support their healthy development, we create a better future for all of us—higher graduation rates, more employment, and healthier lives. #ThinkBabiesNC
- We must make the potential of #babies a national priority. It's time for all of us to #ThinkBabiesNC.
- Quality #childcare feeds a baby's growing brain and will lay a solid foundation for their future learning, behavior, and health. #ThinkBabiesNC
- #ThinkBabiesNC and ensure every family who needs access to quality, affordable #childcare can get it.
- Voluntary, evidence-based #homevisiting programs help parents nurture their babies' healthy development. #ThinkBabiesNC
- Access to nutrition programs can help moms-to-be and babies get a healthy start when so much rapid development is happening. #ThinkBabiesNC
- #ThinkBabies can only eat, sleep, and cry? Think again. Infants can feel joy, interest, and excitement at 3 months old. #ThinkBabiesNC
- When we #ThinkBabiesNC, graduation rates climb, earnings go up, and crime goes down.
- When parents & caregivers respond to infants' feelings of joy, interest, & excitement, they stimulate their neural connections – the foundation for all development. #ThinkBabiesNC

Be sure to tag @NCEarlyEdCo and @ZEROTOTHREE and use #ThinkBabiesNC on Twitter and Facebook!

#KeepMarching

**MomsRising Advocacy
and Organizing Tactics
and Tips**

MomsRising.org
MamásConPoder.org

#KeepMarching

MomsRising Advocacy and Organizing Tactics and Tips

At MomsRising, we know the voices of moms and the people who love them are powerful. We've seen it in numerous wins over the last 10 years, from the local and state levels all the way up to Congress and the White House. Now all our voices are needed more than ever to protect families, stand up against bigotry and discrimination, and continue to lead the way to the kind of policies that lift our families, fuel our economy, and build a nation where everyone can thrive.

MomsRising members across the country are flexing our grassroots muscles, and together we are a powerful force. Whether you're focused on the Administration, Congress, your state legislature, your local city council or other target, here are a few tips and tactics proven to maximize your impact that you can mix and match to put to good use.

- 1 Find a local or national organization to work with you (like MomsRising!) that shares your values. There's a lot to do, and it's often easiest to do it with a group of people and/or an organization supporting you.**

Note: MomsRising is a member service organization, so we do all the hard work for you in terms of finding the top issues when you can make your voice heard and have an impact – and bringing them to you with easy ways to take action. When you are signed on with MomsRising (it's free!), every week we deliver at least three possible actions directly to you that you can do. With each action, you can choose if you have time (and inclination) to do it or not, your choice. We are at your service!

- 2 Welcome your friends to take action with you. Start a #KeepMarching Circle with MomsRising. Sign up here to let us know you're starting a #KeepMarching Circle: <http://action.momsrising.org/signup/MRKeepMarchingCircles/>**

The MomsRising Nuts & Bolts of Making an Impact

| | |
|--|--|
| 1: Pick Your Focus and Do an Action Sketch! | D: High Impact Phone Calls PAGE 8 |
| 2: Develop Your Message | E: Meeting With Elected Officials PAGE 9 |
| 3: Identify Your Target | F: Do a Powerful Delivery PAGE 11 |
| 4: Tactics and How They Work | G: Attend Town Halls and Community Forums PAGE 12 |
| A: Share Your Story! You Are Powerful! PAGE 4 | H: Letters to the Editor PAGE 13 |
| B: Fast Actions for Busy People: Signing Petitions and Sending Emails - They Matter! PAGE 6 | I: Host a #KeepMarching Circle or Other Local Gathering PAGE 14 |
| C: Personalized Letters, Emails, and Postcards PAGE 7 | J: Use Social Media to Win PAGE 15 |
| | 5: In Closing - YOU ROCK! |

THE MOMSRISING NUTS & BOLTS OF MAKING AN IMPACT

1 Pick Your Focus and Do an Action Sketch!

Action Sketch Components: (A) What is your focused priority area where you want to make your voice heard? (B) Why is it important for your voice to be heard right now? (C) What change do you want to make? (D) Who has the power to make that change?

Example of an action sketch: Do you want to protect healthcare? Then here's your action sketch:

- (A) **What is your focused priority area?** Healthcare
- (B) **Why now?** Some in Congress and Donald Trump are trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) right now, despite the fact that it covers nearly 30 million people.
- (C) **Change you want to make?** Protect healthcare coverage for 30 million people, and also protect ACA consumer protections, like no exclusions for pre-existing conditions and no lifetime caps.
- (D) **Who has the power to make the change? (Note: This is also the "target" per below)** Congress is deliberating the ACA now.

2 Develop Your Message

The next step to effective organizing and advocacy after picking your focus and doing your action sketch is developing your message. Whether you are trying to communicate with an elected official, the media, or simply trying to get your friends and neighbors engaged, it helps to spend a little time beforehand thinking about your message. Defining what you want your audience to take from your message, and what you want them to do as a result, will make everything from emails to meetings to letters to the editor more effective.

#KeepMarching Circle Activity:

Spend five minutes drafting a practice message on an issue you care about, then practice it with a partner. Give each other feedback on how you could make your message stronger.

One effective approach to crafting messages is charting your "Problem, Solution, Action." Your audience needs to know what the problem is, how it can be fixed, and what you want them to do about it. Ideally, you should be able to describe your message with no more than one or two sentences in each area.

- **Problem message:** In the problem message, you want to communicate the scope of the problem and frame it in a way that fits with your values and makes the most compelling case. Include one or two key facts or pieces of data, supported by stories when possible – but not too many, which can be overwhelming. You also want to share who caused the problem and who can fix it.
- **Solution message:** You want to quickly move from laying out the problem to providing the listener with options for how it can be addressed. There needs to be hope for change and clear action steps that can be taken.
- **Action message:** You don't want to ever end a conversation or communication without a call to action. This will look different depending on your audience. Some examples might be: asking an elected official to vote for or against a particular policy, encouraging the public to speak up about why change is needed, or asking someone in your community to make a phone call or share their story. But every message needs to end in action. People want to know what they can do!

When making an ask of elected officials, it may sound like, “Can I count on you to protect my healthcare coverage?” If they say no or they aren’t sure, you want to ask what information or support they might need in order to take the action you requested, and then make a plan to follow up with them.

Once you have your message developed, you are ready for almost any tactic. If you are working on multiple issues, you should consider whether you can effectively group them in a single message or whether it makes more sense to divide them up. Too many messages at one time can dilute your impact.

3 Identify Your Target

Knowing your “target” is essential to effective organizing. The *Midwest Academy* provides a useful overview of the process of setting goals, identifying targets, and selecting appropriate tactics in their manual *Organizing for Social Change*. Here are the key things you need to know about how to choose a target:

- **Primary targets:** A primary target is a person who can give you what you want. Primary targets may be in the executive branch like the President, secretaries of various agencies, governors, or mayors; in legislative branches, targets can be leaders and members of Congress, state legislatures, city councils or county commissions; or outside of government like business or civic leaders and CEOs.
- **Secondary targets:** A secondary target is someone who has more power over the primary target than you do. Secondary targets might include a legislative staffer who works on an issue or an assistant, a campaign volunteer or donor, a business or civic leader, or a primary target’s trusted friend. A secondary target might also be your member of Congress who can reach out to other lawmakers who sit on key committees, or a Congressional leader who can try to influence the President.
- **Common target selection pitfalls:** Too often, organizing efforts get off to a poor start because people identify their targets as an institution rather than an individual. One example would be to say you are targeting Congress. Targets are always individuals or a specifically selected group of people you are focusing your efforts on for a particular reason.

People often focus solely on their own elected officials. This can be a good place to start and elected officials tend to be more open to listening to their own constituents. But sometimes it may make sense to target those in the leadership or who sit on key committees. A little digging to see who is on a relevant committee can help you more effectively target your efforts.

- **MomsRising’s approach to targeting:** MomsRising works closely with partner organizations to identify who the best primary targets are on a particular issue, key moments to reach them, and what message and tactics are most likely to be effective. Once we’ve done that, we reach out to our members to offer multiple avenues to have a big impact.

Targeting is about prioritizing. Rarely does anyone have the capacity to focus on all the targets they would like, so it’s important to think about what capacity you have and where you think your efforts would be most effective. Once you’ve decided that, it’s time to focus on tactics.

4 Tactics and How They Work

When thinking about tactics to use in a campaign plan, it can be helpful to think of a triangle. At the top are tactics that fewer people take and at the bottom are the mass participation tactics that more people take at the same time. Each set of tactics has its own benefits and all are effective in different ways. It should be noted that mixing multiple tactics is a critically important tactic, too. For instance, MomsRising has found petitions to be particularly high impact when volunteers personally deliver them to key targets, often along with booklets of stories of the ways the policy impacts real people (which is a regular practice for us). This is a mix of several key tactics from different areas of the triangle.

What's on the triangle? Near the wider bottom, you'll find high impact mass participation tactics like petitions, marches, and rallies that are very effective in showing widespread public support. Higher up in the triangle are personal letters and emails followed by phone calls. Next you'll find tactics like personal deliveries (of petitions, open letters, booklets of personal stories, or other items) or directly asking questions at town hall meetings. Finally, near the top, you'll find in-person meetings or convincing secondary targets to personally contact primary targets as well.

All of these tactics are impactful, and the ones you use at any particular moment depend on your goals and capacity at the time.

Mixing and matching tactics can be key to having a high impact. In fact, at MomsRising, we find that we get the highest impact from mixing tactics in one central campaign project, so that's why you get so many different ways to take action from us, from invitations to sign a petition, to opportunities to share your story, attend a meeting, write a letter to the editor, deliver a petition, make a call, and more. After people take action, we put the puzzle pieces together for a high overall impact. (We call this "Layer Cake Organizing" because many layers together make a beautiful whole, high-impact message that gets through to those who need to hear it – and also we love cake).

Here are some specific high impact tactics to mix and match to have an impact:

A. Share Your Story. You Are Powerful!

It can be easiest to start with what you know—and that's a good thing, because it just so happens that you are powerful.

That's right. Your real-life experiences are more powerful than many people think. It's critical that decision makers hear the stories of those impacted by policies or the lack thereof. It's also incredibly important that these stories are heard in the media because they help shape the public dialogue and build momentum for change. And, it's important that other people hear your story so they know they're not alone, and that when so many people are having the same problem at the same time, it's not an epidemic of personal failings, but a structural issue that we can all solve together. MomsRising works to bring the voices and real world experiences of women, mothers, and the people who love them straight to our local, state, and national leaders to amplify women's voices and advance change that lifts us all.

We collect stories from our members in all our different issue areas. We ask for stories in our action alerts, on our website, and through social media. And we often put them in storybooks and hand deliver them to decision makers (targets). Other times we look through the stories that people have submitted to find people who might be willing to talk to the media or testify when a particular policy is being debated.

Here are a few things to know and think about when you are deciding how to share your story:

- **What's your connection to the issue?** Think about how the policy at hand impacts you. Maybe your family is directly affected by recent executive orders, is afraid you'll lose your healthcare coverage because a family member has a pre-existing condition, lacks paid family and medical leave, or is unable to afford high-quality child care.

Or maybe you aren't directly affected, but you are concerned about how the policy at hand impacts others, like how attacks on families of certain backgrounds undermines who we are as a nation, or you know how important having access to health care, paid leave, and high-quality childcare are for your family, and you think other families need those, too.

- **Reach out to others.** Even if you aren't directly impacted by an issue, you may know someone else who is and you can help by reaching out to them. For example, teachers and school nurses tell some of the most powerful stories about why parents need paid sick leave to care for their sick children. You can ask them to share their story, too!

Here's a link where you can share stories you come across that you think Congress needs to hear:

https://www.momsrising.org/member_stories/submit

- **Don't be intimidated.** Sharing your story can feel intimidating, but it shouldn't be. You don't need to write a lot. Just a few sentences about how a particular policy impacts your family can be very meaningful. It helps lawmakers connect the people they are supposed to represent with the policies they are debating, and puts faces and names on the statistics they are studying. And it helps media understand what they are reporting.
- **Protecting your privacy.** Your privacy is always top of mind at MomsRising. For instance, when you submit your story to MomsRising, you decide if you are comfortable using your last name or whether you want to keep your name confidential.
- **Supporting you in telling your story.** If an opportunity comes up where your story would be a good fit, MomsRising reaches out to you to see if you'd be interested in sharing it. We provide any support, training/coaching, and help you might need. MomsRising members have testified before Congress and state legislatures, spoken at press conferences, and have been featured in TV and print stories, and more.

Sharing your story is one of the most powerful things you can do. And at MomsRising, we know that none of us tells just one story. The issues facing families overlap and intersect in lots of different ways. We appreciate stories on as many issues as you are willing to share.

We hope you'll share some of your stories today!

https://www.momsrising.org/member_stories/submit

#KeepMarching Circle Activity:

Spend a few minutes thinking about your own experiences and what stories you might have that connect to a policy issue. Jot down some notes and make a plan to share your story with MomsRising here:

https://www.momsrising.org/member_stories/submit

B. Fast Actions for Busy People: Signing Petitions and Sending Emails – They Matter!

At MomsRising, we often get asked if signing and sharing petitions and sending emails to decision makers matter. The short answer is YES! In our organization, we have a rule that there's no action without urgency. So anytime you get an alert from us asking you to sign a petition, email your lawmaker, or share an alert on social media, rest assured it's because there's a real chance to move the needle, and that, importantly, we have a high impact plan to deliver the petition signatures to the target.

What happens once you sign a MomsRising petition or click to send an email to your elected official? It depends.

- **If it's urgent...** We make sure it immediately gets into the hands of lawmakers either electronically or in person. We work with partners to figure out exactly when your voice can have the most impact and make sure your message gets to the right person.
- **Creative deliveries and story books.** Other times we collect all the petitions into a big book, along with stories from our members, and volunteers help us hand deliver the package to decision makers. Sometimes this may include an activity, such as inviting members to join us for a creative action like a giant Chutes & Ladders game for early learning on the US Capitol lawn, delivering superhero capes to state lawmakers to ask them to be superheros for policies that lift families, or taking decorated onesies for paid leave to a city council. (Yes, we've done all of these!) These creative approaches make signatures even more powerful, attract media coverage, and we love it when members are able to join us to deliver them.
- **Back us up!** When MomsRising members or staff are delivering petitions, we may reach out to ask you to back us up while we're doing it by making a phone call or sending an email to your local elected official to let them know that, even though you can't be there, the MomsRising members in their office are speaking for you as they deliver your petition signature. It makes a huge difference when leaders know the people they represent are paying attention.
- **Make it personal.** At the state and local level especially, we may ask you to send an email directly to your legislator and provide you with sample language. Even if you only have a second, it's very important that you hit send so elected officials know people in their district are following and care about these issues.

And if you have an extra minute or two, you can make your email even more powerful by adding why you personally care about the issue and sharing a related experience if you have one. On petition pages, you can add personal comments and stories in the comment box and those will get delivered as well. The more personal it feels, the higher the impact! But no matter what you have time to do, we will make sure it is high impact.

- **Share.** Members sharing actions on social media is key. You know what matters to families in your own community, and you are a trusted source of information for your friends and neighbors. Sharing on your own social media networks, in Facebook groups or parent organizations to which you belong, on Twitter, or on local listservs makes a tremendous difference in how many people take action and connects new members to our shared efforts. When you do, you can share safely knowing that MomsRising has done the research to make sure what we put out is accurate and that it's a situation where taking action at the moment really can make a difference.

C. Personalized Letters, Emails, and Postcards

Personalizing your communications is a great way to get an elected official's attention. You can personalize emails through MomsRising's action alerts as described above. Other good options for personalizing your messages are sending an email directly to a lawmaker, posting on their Facebook page, Tweeting a message to them, or sending personal letters or postcards.

Here are a few tips to make these written, personalized communications more effective:

- Research their position before you write. Know what key concerns they may have so you can provide useful information. Think about what messages might be most persuasive given their position.
- Always start with the proper title, such as Honorable, Congressman/Senator, Councilmember, etc.
- Keep your letter clear, concise, factual, and one page or less. Letters are most effective when they focus on a single issue.
- Be polite.
- State the reason you are writing in the first paragraph. Also in the first paragraph, be clear about the issue and what you want them to do. State specifically if you want them to vote YES or NO on a certain policy, and include the relevant bill title and/or bill number if you know it.
- If you are a constituent, mention that early in the letter.
- If you writing about a specific piece of legislation, know the bill's name and number.
- Follow up statements with facts to support them, and cite sources whenever possible.
- Make it personal. Share your own experience and how you see the issue impacting your family and others in your community.
- Have a clear ask, and politely request that they respond to let you know their position.
- Don't forget to put your email address and your physical address on both emails and letters. You want them to be able to respond to you. Your address also proves you are a constituent.
- Postcards are becoming a popular alternative to letters because they are quick, easy, and remove some of the security concerns that can slow down the arrival of sealed mail.

Make it a party with friends!

Letter or postcard writing is a fun activity to do with friends. Consider inviting friends over to write letters together. You can choose whether to provide stationary and snacks or have friends pitch in. It's helpful to have addresses on hand and some facts printed out on whatever issue you are addressing for people to include in their letters.

Download a MomsRising postcard here: https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.momsrising.org/images/Persist_Postcard.pdf

Get crafty!

Making your own stationary or postcards can make the process even more fun. You can buy craft supplies, design something on your computer, or ask your kids to draw pictures on cardstock cut into postcard size. This will help your letter stand out.

#KeepMarching Circle Activity:

Write a quick postcard to an elected official telling them your concerns on an issue and urging them to take action.

D. High Impact Phone Calls

Phone calls are another fast, personal and high impact way to let your target know you are paying attention and want them to act. While calls can be intimidating at first, they are easy and can be very effective, especially at the state and local level where offices are less likely to receive a high volume of calls. For example, even just five to ten calls at the state level can make a difference.

Text JOIN to RISING (which is 747464) and we will make it easy for you to call leaders just when your voice is most needed.

Here are some quick tips to make your phone calls most effective:

- Call your lawmaker at their legislative office. A legislative assistant or intern will likely answer, or you may be directed to voicemail.
- Increasingly, high call volume to Congressional offices means people often can't get through or are finding mailboxes are full. Don't give up! For members of Congress, they may have multiple offices in the state in addition to the national office. Try those numbers, too. Faxing a message may also be an option.
- Lawmakers typically keep track of how many people are calling for or against an issue. It's okay to call more than once on the same issue.
- Spend a few minutes thinking through what you want to say before you call. It can be helpful to jot down the main idea you want to make sure you cover. Be sure to keep it short and to tell them clearly if you are YES or NO on a policy. If you are personally affected by the decision, make sure to let them know that, too.
- Identify yourself, any organization you are affiliated with if you feel like that's helpful, and let them know where you live so they know you are from their district.
- Keep your message brief. Three sentences is a max. Like an effective letter, be sure to make a specific ask of your lawmaker, i.e. "Please vote YES" or "Please vote NO." If you want, you can start by asking if the lawmaker has a position on the issue you are calling about, and then target your ask based on the response.
- When calling about a specific piece of legislation, make sure you know the bill number and name and mention it in your message.
- If you'd like a response back regarding the lawmaker's position, be sure to ask for one and give your phone number, email, or mailing address where you can be reached.
- If the person taking your call mentions specific concerns the lawmaker has on an issue, contact policy organizations who work on that area or visit their websites for useful resources you can share with your lawmaker in a follow up email or letter.
- Be polite and thank them for their time. Your long-term goal is to build a relationship with the lawmaker and those in their office, so you want to make sure you set the right tone even when you disagree.

E. Meetings With Elected Officials

In-person meetings are another high impact and effective way of communicating with and influencing decision makers. They show lawmakers that their constituents care deeply about an issue, help connect an abstract issue with a human face, and allow lawmakers a chance to ask questions and for you to share new information.

In-person meetings can happen at the decision maker's office in Washington, DC, in their state capital, or when they are home in their districts. You might schedule a meeting as part of an organized lobby day, or on your own. In-person meetings are particularly powerful at the local level and can be much easier to set up.

Ideally, the meeting will be with your elected official, but it can also be effective to meet with a staff person or legislative assistant who focuses on the issue you are addressing. This is particularly true for members of Congress or an executive branch agency. In those cases, legislators depend on advice from staff because they can't follow all the issues. Having a key staffer on your side can be critical.

#KeepMarching Circle Activity:

In your group, spend 20 minutes role-playing a pre-meeting and a meeting with a legislator. Pick one person to be the legislator. She or he will decide if they are supportive, hostile, or neutral. The rest of the group should pick an issue and hold a pre-meeting to prepare. Then role-play meeting with the lawmaker. Talk afterwards about what you learned and what was most helpful.

Here are some tips to make your meetings effective:

- **Call early to schedule your meeting.** Sometimes this can take several weeks. It's especially important to call early if you are trying to schedule a meeting during a Congressional recess because those fill up quickly. When possible, don't wait until right before a decision is about to be made to reach out for a meeting. You'll likely need to let the scheduler know how many people to expect.
- **Do your research about the elected leader's position.** To achieve the best results, know the legislation's name and number, current status, and your target's previous voting record on these types of issues. Bonus points if you can find out whether the elected representative you are meeting with is on any relevant committees. Try to identify and understand your target's position, and any particular concerns they may have that you can address. You can do a lot of this research on the Internet. You can also call their office and ask their staff questions about where they stand on an issue or find out about any of the other topics listed above, before you go in for the meeting.
- **Develop your main talking points.** What are the key facts you want them to know about your issue? Why does it matter to their constituents? Who will it impact? Write down your very short three main points and print them out before you go in for the meeting. Be prepared to respond to opposition arguments.
- **Find or develop materials to leave behind.** It's helpful to have a factsheet that you can refer to and leave behind. Reach out to groups like MomsRising that do this work for resources. News stories and op-eds are also good options. Make sure to have something to leave, along with your contact information on it.

- **Pick your team.** The most effective meetings usually involve a small group of constituents, ideally no more than six, who can share a variety of perspectives on the issue. You might want to include someone directly affected, someone from the business or faith community, and/or a local civic leader. If you have a relationship with someone who would count as a secondary target – someone who personally knows the elected official, who volunteered on their campaign, or has some other direct connection – it would be great to include that person, too.
- **Pre-meetings are critically important.** Before any meeting with an elected official or primary target, it's important to schedule time for all those attending to meet together to review the goals, message, and strategy for the meeting and decide who will play what roles. These are best done in person, but can also be done on a conference call if necessary, or right before the meeting.
 - Basic review of the legislation or topic you are focusing on in your meeting. Make sure everyone knows where it is in the process and how your target can influence the outcome.
 - Share any background on outreach that has been done on this issue so far, and what you know about the target's current position, such as any concerns they may have and how they voted previously.
 - Discuss and brainstorm the goals for the meeting. What do you want the outcome to be? Decide on what your ask will be.
 - Discuss what roles each person will play in the meeting and the order that you all will be speaking. Choose a spokesperson who will get the meeting started and help facilitate. Pick a note taker. Decide who will make the ask. Make sure everyone has a part to play.
 - Decide what information you think is most important to share. Effective meetings include a balance of sharing personal stories, information on the broader impact, and facts that help address any concerns.
 - Reach agreement on what you would like the agenda of the meeting to look like.

IN YOUR MEETING, DO:

- Have the group spokesperson start you off and have members of the group introduce themselves and thank the leader and/or their staff for being there with you. Be polite and avoid personal criticism. You may disagree, but this meeting is part of building a longer term relationship, and there may be future areas where you agree. You need to be able to work with them as long as they are in office.
- Share why you are there and state clearly what you are asking the lawmaker to do. If this is regarding legislation, have the name and bill number.
- Take turns sharing why this matters to you, providing relevant facts. Feel free to share a personal story, but keep it brief and tie it back to your ask of the lawmaker. Communicate why this matters to other constituents they represent and the community impact. Stay focused on a few key messages you want the target to hear.
- Ask if the target has any questions or concerns you could help answer. Don't worry if you don't know all the answers. Just say, "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you!" Don't try to fake it.

CONTINUED...

IN YOUR MEETING, DO:

- Make your ask for their support.
 - If they are supportive, ask if they need resources or how you can help. You might follow up with a specific ask about whether they would be willing to do something else to move it forward, like reaching out to colleagues.
 - If they are not supportive, try to find out why and ask if they have questions for which you could help find answers. Are there resources that could be helpful? If so, offer to follow up with those. Don't argue with them, even when you disagree. Use this as a chance to educate them and try to address their concerns, but avoid being confrontational.
 - Thank them for meeting with you.

IN YOUR MEETING, DON'T:

- Feel intimidated! Remember, lawmakers work for all of us, so it's important for them to hear about the issues we care about most.
- Think you have to be an expert on the issue. Your personal experiences are what matter most and you don't need to be able to talk about technical policy specifics to make your views known.
- Get off topic or ramble for too long. Stay focused on what you care about most as time will be limited and you want to be sure to get your message across.
- Speak disrespectfully to your member of Congress or their staff. We know that strong emotions accompany many issue areas – being passionate is great, being rude is not.

- **Follow up.** In addition to getting support on your issue, in-person meetings are about building relationships with the decision maker. Write to say thank you and to provide any requested materials. If they commit to a specific action, follow it and write to thank them if they do what you requested.

F. Do a Powerful Delivery!

Another effective, high-level tactic is doing a delivery to a decision maker's office. MomsRising members often do deliveries of story books, petitions, or open letters to elected leaders, sometimes with a fun, related item to illustrate the point. For example, right now, we have storybooks ready to go on health care, early learning, criminal justice reform, and more. We'd love for you to sign up to deliver them directly to your representatives in your local community. Some of our story deliveries are targeted at members of Congress, while others are made for mayors and city council members. Deliveries are easy to do, but make a big impact.

Here's how a delivery works:

- Decide what you want to deliver. This could be a MomsRising storybook, open letter, or petition. It could also be a personal note or card with some factsheets or news stories you pull together.
- If you are delivering to a member of Congress, it might make sense to call ahead to let them know you're planning to stop by, but that is not generally necessary for state legislatures. Local elected officials often have more limited office hours, so you might want to check when would be a good time to stop by.
- Deliveries are great to do with kids, because they are quick, easy, & kids help make an even bigger impression.
- With a delivery, you typically don't expect to meet with the actual decision makers, except perhaps at the local level. Typically you will be leaving your item with a staffer.
- Think ahead of time about what you'd like to say when you drop off your delivery. Introduce yourself, let them know you are a constituent, and tell them what you are dropping off and why you wanted to provide the decision maker with additional information. This would also be a good time to repeat your ask of what you are hoping the decision maker will do as a result.
- Sometimes MomsRising sends out a request for volunteers, asking our members to join us to deliver to certain members of Congress or to entire state legislatures. When that happens, all you have to do is RSVP and show up. Kids are welcome and MomsRising will provide all the materials and what you need to know. Having volunteers help with deliveries makes a huge impact, which can be even bigger when those who can't join us call and email their representatives to let them know to expect us.

G. Attend Town Halls and Community Forums

Town halls and community forums are another valuable opportunity to communicate your priorities, thank leaders, and hold elected leaders accountable. These are often held during Congressional recess or before things start moving in state or local sessions. In some places, local elected officials hold “coffee with council” or “breakfast with the commissioners.” You can often find these opportunities by checking your representative's website or signing up to be on their mailing list. Can't find one? Call their office directly and ask.

Here are some tips to make your town hall experience a success:

- **Prepare your questions ahead of time.** Have several different short question options ready in case someone else asks your question first. The best questions are very short, fact-based, refer to the decision maker's record on the issue, refers to how this issue impacts their constituents, and has a clear ask. Examples of asks might be to commit to voting a certain way or co-sponsoring legislation. Sometimes organizations, including MomsRising, have sample questions you can use.
- **Come early if you can.** You want to get a seat near the front or on an aisle where it's easier to get your question recognized.
- **Be polite, but expect answers.** The decision maker may try to not directly answer your question. If this happens, ask a follow up or let them know you don't feel like they are answering you. Hold on to the mic after you ask your initial question so you will be able to follow up if necessary.
- **Always, always say thank you.** Elected leaders get a lot of people who are unhappy reaching out to them, so the power of a thank you is magnified. Be sure to use it and say thank you.
- **Support others.** Make your support for other questions known by clapping or cheering.

What if your representative is not holding town halls?

An increasing number of representatives are not holding town halls because they don't want to face those unhappy with them. Here are some things you can do if there is no town hall scheduled for your area:

- Check to see if there are other public events on the elected leader's calendar you could attend.
- If there aren't any events listed, call and ask for information on when s/he will be participating in a public event.
- If they tell you they aren't doing public events, make an ask that they schedule some.
- If they still fail to provide public event opportunities for feedback, let them know via phone, email, or letter that as their constituent you are disappointed that they are not making themselves accessible.
- Consider writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about your disappointment.
- Share your frustration on social media.
- You might even start a community petition through a petition site calling on your representative to hold a public meeting. You could deliver the petition to your elected official.

H. Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are another powerful and often overlooked tool. Decision makers often look to the media in their home district to see what issues are important to their members.

Here are some things to think about in crafting your letter:

- **Be direct.** Make one point or at most two in your letter. Start with a catchy opening and use the active tense.
- **Keep it short.** Papers typically take between 150-200 words. Check with your local paper for their limits.
- **Be timely.** You can mention a recent specific article or letter that appeared in their paper, and refer to the title, date, or author when possible. You can search to see what the paper has covered recently or set up Google alerts to let you know when issues you care about are being discussed.
- **Support your facts.** If you cite data, indicate where you found it. Refute or support specific statements, or address relevant facts that were left out. Avoid attacking the reporter or newspaper.
- **Local impact.** Make it relevant to your local community. If it's a national issue, share how it would affect your area.
- **Do your research.** What kind of letters does the paper typically runs. Is there a format or length they prefer?
- **Be professional.** This is not a letter to a friend. Write at a level appropriate for the community and avoid jargon.
- **Encourage others to write!** Your local paper may only allow you to submit a certain number of stories, but you can amplify your impact by reaching out to others to ask them to write and providing some talking points if they need them.

#KeepMarching Circle Activity:

Take five minutes and outline a letter to the editor that you would like to send to your local paper. Share your outline with a partner for feedback.



I. Host a #KeepMarching Circle or Other Local Gathering

One incredibly important tactic is engaging others. You can have a big impact as an individual, and many individuals together have an even bigger impact. #KeepMarching Circles or any local gathering of like-minded friends are a powerful tool for doing this. You can use them to identify shared concerns, get educated on issues or tactics, or make taking action more fun by doing it together.

The easiest way to get started is reach out to those around you. You could do this in your neighborhood, local listservs, on social media, or in groups to which you belong. Let people know you are ready to do more and want to find out if there are others interested in joining you.

*Let us know if you're going to start a #KeepMarching Circle, or would like to hold a local gathering, by clicking here so we can support you:
<http://action.momsrising.org/signup/MRKeepMarchingCircles/>*

How to hold a #KeepMarching Circle or Gathering:

- **Pick a location.** If it's only people you know, you could consider doing it at your home. Other good locations are libraries, parks, or restaurants.
- **It's up to you what it looks like.** You can provide snacks or have people pitch in. You could open it to kids, whole families, or just adults.
- **Pick a time that works best for you.** Doodle polls can be a good way to coordinate times if needed, and things like Facebook events or Evites can help you communicate with those who are coming.

- **Decide what you want to do.** For the first meet up, it may be helpful to spend some time letting people get to know each other and sharing what issues are most important to them. At other meetups, you might want to focus on a specific topic, learn some new tactics, or strategize about the tactic you want to do together. (MomsRising has you covered on a list of topics. If you sign up that you're holding a #KeepMarching Circle, then we can help you every step of the way. Here's that #KeepMarching Circle sign up link again: <http://action.momsrising.org/signup/MRKeepMarchingCircles/>).

In addition, doing an action sketch together (as described in detail above) at a meeting will likely be very helpful. Here's a summary of the action sketch components again: **(A)** What is your focused priority area where you want to make your voice heard? **(B)** Why is it important for your voice to be heard right now? **(C)** What change do you want to make? **(D)** Who has the power to make that change?

- **Resources to use!** MomsRising has toolkits ready on a wide range of our issues that include resources, discussion questions, and even related crafts for kids. You can download some of them here:
 - **Holding a Moms Meetup Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/familiestoolkit>
 - **Paid Family and Medical Leave Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/paidleavetoolkit>
 - **Healthcare Gathering Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/healthcaretoolkit>
 - **Gun Safety Gathering Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/gunsafetytoolkit>
 - **Early Education Toolkit:** <http://moms.ly/2kU04Rj>

J. Use Social Media To Win

Social media is a powerful tool for organizing and making sure your voice is heard. It should be noted that many people are now getting their news directly from social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, so when you post messages, you're actually part of the media and are providing a service to your friends and followers!

There are a number of social media platforms out there: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr and more. You get to decide what makes the most sense for you, and for the community you're engaging.

Facebook has the largest user base, so it's where you're most likely to find people you can meet up with and learn from. On Facebook, you can not only post on your own page, but you also can join local and national groups. Groups are different from pages; groups are more informal and often allow individual members to post and converse. Post-election, numerous Facebook groups have formed to share information and organize locally. Look for one in your area and then you can post about what you're doing there as well as learn about what others are doing. Facebook also provides many organizing tools like surveys apps and event pages if you want to invite people to your #KeepMarching Circle or other gathering.

On Twitter, you can not only Tweet out actions for people to take and news that you see as relevant, you can also follow news media like the New York Times or AP for breaking news. You can also find many policy insiders on Twitter who like to provide the inside scoop on issues they are seeing first hand.

The bigger your networks on these channels, the bigger an audience you have for your own thoughts and views. Finally, virtually every public figure has a Facebook page and Twitter feed, where you can politely direct your thoughts and opinions. (A thank you goes a long way on social media, too, particularly because elected leaders are often awash in complaints).

5 In Closing – YOU ROCK!

Thank you for taking the time to work with MomsRising and help build a nation where everyone can thrive. Your voice is needed now more than ever—and mixing and matching the above tactics is a great way to make your voice heard. Please note that you don't have to do a mix of ALL the above tactics on the same day, week, month or year as everyone else. Do what works for you. Other people are taking action and choosing the tactics that work for them too, so it all adds up over the country. Doing what you can do, in the time you have to do it, has an impact.

Before we go, one note is that you can use this toolkit for holding a #KeepMarching Circle meeting or other local gathering to get started talking about what tactics might work best for you and your community.

And check back with MomsRising often: In the near future, we'll be adding trainings about how to tell your story, more information on how Congress and state legislatures operate, and more sample agendas for #KeepMarching Circle meetings.

Whatever tactics you decide work best for you, MomsRising is here as a resource for you. Keep us posted on your progress by emailing info@momsrising.org, which we may even share on our blog as inspiration. Together, let's #KeepMarching!

Thank you for ALL you're doing!

MomsRising.org is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States.

MomsRising is working for paid family leave, flexible work options, affordable childcare, and for an end to the wage and hiring discrimination which penalizes so many others. MomsRising also advocates for better childhood nutrition, health care for all, toxic-free environments, and breastfeeding rights so that all children can have a healthy start.

Established in 2006, MomsRising and its members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America's families. In 2013, Forbes.com named MomsRising's web site as one of the Top 100 Websites For Women for the fourth year in a row and Working Mother magazine included MomsRising on its "Best of the Net" list.

MomsRising.org
MamásConPoder.org

Words That Work

| | |
|--|--|
| Every family / Every child | All children |
| Equal (<i>instead of "fair"</i>) | Choice / You decide |
| An American issue | Deserve |
| Grow. Learn. Succeed. | Future-focused |
| Prepare / Preparing | Inclusive |
| Kid / Child-focused | Family leave (<i>instead of "parental leave"</i>) |
| Efficient & Effective | Accountable / Accountability |
| Parental Involvement | Achieve potential |
| Educators (<i>instead of instructors</i>) | Opportunity |
| Healthy | Strong / Solid / Quality foundation |

Recommendations from the Bipartisan Policy Center and Luntz Global.

Think Babies™ Elevator Speech Worksheet

Use this worksheet to develop your elevator speech about early childhood issues. Write down your ideas in each section and then use the last box to put it all together. Remember these tips:



Checklist for fine-tuning:

- ✓ Think about who your audience is.
- ✓ Write down all that comes to mind.
- ✓ Then cut the jargon and details. Make strong, short, and powerful sentences and eliminate unnecessary words.
- ✓ Connect the phrases to each other. Your elevator speech has to flow naturally and smoothly. Don't rush.
- ✓ Make sure it answers the key points and inspires action.
- ✓ Practice!

| THE HOOK <i>Grab their attention!</i> |
|---|
| |



THE BODY

Tell them who you are/what you do/what the issue is

Large empty rectangular box for writing the body of the speech.

Story/data/important

Small empty rectangular box for writing story/data/important information.

What is your solution?

Small empty rectangular box for writing the solution.

Why does it matter?

Small empty rectangular box for writing why it matters.

THE WRAP-UP

What do you want them to do? How can they help?

Large empty rectangular box for writing the wrap-up.

YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH

Put it all together!

Large empty rectangular box for writing the final elevator speech.



**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**



SECTION 5

Infographics



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Children's Initiative



The Younger the Child, the Lower the Pay for Early Educators

Among an early education workforce that's already low paid, **teachers working with infants & toddlers earn the least.***

*All analyses in this infographic refer specifically to center-based early educators, due to data limitations.

86% of infant & toddler teachers earn less than \$15/hour, compared to **67% of preschool teachers.**

African Americans are disproportionately affected by this wage penalty.



52% work with infants/toddlers,

compared to **43%** of all early educators.

But that's because younger kids need teachers with less expertise, right?

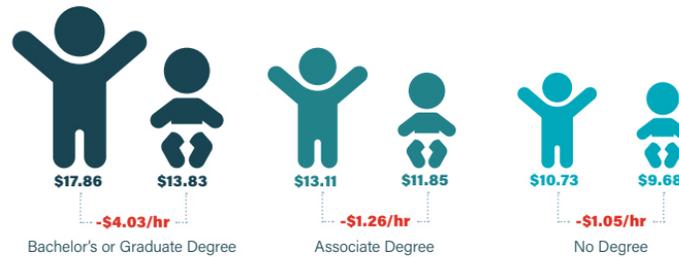
Actually, teachers of infants and toddlers need just as much skill and education as teachers of older children.



In the first few years of life, **more than 1 million new brain connections are formed every second.¹**

These connections are shaped by children's interactions with adults, yet even with a Bachelor's degree, **infant/toddler teachers are paid about \$4 less per hour than similarly qualified early educators working with 3-5 year olds.**

In fact, there is a **wage penalty at every educational level for working with younger children.**



If it's so important, why are people who work with infants and toddlers paid so much less?

The difference is partially explained by program funding. Compared to preschool services for children age three to five, services for infants and toddlers are more expensive to provide, yet are less likely to be primarily publicly funded.



Approximately **15% of centers serving infants/toddlers** report public funding as their predominant revenue source,



compared to **50% of centers that serve only preschoolers.**

Learn more at <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/early-childhood-workforce-index/>

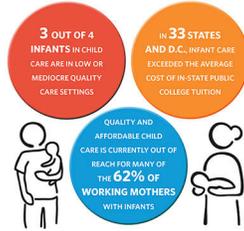
¹ Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

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AMERICA'S FUTURE DEPENDS ON QUALITY CHILD CARE

Low Quality, High Cost

THE STATE OF INFANT AND TODDLER CHILD CARE



Why does Quality Care Matter?



Brain Development

Healthy relationships with child care providers and other caregivers feed a baby's growing brain, building the foundation for all later development and learning, and help with:

- Intelligence
- Language
- Emotions
- Social competence



School Skills

Quality child care prepares babies for future learning and success, including:



Closing the Opportunity Gap

Low quality child care can be detrimental to children's development, but it is often the only care available in low-income communities. Access to quality child care, however, can set them on a path to:

- Higher IQ
- Higher reading & math achievement
- Less likely to repeat grades
- More likely to complete college
- Increased earnings
- More likely to be employed
- Better health as adults



The Elements of Quality Care

A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

To help children make connections that support their development, there should be a 1:4 caregiver to child ratio and no more than 8 children per group.

A COMPETENT WORKFORCE

Caregivers and teachers should have specialized knowledge and skill in early childhood development, with a focus on infants and toddlers.

A COMPENSATED WORKFORCE

Child care workers have hourly wages 23 percent lower than similar workers in other occupations and 1 in 7 live in families with income below the poverty line.

CONTINUITY OF CARE

One primary, but not exclusive, caregiver for at least 1 year and optimally until age 3, is critical for an infant's emotional development.



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



HOME VISITING

Supporting Parents and Child Development



A knock on the front door can bring parents the support they need to nurture their young child's healthy development. Home visiting reaches families where they live by delivering parent support and child development services directly to the home environment.

Developmental Screenings

Information on child development and early learning

Social Support

Referrals to ancillary community services



Linkages for enrollment in public benefits

Learn more: www.zerotothree.org/homevisiting

Citation: Adapted from Deanna S. Gombay, *Home Visitation in 2005: Outcomes for Children and Parents*. Invest in Kids Working Paper No. 7. Committee for Economic Development, Invest in Kids Working Group, 2005. www.ced.org.



How the Coverage Gap Affects North Carolina Families

The Affordable Care Act set aside funds for nearly all North Carolinians to obtain affordable health coverage. For many middle-income families the health law provides tax credits to help purchase private health insurance. The law also provided funding to close the gaps in our current Medicaid program to extend coverage to the working poor.

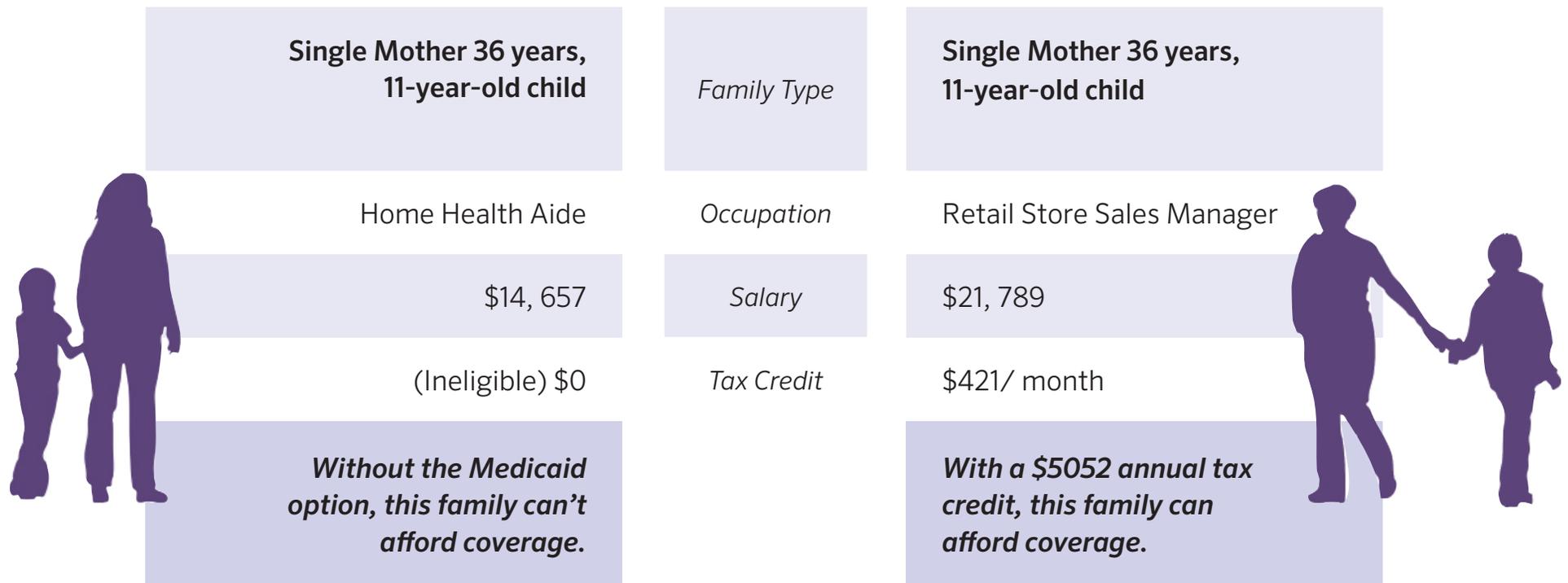
Medicaid does not currently cover all low-income people. Instead, only certain groups of people

are eligible for Medicaid. Pregnant women and children, for example, can obtain Medicaid in North Carolina. Many seniors also receive Medicaid coverage to supplement Medicare or pay for long-term care services. Non-disabled adults without children do not qualify for Medicaid in North Carolina. Eligibility for parents is tightly restricted.

Our state can use the money earmarked in the Affordable Care Act to close this coverage gap for

struggling parents and adults without children. The Governor and the state legislature must agree to tap this federal revenue before we can expand insurance as the health law originally intended.

To illustrate how this coverage gap works here are some examples of individuals and families with no affordable options for insurance. In North Carolina more than 500,000 people are impacted by this gap:



If North Carolina accepts the new Medicaid dollars, **BOTH** families can access affordable health care.

How the Coverage Gap Affects North Carolina Families

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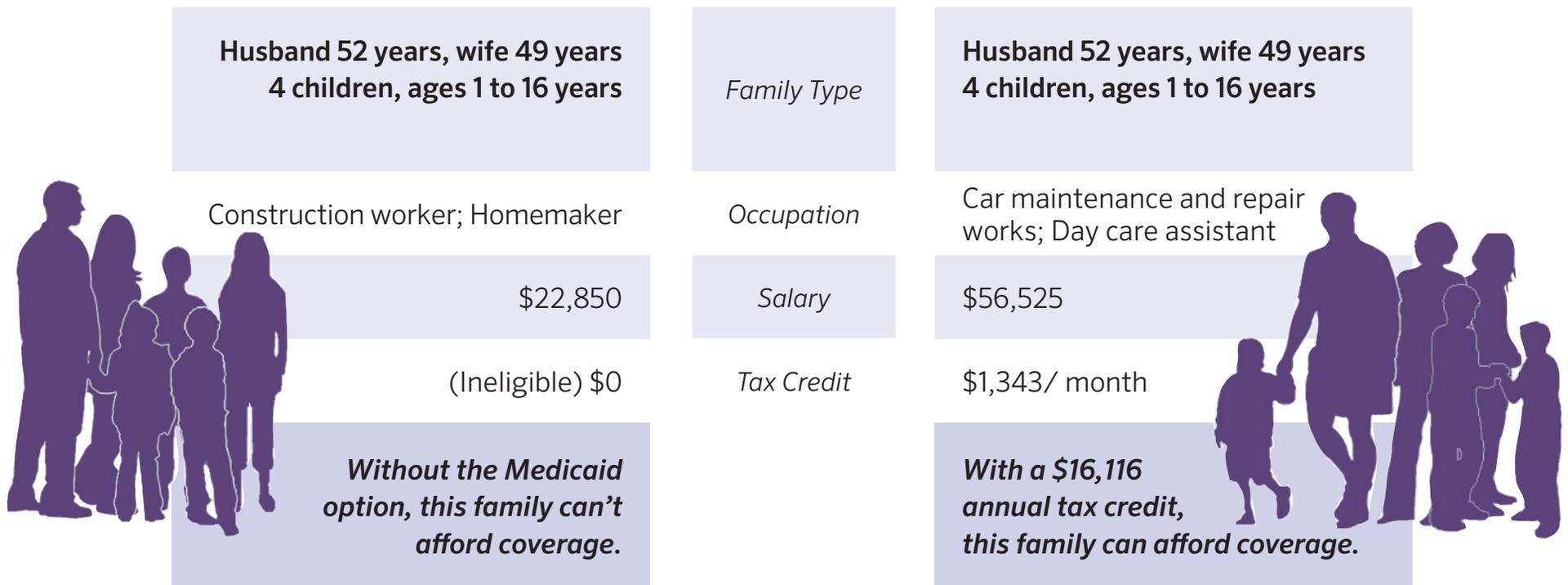
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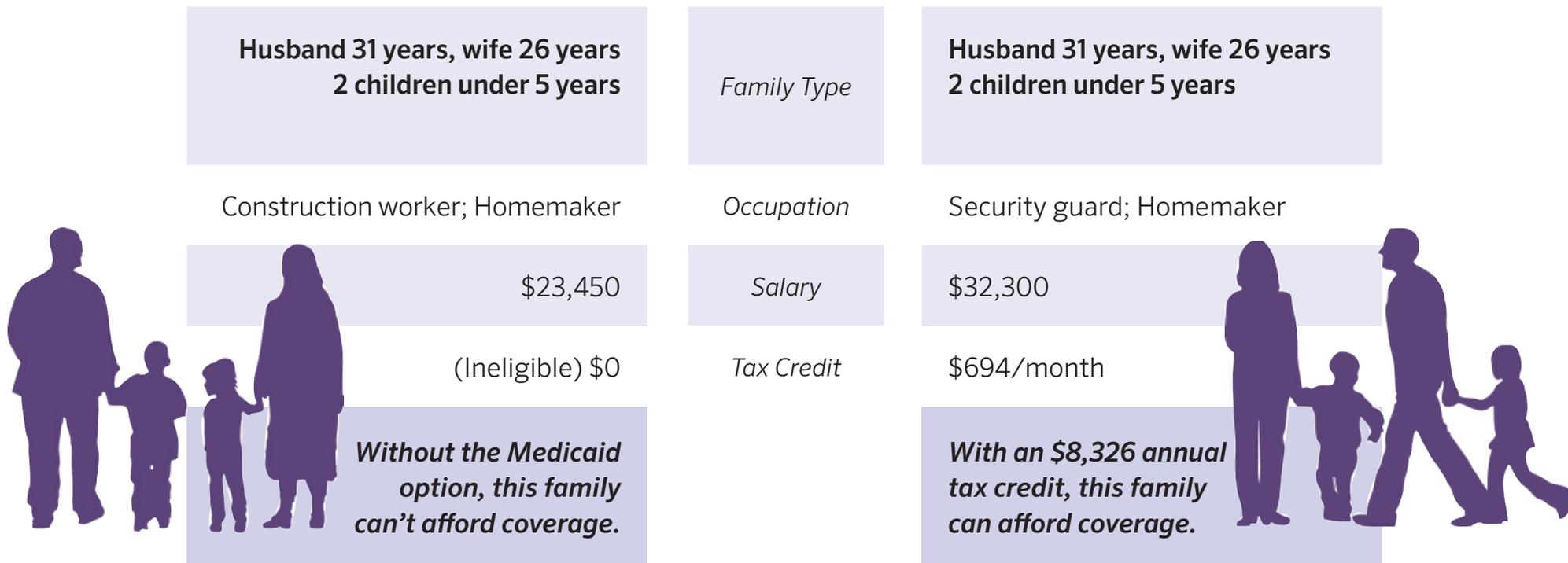
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**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**



SECTION 6

Social Media Images



PRITZKER

Children's Initiative

**Make your biggest
priority the
little ones.**



**Let's start them off
on the right footie.**



**Tell Congress:
It's time to
Think Babies!**



**It's time to
make babies
a national
priority.**



**The future
begins
with babies.**



**The future
begins
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NORTH CAROLINA EARLY EDUCATION COALITION



For more information, please visit:

www.ncearlyeducationcoalition.org/think-babies.html



PRITZKER

Children's Initiative

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.