

A special announcement from the NC Early Education Coalition

With much respect and admiration, the NC Early Education Coalition announces today that Michele Rivest will be transitioning away from her full-time work with the Coalition. You know her best for her policy and advocacy work, but she has truly been the heart and the soul of the Coalition for more than 10 years, with roots back to our inception in 1990.

Michele has played an instrumental role in so many achievements and milestones for early education in North Carolina. From the development of Smart Start to more recent initiatives like Think Babies™ NC, she has spent more than 30 years working with policymakers, early childhood stakeholders, partners, and advocates to make high-quality early childhood education more affordable and accessible for children and families.

Michele will continue to serve as the Senior Campaign Director, focusing on our early childhood education and Think Babies™ NC policy priorities until the conclusion of the 2021 legislative session.

“Michele has been a tireless champion for young children, their families, and their educators throughout her life and career,” said Jenna Nelson, Executive Director. “We are indebted to her for her many years of service, and we are so grateful to know that she will always be a phone call away should we need support.”

“Working together with amazing advocates and partners on early childhood education issues has been the greatest joy and passion of my life,” said Michele. “I’m excited to spend time with family and friends and discover new interests in my next chapter, but I’ll always be cheering you on from the sidelines and offering my support. It’s so exciting to think about what this generation of early childhood leaders will accomplish in the future.”

“We truly can’t thank Michele enough for the phenomenal work she has done,” said Janice Price, Board President. “Beyond policy wins, part of her legacy is that the Coalition is stronger and more unified than it’s ever been. We know that we are in excellent hands with Jenna and the rest of the wonderful staff, and we are thankful for their continued leadership and vision for early education in our state.”

The current Coalition team – Angela Burch, Azizi Culpepper, Christin Davis, Jenna Nelson, and Elaine Zukerman – will ensure a smooth transition and continue the work of the Coalition to make sure that every child in North Carolina – regardless of race, family income, or zip code – has access to high-quality early care and learning. If you’d like to contact Michele, please email her at Michele.Rivest@NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org, and if you have any questions, please contact Jenna at JennaN@NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org. Thank you all for your continued efforts on behalf of young children and for being our partners in this important work!