

Announcing the 2022 Outstanding Early Education Advocate Award Winners!



At the Celebrating Child Care Heroes event on June 16, 2022, the NC Early Education Coalition recognized some of North Carolina's child care heroes with the presentation of the 2022 Outstanding Early Education Advocate Awards! The Coalition created this award to honor and recognize individuals who have gone above and beyond in their advocacy efforts for young children, their families, their educators, and the early childhood system.

The awards were presented to individuals in each of the following categories: an early education teacher, an early education center director, a family child care program, and a community leader. The 2022 award recipients are:

Early Education Teacher: Tanaka Eaddy

Tanaka is an infant teacher at Bright Horizons in Durham who received this award for her willingness to speak up, share her story, and help motivate and inspire others. She has been a teacher for almost 25 years, and she is passionate about what she does and about advocating for her fellow teachers to be able to access supports and programs. Tanaka participated in the Worthy Wages Campaign by bravely sharing her story in a testimonial video about the Child Care WAGE\$ program, highlighting the many positive benefits that it has had on her life and career. As she said in her own words, "I want to advocate for children and teachers because I know what teachers go through every day. I want to encourage them to keep going."

Early Education Center Director: Norma Honeycutt

Norma is the director at Partners in Learning in Salisbury. She is a powerful advocate for early education, participating in numerous committees and initiatives to advocate for better access to child care, early intervention, and other services for young children and families. Norma has also inspired many of her employees to further their education and has participated in the Worthy Wages Campaign to advocate for workforce compensation and education opportunities. During the pandemic, she has worked endlessly to secure additional funding and grants to support her program and serve the teachers and families in her community.

Family Child Care Home Provider: Omega Wilcox

Omega Wilcox is a family child care provider in Winston-Salem who works to improve the lives of children and families in her community and in all family child care homes across the state. In addition to caring for the children and families in her program, she serves as a community volunteer and board member of local early childhood organizations, and she has spoken to legislators about her ideas and recommendations for ways to better support early childhood teachers and providers. Omega is a huge support for families and providers, listening to their needs and advocating for change.

Community Leader: Marsha Basloe

Marsha is a lifelong advocate and a powerful leader for early childhood at the local, state, and federal level. She currently serves as President of Child Care Services Association. Previously, Marsha was a senior adviser for the federal Office of Early Childhood Development in the Administration for Children and Families, and prior to that, she held leadership roles at the state level in North Carolina's CCR&R and Smart Start networks. Marsha is a Board Member of the Coalition and she has been a leader in the Think Babies™ NC Alliance, the Worthy Wages Campaign, and countless other initiatives, including her recent appointment by Governor Cooper to the NC Interagency Council for Coordinating Homeless Programs. Under Marsha's leadership, CCSA has expanded and added new programs and services to support young children, early educators, and the child care system at large. But beyond her ability to lead programs, Marsha's advocacy strength lies in her willingness to raise her voice for others. Marsha's energy, commitment, and expertise have had a major impact on children, families, and early childhood educators. Fighting for the workforce behind the workforce – as well as her commitment to young children experiencing homelessness – is her hard-earned and much-deserved legacy.