



NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION

2022 Legislative Session Recap

July 20, 2022

Goals for Today

- Review what's in the budget for young children, their families, and their educators
- Update on Leandro
- Federal funding updates
- Prepare for the 2022 elections
- Answer your questions!



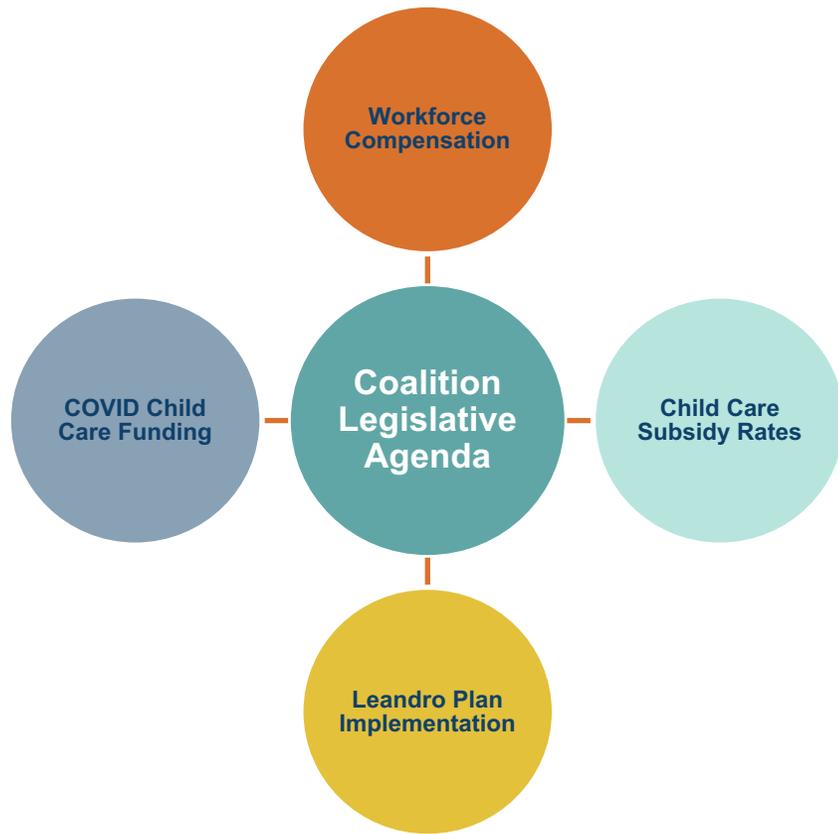
What's in the budget for young children, their families, and their educators?



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2022 Legislative Session

2022 Early Education Policy Priorities



- **Child Care Workforce Compensation**
 - Expand Child Care WAGE\$ statewide
- **Child Care Subsidy Rates Improvements**
 - Establish a statewide “floor” to provide adequate and equitable reimbursement rates
- **Fund and Implement the Leandro Action Plan**
 - Including expanded funding for Smart Start, NC Pre-K, Child Care Subsidy Assistance, Early Intervention, and more
- **COVID Child Care Funding**
 - Continue to invest in child care as opportunities arise

Final Budget Summary for Early Education

Good News

- Child Care Subsidy rates raised to 2018 levels with federal American Rescue Plan funding
- NC Pre-K rates increased
- Smart Start administrative cap raised

Bad News

- No Child Care WAGE\$ expansion
- No Child Care Subsidy rates statewide floor
- No NC Pre-K expansion
- Does not include full funding for Leandro Plan

Bright Spots in the Budget

- **Child Care Subsidy rates**

- Reallocates a portion of the federal American Rescue Plan Act funding for child care subsidy assistance (\$206-215 million in the 2021 budget) to increase child care subsidy reimbursement rates to the 2018 market rate level
- Temporary - funds will expire in September of 2024



Bright Spots in the Budget

- **Smart Start:**

- Raises the cap for administrative costs from 8% to 9%.

- **NC Pre-K:**

- \$9 million in recurring state funds to increase rates an additional 7% over the planned increase in the 2021 budget - for a total increase of 9% this biennium - with the intention of supporting salaries for NC Pre-K teachers in private child care programs.
- A portion of these funds will also be used to raise the reimbursement rate for public schools and Head Start programs by 5%.

Other Child Care Action this Session

- **Additional Pathways for Early Childhood Credential (H159)**

- Allows early childhood teachers to obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential from the National Council for Professional Recognition, or another accredited ECE Credential from one of five other ECE Credentialing organizations named in the bill.
- Directs the Community College system to design a test that would be an equivalency for a lead teacher requirement to teach in a licensed child care program in North Carolina.
- <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/D/dcd-0169.pdf>

- **Criminal Background Checks**

- Aligns state criminal background checks for prospective child care providers with federal block grant requirements, which is a background check every 5 years rather than every 3 years

- **End of the State of Emergency**

- Governor Cooper announced that the COVID-19 State of Emergency will end on August 15, 2022
- Child care programs will have 6 months after that date to meet pre-pandemic staffing requirements

What's Missing for Early Education

- Child Care WAGE\$ expansion
- More equitable Child Care Subsidy reimbursement rates with a statewide floor (H574)
- NC Pre-K expansion
- Full funding for early childhood components of the Leandro Plan
- Anything to sustain programs when federal support ends



Think Babies™ NC this Session

- Medicaid Expansion

- Not included in the final budget, but progress is being made!
- Senate and House leaders now both support expanding Medicaid, although they still disagree on some of the details
- Senate passed full Medicaid expansion this session; House isn't there yet

- Other issues

- Despite the urgent need for infants, toddlers, and their families, no other prenatal-to-3 policy priorities – *paid family leave, early intervention, home visiting, Earned Income Tax Credit, among others* – were addressed during this legislative session



Our Bottom Line Summary

- This budget represents a big missed opportunity for young children and families, and especially early educators!
- Invests too little – not sufficient to address the current workforce crisis and the looming “cliff” when federal Child Care Stabilization Grants end
- Spends almost none of the \$6.2 billion surplus of state funds, which could have been used to support early education
- Read our full statement and budget summary here:
 - <https://nearlyeducationcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Budget-Statement-and-Summary-7.1.22.pdf>





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Update on Leandro

What's the Latest?

- Leandro is a marathon, not a sprint!
- NC Supreme Court will hear oral arguments beginning August 31st regarding the court order to fully fund the Leandro Plan
- Amicus Brief signed by 144 organizations
- Just two years of the Leandro Plan includes approximately \$190M for early education:
 - \$71.9 M to expand NC Pre-K and improve rates
 - \$40 M for Smart Start
 - \$36 M to expand the Child Care WAGE\$ program
 - \$20 M to improve Child Care Subsidy reimbursement rates
 - \$18.45 M for early intervention
 - \$1.75 M for workforce recruitment strategies and professional development
 - \$1.7 M for early childhood workforce data system

COUNTDOWN
to **COMPLIANCE**

The Leandro Plan

North Carolina's legislative roadmap for meeting the educational needs of EVERY CHILD.

Every Child NC
everychildnc.org

What Can You Do?

- Upcoming events: Leandro Week of Action
 - Saturday, August 27th – Leandro Celebration at the NC General Assembly
 - Wednesday, August 31st – Leandro hearing begins
 - Stay tuned for details!
- What else can you do?
 - Educate your communities and your elected officials about what the Leandro Plan funding means for young children and families
 - Local funding tool: <https://everychildnc.org/leandro-impact-analysis-early-education/>
 - Show public support for the court order
 - Statement from early childhood organizations: <https://ncearlyeducationcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ECE-Statement-on-Leandro-Hearing-11.12.21.pdf>
 - Stay tuned for advocacy opportunities and connect with other partners working on this
 - Every Child NC: <https://everychildnc.org/>



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Federal Funding Updates

Update on the Reconciliation Package

- As of now, child care is unlikely to be part of Congress' upcoming reconciliation package
 - Sen. Manchin has stated that he will only support a very narrow set of priorities, which doesn't include child care
 - Reconciliation is a Congressional maneuver to pass budget-related items with a simple 51 vote majority – cannot afford to lose a single Democratic vote
- It's not over 'til it's over...
- ...but NC has 2 Republican senators, which means there is little we can do to influence reconciliation
- Social media toolkit:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1535GcAl7Fs8lIP6gaGRv1g7Q0yrfGF0igBQpWZ1msv8/edit?usp=sharing>
- Take action: <https://www.thinkbabies.org/take-action-email-congress-child-care-reconciliation/>



Child Care Stabilization Grants

- Funded through the federal American Rescue Plan
- Quarterly payments to child care programs have been disbursed since fall of 2021:
 - Final payment will be disbursed in January of 2023
 - Will cover the January-April quarter
 - Funds can be spent through September of 2023
- Questions? Contact DCDEE's Stabilization Grants Customer Service Team!
 - (919) 814-6300, Option 2
 - [Online form](#)



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2022 Election

Your Vote Matters!

- Election Day is Tuesday, November 8th
- National, state, and local offices are up for election this year
- What's at stake?
 - Critical support for young children, families, and early educators
 - An opportunity to address the workforce crisis and sustain the early childhood system
 - Equitable funding to provide every child a sound, basic education beginning in early childhood.
 - Our future!
- The time is now: register, make a plan to vote, get out the vote, and make child care a priority issue during this election.



What Can You Do?

- Register to vote and make sure others are registered to vote
 - <https://www.ncsbe.gov/registering>
- Get to know the candidates for office in your district
 - [2022 General Election Candidate List by County and District](#)
- Attend town halls, candidate forums, other campaign events
 - Tell candidates about the issues that matter to you and ask how they plan to support those issues
- Provide information and educational resources to candidates
 - As individuals, no limitations; for nonprofits, must provide the same information and resources to all candidates running
- Stay tuned for our electoral advocacy toolkit and additional training – coming soon!

Questions?



Thank you!

www.NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org

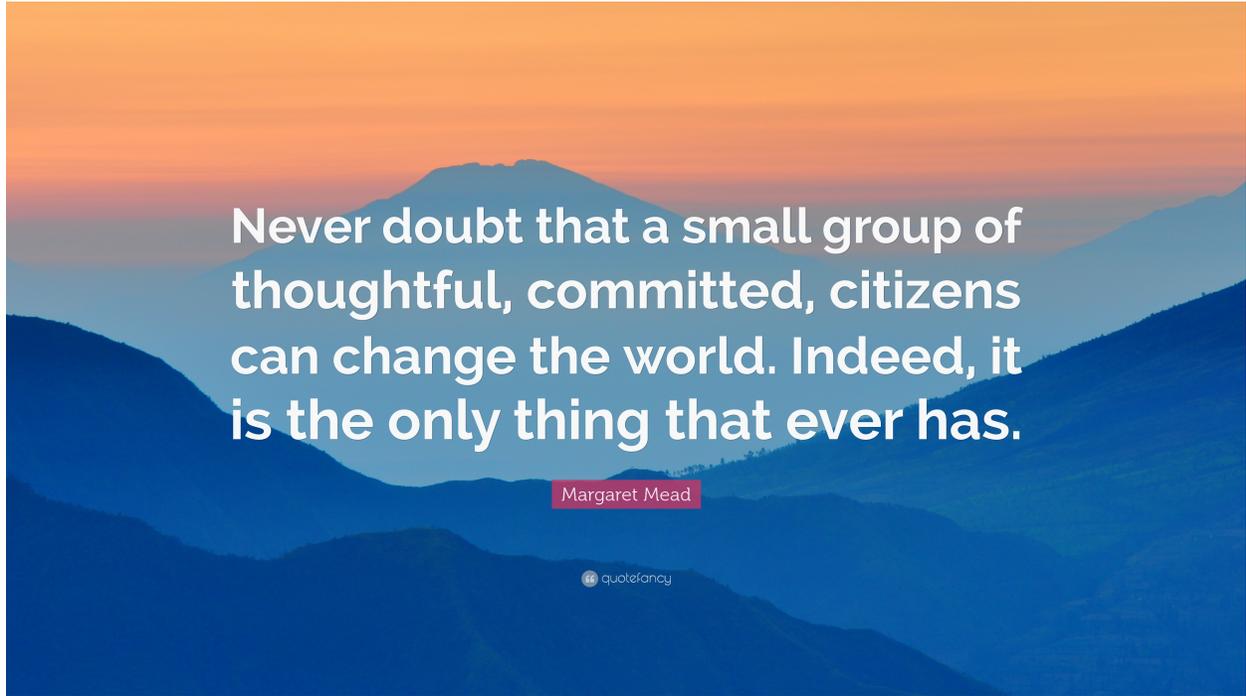
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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

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