

Statement on the North Carolina House Budget

Throughout this legislative session, the NC Early Education Coalition has focused on ensuring that children have access to high-quality early learning experiences, that parents can afford child care so that they can work, that early educators can afford to keep teaching, and that child care programs receive adequate funding to sustain their services.

On Wednesday, March 29th, the House released its [state budget](#) for the 2023-2025 biennium. The budget spends approximately \$30 billion for year one and a little bit more in year two, but it includes shockingly little for young children, their families, and their educators.

Despite bipartisan support in both the House and Senate for large investments in early education - including a \$300 million [bipartisan bill](#) to support the early childhood workforce - the budget does not include any of the much-needed funding or policies that have been proposed. With ample state funding available, we view this budget as a huge disappointment for early education.

North Carolina needs a budget that invests in the long-term sustainability of a strong early childhood system. With federal relief funding coming to an end soon, this budget would continue to put child care on a precarious path, the impacts of which will be felt by everyone in our state.

Here is what is in the House budget for early education:

- \$24 million recurring to keep child care subsidy rates at the 2021 market rate level (starts in FY24-25 to extend the temporary rate increase provided last year using federal funding)
- \$5 million recurring each year for Smart Start

Two additional child care provisions have been added as amendments:

- \$900,000 each year to establish a Tri-Share child care pilot program (originally filed as [H322/S293](#))
- \$10 million non-recurring for a pilot program to give full-time child care teachers automatic eligibility for child care subsidy assistance (originally filed as [H483](#))

We remain committed to working with state policymakers to secure funding to help stabilize and sustain child care programs and teachers and to make child care more accessible for young children and working families across the state. Our young children, families, communities, businesses, economy, and our future are all depending on it.