

Raise North Carolina Talking Points



The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is launching the *Raise North Carolina* public education campaign about the value of the state’s early care and learning network. Led by the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), the campaign shows how greater support and investments deliver positive outcomes for children, families, and North Carolina’s economy. Investing in early childhood education helps us all *Raise NC*.

This document is intended to help teachers, parents, organizations, advocates and others communicate the value of North Carolina’s early care and learning network. The Talking Points can be used to prepare for speaking or writing to families, constituents, partners, policymakers, business leaders or the media. Choose points to support a specific goal and/or address a specific audience.

Businesses

Businesses need employees for our state’s economic recovery, but many parents can’t work because they can’t afford early care and learning. Businesses can help *Raise NC* by calling for increased investment in early care and learning subsidies that help parents go back to work and employers find the employees they need.

- North Carolina has a high-quality early care and learning network that has proven to produce better education, health and economic outcomes for children and the state. The availability of high-quality early care and learning is a major factor in attracting businesses from around the world to bring jobs to North Carolina.
- Early childhood development is economic development with benefits in the near and long-term future—especially as employers are looking to get people back to work in the COVID-19 recovery.
- High-quality early care and learning supports families as they work and builds the next generation of workers by laying the foundation for long-term success.
- Unfortunately, early care and learning costs exceed many families’ ability to pay, limiting their opportunities to work. Strengthening the availability and accessibility of early care and learning across the state supports families, businesses and communities.
- Early care and learning subsidies help ensure that every child has access to a quality early education, which is mandated by the state’s constitution and drives the social and economic success of North Carolina.
- Without subsidies to afford the high cost of early care and learning, many lower income North Carolina parents will have to choose between working and caring for their young children—and businesses will have trouble finding employees.
- North Carolina has 19,400 families on the early care and learning subsidy waiting list—a situation that

holds back children, prevents many parents from working and reduces the number of employees available to North Carolina businesses.

General Audiences

- North Carolina’s early care and learning network is a partnership of early childhood professionals and the people, organizations and agencies collaborating to prepare young children for success in life and support families as they work.
- More than 35,000 early care and learning providers, teachers and staff are central to raising North Carolina, impacting the lives of 265,000 young children and their families every year.
- The COVID-19 pandemic put a spotlight on the critical need for economic recovery, something that requires building on and strengthening North Carolina’s early care and learning network. In 2021, North Carolina used federal funding to make a historic \$805 million investment in Stabilization Grants to provide early care and learning programs with financial relief and help stabilize their operations.
- Even so, the network remains under strain and requires additional support to strengthen early childhood providers and teachers so they can raise North Carolina by serving more families.
- *Raise North Carolina* (RaiseNC.nc.gov) is a long-term public education campaign including social media, television ads and online ads in partnership with the many organizations and leaders that support our early learning network and educators.
- NCDHHS encourages North Carolina parents, caregivers, educators, advocates, businesses and policymakers to join in and take action by:
 - o Showing appreciation on social media for the early care and learning teachers and educators who serve young children and families each day. Use the hashtag #RaiseNC and tag @ncdhhs. Easy-to-use resources are available at RaiseNC.nc.gov.
 - o Sharing success stories that highlight the great work and positive impacts of early care and learning on children, families and communities.
 - o Educating local communities about the importance of public investment in the state’s early care and learning network.
 - o Learning more about the importance of the state’s early care and learning network and equipping fellow community members with information about *Raise NC* at RaiseNC.nc.gov.

