

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.

About Providers/Teachers

At the center of NC's early care and learning network are thousands of providers and teachers with a deep commitment to the healthy development of children and to the families and communities they serve. Providers and educators can help *Raise NC* by voicing what they need to provide quality care and by making it clear that access for families is impossible without access to quality early childhood teachers.

- North Carolina's future relies upon highly qualified early care and learning teachers to provide education and care for more than 265,000 children each year.
- Growing our economy starts with strengthening North Carolina's early care and learning providers and teachers. It is the workforce behind the state's workforce—but it is under great strain.
- Early learning teachers, many of whom are parents themselves, aren't compensated like other teachers. They want to stay in the profession, but their salaries and benefits often force them to look elsewhere to make ends meet.
- They make on average \$12 per hour, and half are not offered health insurance. One-third work full time but still needed some form of public assistance in the last three years.
- Those that remain in the profession struggle with low salaries, few benefits and not enough access to professional development that will advance themselves and the communities they serve.
- Each child—regardless of their socio-economic status—deserves access to high-quality early care and learning teachers to have the opportunity to develop to their full potential and thrive. Yet, the labor shortage of these critical teachers means that those who need them most don't have access to them.
- Investing in the workforce of high-quality early care and learning teachers will give children what they need to succeed, parents the confidence to go back to work, and the state a highly productive present and future workforce.

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](https://www.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](https://www.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](https://www.RaiseNC.nc.gov).

