

# 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.

## Parents

**North Carolina's early care and learning network partners with families to support their young children's development and prepare them for success in school and life. Parents can help *Raise NC* by sharing their experiences with North Carolina's early care and learning network, shining a light on our outstanding early learning teachers and providers and calling for continued investment in the system to make it stronger.**

- Brain development that happens in the first five years of life sets the stage for future success.
- Positive interactions between young children, their parents and families and early caregivers and educators create healthy brain development through experiences that prepare them for success in school and life.
- North Carolina's high-quality early childhood teachers partner with families to aid the healthy development of their young children. They form close relationships with parents and children, knowing each and using their strengths and interests to help them achieve their goals.
- When healthy development in young children is fully supported, extensive research shows they are more likely to reach developmental milestones, fulfill their potential and be productive in life as evidenced by:
  - o 3rd grade reading proficiency
  - o High school graduation and postsecondary education
  - o Gainful employment
  - o Lifetime physical and mental health and well-being
  - o Avoidance of substance abuse and crime
- Unfortunately, NC's great early care and learning network serves too few children, and early care and learning costs exceed many families' ability to pay.

- o North Carolina families with two young children spend, on average, 16.8% of their income on early care and learning, while a single parent with one infant spends 38.4% of their income.
  - o Some years North Carolina has had as many as 30,000 families on the waiting list to get help paying for early care and learning.
  - o Only half of eligible children are enrolled in NC Pre-K due to lack of public funding. Nearly 33,000 eligible children per year are unserved.
- Increasing access to high-quality early care and learning would help children and families thrive and help raise North Carolina. Now is the time to invest in strengthening the early care and learning network and supporting early care and learning teachers.

## General Audiences

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- 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).