



**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**

Be a Big Voice for Young Children

October 27, 2020



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The NC Early Education Coalition is a proud partner in the national ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ campaign and in the Pritzker Children's Initiative's National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.

About Us

We accomplish our mission of advocacy and education by:

- Developing policy positions shared with elected officials.
- Researching and producing fact sheets for our members, policymakers and the media.
- Providing training and resources on critical issues.
- Engaging a full-time lobbying team at the NC General Assembly.
- Creating advocacy alerts to mobilize our members to action on early education issues.
- Collaborating with national and state partners to advance policies to support young children and their families.
- Serving as a proud partner in the national ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ campaign and the Pritzker Children's Initiative's National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers



Child Care is Essential!

- **Child Care is Essential**

- For young children's healthy development and learning
- For families to go to work
- For our state's economic recovery and prosperity

- **[Child Care is Essential Video](#)**

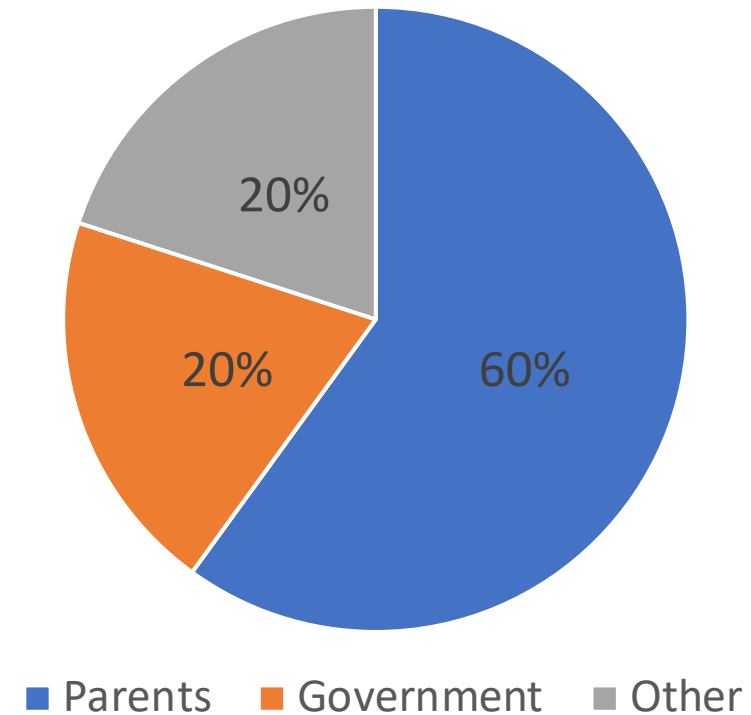


Child Care Isn't Funded Like It's Essential

Child Care operates as a private business – Market Model that doesn't work.

- All child care programs operate on razor-thin margins, little cash reserves
- Revenue comes primarily from parents - programs need full enrollment
- Child care subsidy rates built on 30 year-old framework.
- Workforce requires special skills and education, but remains low-wage with few benefits
- Tens of thousands of families on waiting lists for services
- During COVID - enrollment dropped dramatically, staff laid off, programs lost revenue and went into debt

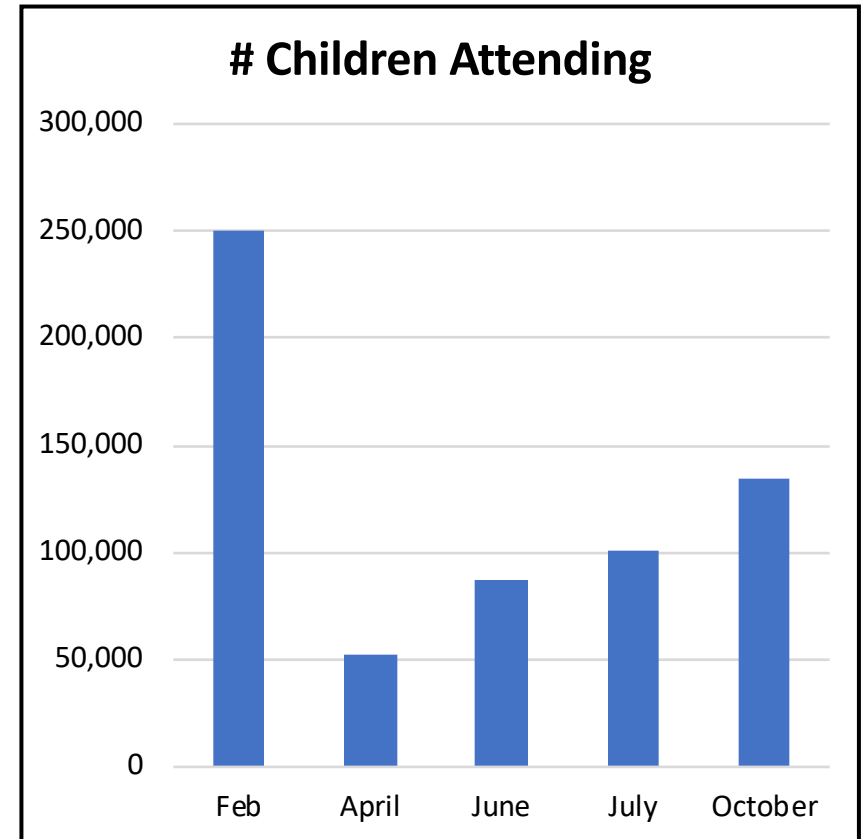
Child Care Revenue



Current Child Care System Status

- Steady reopening
- High vacancy rates
- Children attending now - 135,032 (55% Pre-COVID)
- 51% of programs operating at 80% capacity or less expect to close within six months
- Forsyth County: 16% of programs are still closed – 22% of centers, 7% of family child care homes (*self-reported, 10/6/20*)

Program Type	Open #	Open %	Closed #	Closed %	Vacancy
Licensed Centers	3494	80%	867	20%	42%
Licensed FCC Homes	1261	95%	72	5%	26%
Total	4755	83%	940	17%	



COVID-19 Child Care Relief

- DCDEE \$186 M Child Care Relief
- New policy changes in September
 - Subsidy reimbursement based on true attendance only
 - Parent copay fees again required
- NC General Assembly
 - \$35M Operating Grants
 - \$6 M PPE
 - \$8M school-age child care subsidy

CARES ACT CHILD CARE FUNDS TOTAL = \$186 MILLION

- \$34.7 Emergency Child Care Subsidy
- \$38.2M for teacher and staff bonuses
- \$80M for operational grants
- \$6.2M for PPE and cleaning supplies
- \$5 M to Smart Start for parent support & TA
- \$10M to cover parent copayments June & July
- \$12M for additional PPE and cleaning supplies for rest of the year (projected)

What's Next?

- Not sure when the next relief bill will happen, but there is bipartisan support for child care:
 - U.S. House passed the Child Care Is Essential Act, which would provide \$50B for child care;
 - U.S. Senate included \$15B in HEALS Act.
- Keep the pressure on Congress for more federal child care relief funding
- #SaveChildCare Wednesdays
 - [Click here for a messaging toolkit](#)
- NC State Legislative Session starts in January





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Advocacy Tips and Resources: Be a Big Voice for Young Children



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The Power of Advocacy

- Elected officials want to represent the best interests of their constituents who live in their counties and districts.
- Help your policymakers understand the issues and what is happening in your own community.
- Don't assume they know – they don't unless you tell them.
- Educate and activate!



What Persuades Policymakers?

Urgent Need

Accurate
Facts

Compelling
Real Stories

Effective
Solutions

Messages &
Messengers

Other
Policymakers

Local
Support

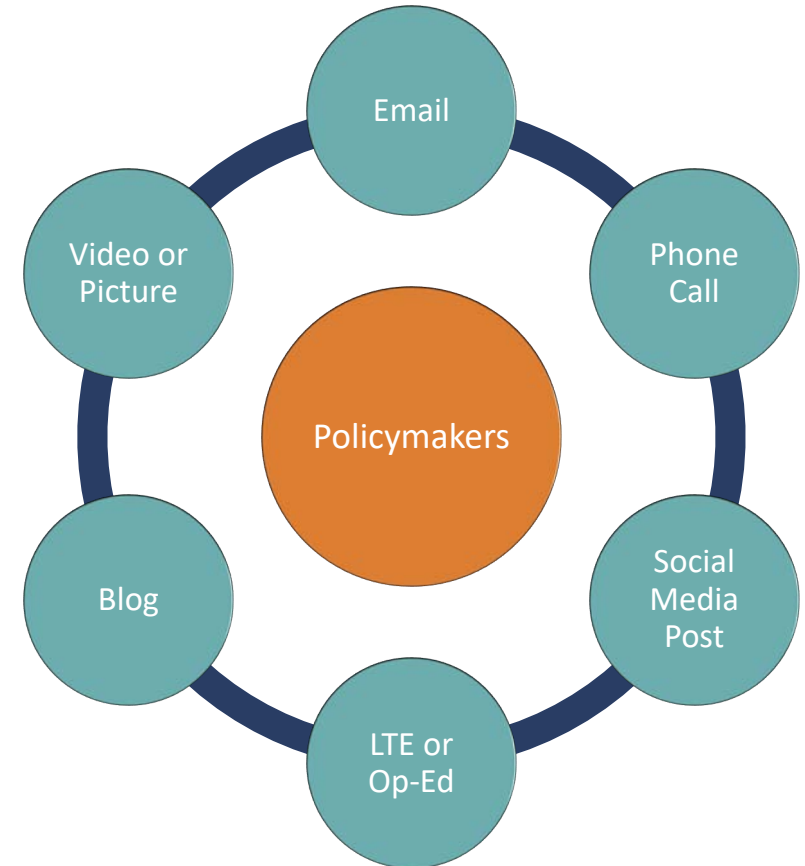
Media
Coverage

Legal
Requirement

Sharing Your Story

A Surround Sound Approach:

- Send an email to your legislators
- Call your legislators
- Post a message on social media – and tag your legislators
- Record a short video or post a picture on social media – and tag your legislators
- Write a blog or newsletter article and share it online and with your network
- Write an LTE or Op-Ed for your local newspaper
- Share a story with us through our [Action Center](#) that we can use in our conversations with policymakers

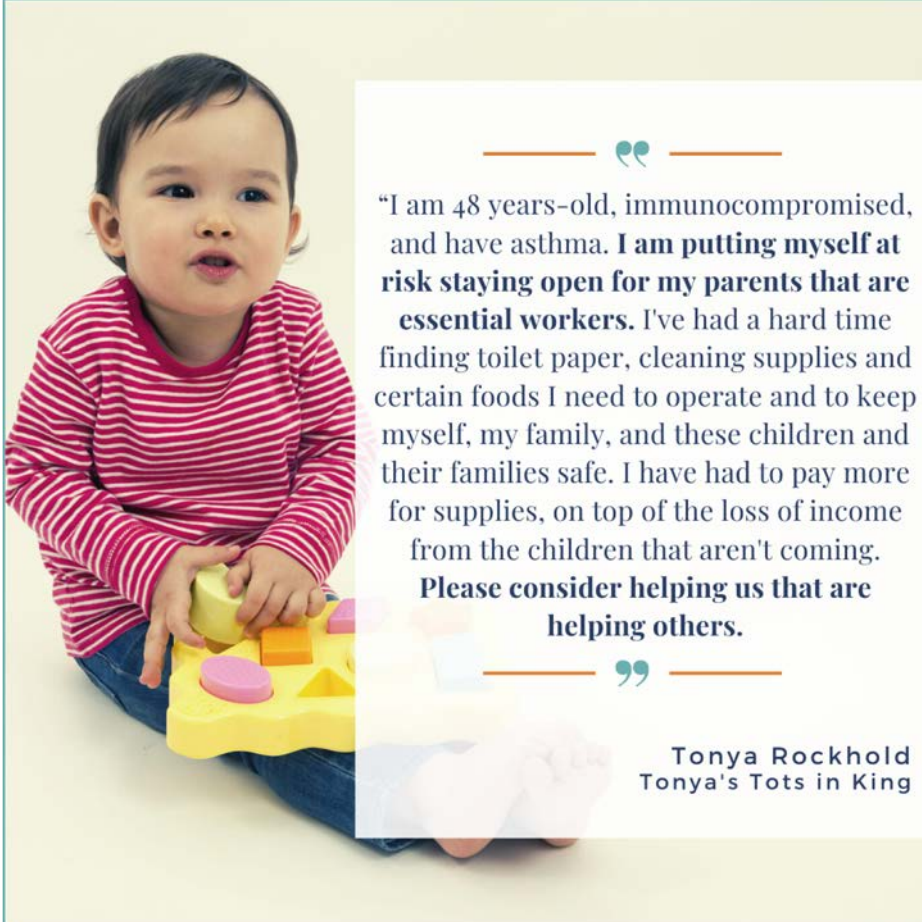


Examples



“OUR PROGRAMS ARE SUFFERING MAJOR LOSSES DURING COVID19. SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED AND WE ARE LOSING FAMILIES. WE STILL HAVE TO PAY OUR BILLS.”

CASSANDRA GULLICK
GULLICK'S LEARNING ROOM IN WINSTON-SALEM



“I am 48 years-old, immunocompromised, and have asthma. **I am putting myself at risk staying open for my parents that are essential workers.** I've had a hard time finding toilet paper, cleaning supplies and certain foods I need to operate and to keep myself, my family, and these children and their families safe. I have had to pay more for supplies, on top of the loss of income from the children that aren't coming. **Please consider helping us that are helping others.**”

Tonya Rockhold
Tonya's Tots in King

Examples

WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL

[April 30, 2020 – Letter to the Editor](#)

Child care shortage

Families rely on our early education system to keep working, and our state's economy does, too. But child care programs rely on tuition to operate, and most parents are staying home with their children during this crisis. Many of these small businesses won't survive the loss of their primary source of income, leaving many in our community without a place for their children when it's safe to go back to work.

As the board chair of Smart Start of Forsyth County and through my work with business leaders as a Vistage chair, I am deeply concerned about the families who will need child care and the ability of the small businesses that make up our critical, underfunded and fragile early education system to survive this public health and economic emergency. Early education is the key to future success in school and

life for these children, and access to child care is also the key to helping our community bounce back.

We were already facing a child care shortage before COVID-19 hit, and now nearly one-third of child care providers in Forsyth County have closed. The reality is that many won't be able to reopen without support from state leaders. Policymakers must provide funding to help these small businesses recover and support our child care industry — the workforce behind the workforce — or else it will be incredibly hard for N.C.'s families to go back to work. I urge you to let them know you care about this crucial issue, too.

Sheryll Strode, Winston-Salem

Examples



THE COVID ECONOMY

‘You’re so stressed you can’t sleep at night’: Parents and child-care providers are still struggling as the pandemic drags on



Stephens says the enrollment numbers still need to keep rising in order to get the business back on track and rebuild her emergency savings, which she’s had to dip into during the pandemic. “If our enrollment does not continue to increase and get back where it was, if we’re not able to build those savings reserves back up, I’m not sure how that’s going to affect our company,” she says.

[Click here to read more.](#)

Theresa Stephens, left, is the owner of North Carolina-based Church Childcare and has implemented daily temperature screenings at her two child-care centers. Source: Theresa Stephens

Examples



Everybody Needs an Equal Chance

Tools You Can Use

Advocacy Tools and Resources

- Advocacy toolkits
- Action Center
- Talking points, sample emails, and other templates
- Social media toolkits
- Fact sheets and infographics
- State and county level data
- Policymaker contact information



Resources available here: www.NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org

Electoral Advocacy



Electoral Advocacy Toolkit

**Your vote matters.
Children are counting on you to be their champion!**



Electoral Advocacy Toolkit: www.nearlyeducationcoalition.org/2020-electoral-advocacy-toolkit

What's At Stake in this Election

This election provides an opportunity for policymakers to make bold progress on key issues that all children need to thrive – healthy beginnings, supported families, and early learning.

The stakes are high:

- Healthy development
- Supported families
- Educational success
- Economic prosperity
- Every child's potential



Advocacy Tools

Tell 2020 candidates to make young children and families their top priority

Templates and resources available in the toolkit:

- [Sample email to candidates](#)
- [Sample questions for candidates](#)
- [Sample social media posts](#)
- [Sample letter to the editor](#)
- [Key facts about NC's young children and families](#)



Voting is the most important thing you can do!



Thank you!