



Agenda

Overview of **Think Babies NC**

New NCECF brief on **health and development policies in NC**

Think Babies **health agenda**

Recap the **NC Early Childhood Summit**

Brains are **Built, Not Born**

Early experiences are **built into children's bodies**—shaping brain architecture and impacting how biological systems develop.

Every **experience a baby has forms a neural connection** in the brain at a rate of more than a million synapses per second in the early years.

Not all will last. Connections that get used more strengthen, and those used less fade.

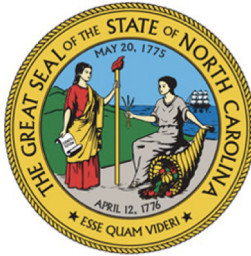
Positive early experiences build **a strong foundation** for learning and future health.



PRITZKER
Children's Initiative



NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**



MomsRising.org | MamásConPoder.org



NC Child
The Voice for North Carolina's Children



North Carolina 2019 Policy Priorities for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

Developed by the Think Babies™ NC Leadership Team



When we support our youngest children in having the opportunity to fulfill their potential, we create the best outcomes in health, education, and economic well-being for everyone in North Carolina.

About Think Babies NC:

Think Babies™ NC seeks to advance policies that support the healthy development of North Carolina's babies and toddlers. It is aligned with the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading initiative and the NC Early Childhood Action Plan. Think Babies™ NC is led by the NC Early Education Coalition with support from the NC Early Childhood Foundation and a Leadership Team of state and local organizations focused on advancing public awareness and policy solutions for infants, toddlers, and their families.

Ensuring Good Health and On-Track Development for North Carolina Babies and Toddlers

Children's development during the first three years of life is strongly impacted by their health. Experiences during this time are hardwired into their brains and bodies, forming the foundation for all subsequent development. Good health in utero and good birth outcomes, access to needed health services, and families and communities that support health outcomes all increase the chances of good physical and social-emotional health and on-track development during childhood and throughout life.



First of three issue briefs on where NC is on **policies that have the potential to support babies and toddlers**

PHYSICAL HEALTH POLICIES

POLICY	NC HAS POLICY IN PLACE?	# OF STATES WITH POLICY IN PLACE	POLICY AND PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS
Pregnant women with household income under 200% of the federal poverty level* are eligible for Medicaid. *\$42,560 for a family of three	NO <i>but very close</i>	33 states	Pregnant women in NC are eligible for Medicaid if their income falls under 196% of the federal poverty level.** **\$40,728 for a family of three

Children under age six in households with incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level are eligible for Medicaid.	YES

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH POLICIES

POLICY	NC HAS POLICY IN PLACE?	# OF STATES WITH POLICY IN PLACE	POLICY AND PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS
State Medicaid reimburses doctors for social-emotional screening, with a tool designed for that purpose.	YES	41 states cover SE health screening with a tool designed for that purpose- 18 use a separate b code. 27 of these states cover the use of SE health screening tool in non-med settings.	
State requires a regular schedule of social-emotional screening for all infants and toddlers involved in the child welfare system.	NO	8 states	

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING POLICIES

POLICY	NC HAS POLICY IN PLACE?	# OF STATES WITH POLICY IN PLACE	POLICY AND PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS
State Medicaid program requires standardized developmental screening as part of well-child visits.	YES	14 states	NC requires screenings from birth through age five. The state has policies for developmental, autism and postpartum depression screenings.
State Medicaid reimburses doctors for the use of a standardized developmental screening tool, in addition to the regular payment for a well-child visit.	YES	26 states	

Critical Questions

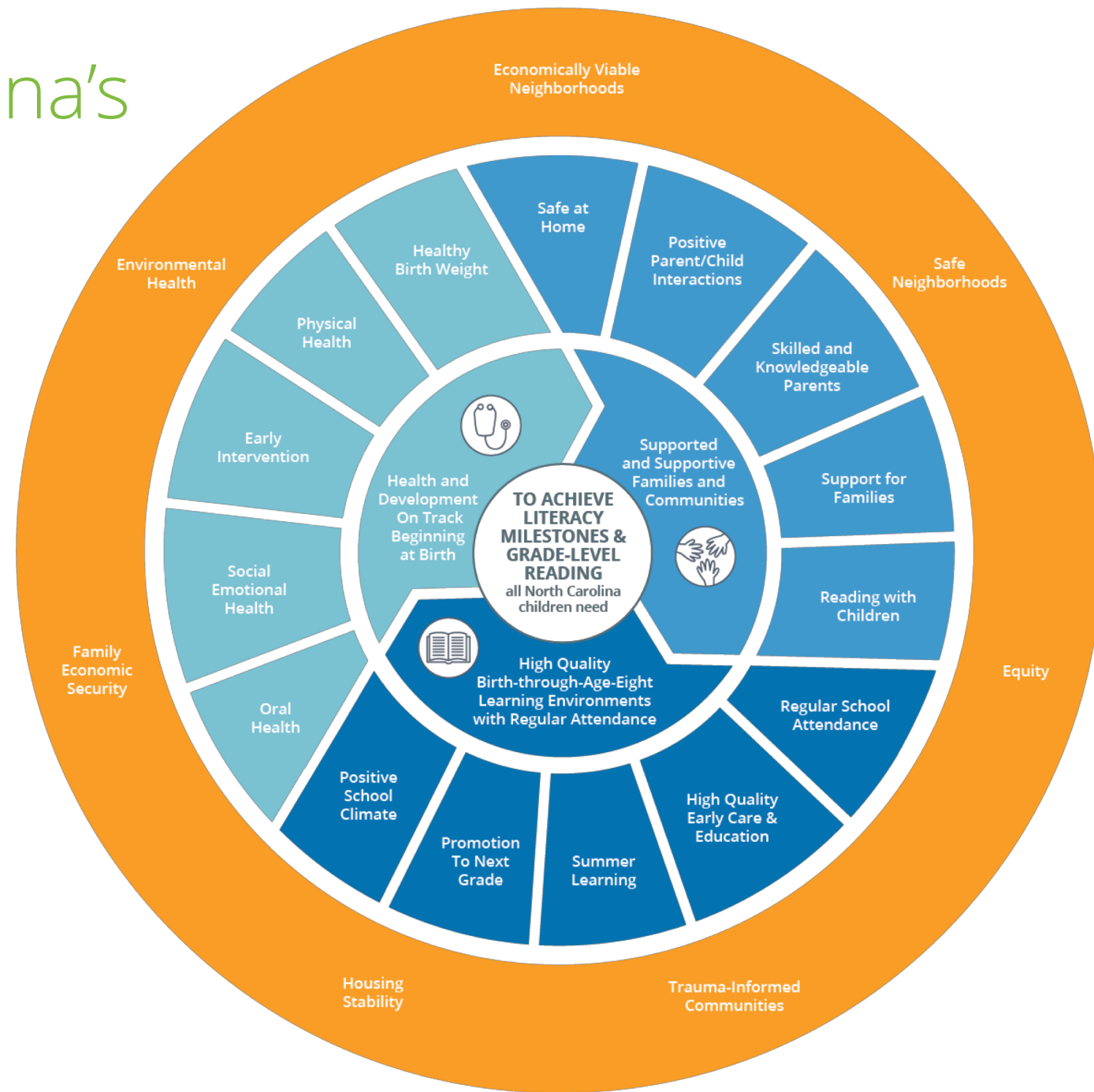
How could closing the coverage gap in NC for pregnant women and other low-income adults ensure better access to prenatal care and healthy, full-term babies?

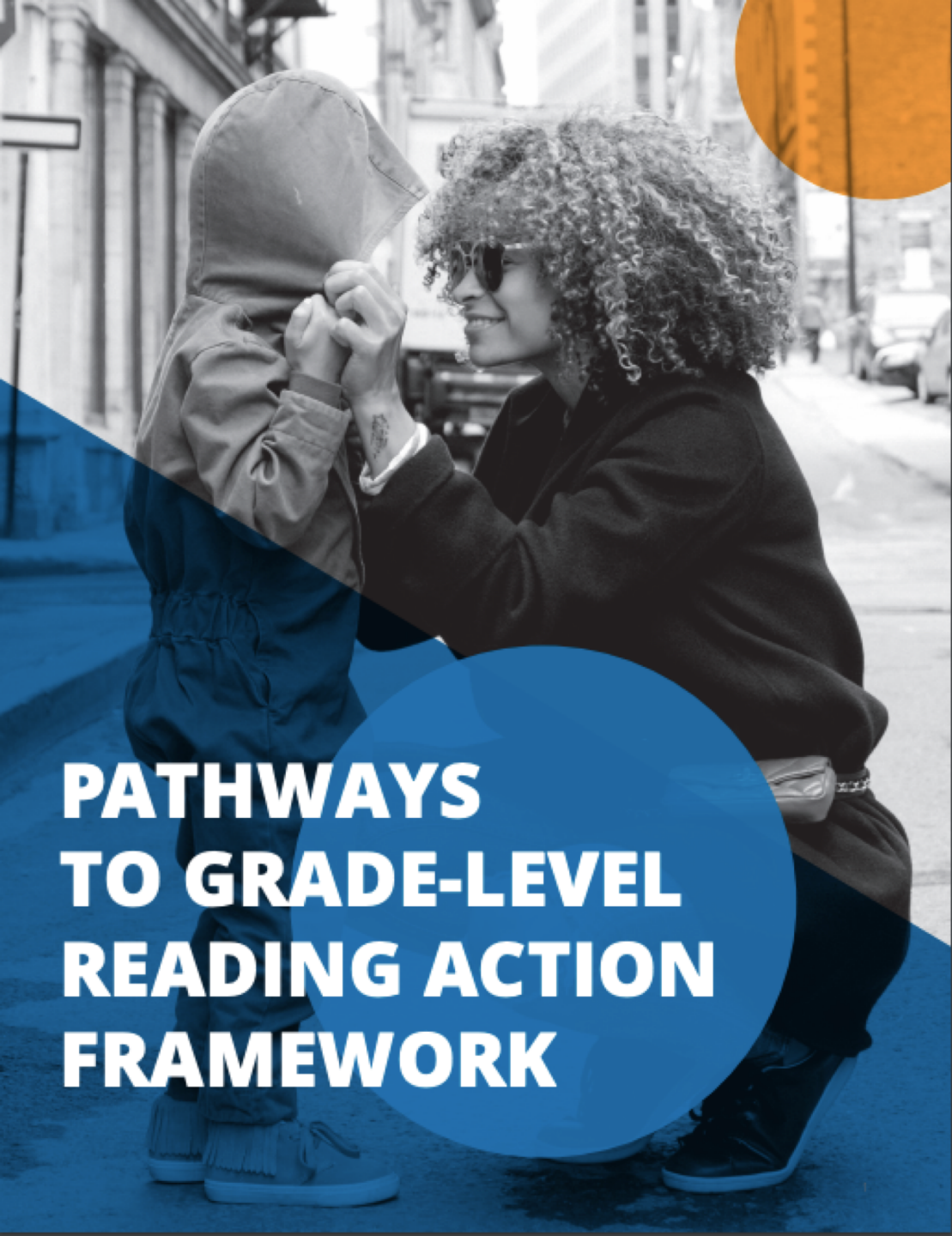
NC has long led the nation in developmental screenings. How can we build on that success to ensure that every infant and toddler involved with the child welfare system has access to the recommended screenings?

Since mothers can now be screened for maternal depression as part of infant well-child visits, how can NC use that screening data to better understand where additional mental health services are needed?

Pathways is North Carolina's **Early Learning Operating Model**

The **Pathways Model and Action Framework** have been forged through the thinking of hundreds of stakeholders across sector, geography, and political aisle, community voices from two rounds of 14 community conversations, a meta-analysis of parent voice from across North Carolina, and national research focused on what works for children of color.





PATHWAYS TO GRADE-LEVEL READING ACTION FRAMEWORK

Full Pathways Action Framework

is available online at:

<https://buildthefoundation.org/initiative/pathways-to-grade-level-reading/>

Endorse the Framework!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EndorsePathways>

Think Babies Health and Development **Policy Agenda**

Make sure parents have access to health insurance by closing the coverage gap.

Adopt reasonable workplace accommodations for pregnant employees.



NC Child

The Voice for North Carolina's Children



MomsRising.org | MamásConPoder.org



Rob
Thompson
NC Child





Beth
Messersmith
MomsRising





Tom
Vitaglione
NC Child



NC Early Childhood **Summit**

Dr. Mandy Cohen

Governor Jim Hunt

Governor Roy Cooper

Three Panel Discussions: Healthy, Safe and Nurtured, Learning and Ready to Succeed

Keynote: Dr. Jack Shonkoff, introduced by First Lady Kristin Cooper

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACTION PLAN



Our Vision for NC's Children:

*All North Carolina children
will get a healthy start
and develop to their full potential
in safe and nurturing families,
schools and communities.*



Healthy

Children are healthy at birth and thrive in environments that support their optimal health and well-being

Healthy | 2025 GOALS



1. HEALTHY BABIES



2. PREVENTIVE HEALTH SERVICES



3. FOOD SECURITY



Safe and Nurtured

Children grow confident, resilient and independent in safe, stable, and nurturing families, schools and communities

Safe and Nurtured | 2025 GOALS



4. SAFE AND SECURE HOUSING



5. SAFE AND NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS



6. PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE



7. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCE



Learning and Ready to Succeed

Children experience the conditions they need to build strong brain architecture and skills that support their success in school and life

Learning & Ready to Succeed | 2025 GOALS



8. HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING



9. ON TRACK FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS



10. READING AT GRADE LEVEL

Summit Highlights

Dr. Keisha L. Bentley-Edwards: We often talk about poverty because it's easier. Though social class and race are often intertwined, these are racial disparities. We haven't seen the disparities decrease because we weren't talking about racism.

Stephanie Fanjul: We do things incrementally, which is important, AND there are moments where you can leap forward. Sometimes our pragmatism is just a tiny sliver too close to settling for the status quo. When it comes to what we're doing for children, we're going to need to be incredibly brave.

Dr. Betty Rintoul: Love is the active ingredient because of how the brain is designed. We go around thinking we are thinking beings who happen to feel, but really we are feeling beings who happen to think.

Dr. Shonkoff Challenged NC to **Think Differently**

“Encouragement does not necessarily lead to creativity. Collisions do – the collision that happen when different fields of expertise converge in some shared physical or intellectual space. That’s where the true sparks fly.”

From: Steven Johnson, *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation*



Promote Understanding

Promote public understanding of and support for policies that promote children's birth-to-eight years for academic and lifelong success.



Spearhead Collaboration

Convene and spearhead collaboration to bridge North Carolina's birth-to-five and kindergarten-to-third grade systems.



Advance Policies

Advance policies that create a stronger NC today and tomorrow by supporting each child's birth-to-eight development.



www.buildthefoundation.org



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