



**NC Early Childhood
FOUNDATION**
CONNECTING POLICY TO IMPACT

Child Care Is Essential Infrastructure for North Carolina

Reliable, affordable child care strengthens NC's workforce and economy.



The Problem

Thousands of NC families cannot find or afford child care. **5+ families compete for every child care seat.**

Parents struggle to stay in the workforce without reliable options. **1:3 parents scale back work because of child care, and 1:4 quits a job.**

Child care is critical economic infrastructure, not just a family issue. **Center-based infant care is \$12,370 a year in 2025—higher than in-state college tuition.**

North Carolina's Child Care Gap Costs \$5.65 Billion Every Year

LOST PRODUCTIVITY

\$5.65 billion lost in annual economic activity

EMPLOYER COSTS

\$4.29 billion lost from employee turnover, absenteeism, and decreased productivity

LOST TAX REVENUE

\$1.36 billion lost state and local tax revenue

Child care is essential infrastructure—just like roads, energy, and broadband.

The Solutions: What North Carolina Can Do Now



Increase Child Care Subsidy Rates

Align funding with the true cost of quality care.



Support the Early Education Workforce

Expand salary supplements.



Engage Employers and Offer Incentives

Offer flexible scheduling, DCFSAs, and partnerships with child care providers.



Build a Publicly Funded Child Care System

Treat child care like essential infrastructure.



Coordinate Systems and Data

Create unified standards and data tools.



Prioritize Infant and Toddler Care

Increase funding and expand family child care homes.

Strong early mental health systems build resilient children, stable families, and a stronger North Carolina.

More at BuildTheFoundation.org