Innovative, Business-Led

Family Forward NC is an innovative initiative to improve children’s health and well-being and keep North Carolina’s businesses competitive.

It is **business-led change** to increase access to research-based, family-friendly practices – big and small - that increase workplace productivity, recruitment and retention; grow a strong economy; and support children’s healthy development.
Future Ready — It’s Urgent!

By 2020, an estimated 67% of jobs in North Carolina will require some post secondary education.

Currently, only 45.9% of North Carolinians meet this need.

And the majority of our children are not meeting a key predictor of future academic success and higher education attainment.
38% of NC 4th graders in 2015 scored at or above proficient in reading as measured by NAEP.

34% of NC high school students met ACT college readiness benchmarks in reading in 2016.
“American business depends on a strong workforce, now and in the future, to compete and succeed globally. But America is facing an unprecedented workforce crisis: a large and growing shortage of skilled workers.

One root of this problem is that we’ve underestimated the importance of the earliest years of life.”

— US Chamber of Commerce Foundation
So why are the early years so important?

2-Minute Crash Course in Brain Science
Child development is a **dynamic**, interactive process.

It is **NOT** predetermined.
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.
The graph illustrates the development of different cognitive functions over the lifespan of an individual. It is divided into different stages:

- **Sensory Pathways (vision & hearing):** These develop early in life, with notable peaks around the age of 2 to 3 years.
- **Language:** Development starts at about 1 year of age and continues to peak around the age of 6 to 7 years.
- **Higher Cognitive Functions:** These develop later, with significant growth observed around the age of 12 to 14 years.

The graph is sourced from C.A. Nelson (2000).
Future Ready

Workplaces that support parents have a direct impact on their children’s health, well-being and future academic and career achievement.

These benefits all come back to business by building a strong future workforce.
Family Friendly — It’s Urgent!

Family-friendly workplaces make businesses competitive in hiring and retaining qualified workers. This is especially relevant today.

22.7% of North Carolinians are under age 18

25.9% of North Carolinians are aged 25-44—prime child-bearing and working years
83% of millennials would leave their jobs in favor of those with more family care benefits.
Family Friendly

In a survey of 200 HR managers, two thirds cited family-supportive policies as the single most important factor in attracting and retaining employees.

(The Council of Economic Advisers, June 2014)

41% of working parents say a lack of family support benefits has hurt their work performance.

75% of mothers say they have passed up work opportunities, switched jobs or quit altogether to tend to their children.

50% of fathers have altered their career plans to tend to their children.
Increasingly, working parents consider family-friendly offerings a priority when it comes to choosing or staying in a job.
Business Smart — It’s Urgent!

Many U.S. and business policies are based upon an outdated model: a two-parent household, one of whom is working outside the home for pay. But only 6% of today’s households fit that description.

$4.4 Billion annual cost to US businesses due to employee absenteeism as a result of childcare issues

$38,000 of the additional cost to an employer for a premature birth. On average, a healthy, full-term baby costs an employer $2,830, versus $41,610 for a premature baby.
It’s Not Just Paid Leave

There’s a wide range of possibilities for big and small businesses:

• Maternity/paternity leave
• Flextime
• Workplace accommodations such as lactation supports
• Subsidized child care
• And more!
Business Smart

Family-friendly workplaces provide a competitive advantage, including:

• Attracting and retaining talent, reducing turnover costs
• Increasing productivity and employee satisfaction
• Reducing absenteeism
• Reducing health care costs
• Improving the bottom line
• Increasing diversity
Family Forward NC is business-led change. We’ll listen and learn, educate and engage and ultimately support more North Carolina businesses in adopting research-based family friendly practices.
Family Forward NC is an initiative of the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation supported by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina as the founding sponsor.
We Need You!

Our work will be guided by businesses - of all sizes across - and employees across the state. Help us get started!
Imagine . .

It’s 2028 and employers of all sizes are finding ways to create family friendly workplaces benefiting their company, employees and their children.

What helped you get there?
Let’s Get Started!

- Be kept up-to-date
- Partner with us to host a business-focused Family Forward NC presentation and discussion
- Participate in a conversation to inform development of the Guide
- Share my company’s family friendly workplace policies and practices

Thank you for taking the time to learn about Family Forward NC. Through research and the exchange of ideas among business leaders, employees and organizations, Family Forward NC will promote workforce investments that support children’s healthy development and a competitive business environment, both in the short and long term.

LET’S GET STARTED
I would like to (check all that apply):

- ☐ Be kept up-to-date on Family Forward NC news, events and business recognition. Please provide your email address below.
- ☐ Partner with the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation to host a business-focused Family Forward NC presentation and discussion in my community, professional association, local Chamber of Commerce, or workforce and economic development organization.
- ☐ Participate in a Family Forward NC conversation with other business leaders to inform the development of the Guide.
- ☐ Share my company’s family friendly workplace policies and practices for recognition and/or a case study.

Name ____________________________
Affiliation _________________________
Phone ____________________________
Email ____________________________
Zip Code _________________________

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