

FOCUS ON: THE FUTURE OF NORTH CAROLINA'S ECONOMY



The lack of affordable child care for low income parents and caregivers contributes to widening income inequality, and stands in the way of economic prosperity for all of North Carolina.

If we are to reach our 2030 goal of having 2 million North Carolinians with a high quality credential or post secondary degree, then adult learners need access to the supports necessary to successfully complete their education.

Affordable child care is one important support.

Across the country, men have recovered all the jobs they lost in the pandemic, but women are still down by 515,000 jobs compared to February 2020.

BRINGING MORE WOMEN BACK TO WORK MEANS ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE.

In July, NC was named the #1 State for Business, ranking the strongest economy in the country. We continue to win over other states, especially those vying for manufacturing. If our state ambition is to continue on this trajectory, it will take a skilled workforce to do so. **Adult learners are an important demographic to fill this skilled workforce, and access to affordable child care is vital to their success.**

Between the Toyota plant in Randolph Co and the Boom Supersonic facility in Guilford Co., approximately 3,500 jobs will be created. Yet, **in the Piedmont-Triad Prosperity Zone, over 50% of children under age 5 live in childcare deserts.**

The lack of available and affordable child care is particularly acute for low income households in the Sandhills, Piedmont-Triad, the Northeast and Northwest Prosperity Zones. In these regions, numerous and complex financial stressors, such as the cost of housing and the availability of transportation, challenge low income parents and caregivers to find and maintain work while meeting their family obligations. The combination of these factors continues to widen the income inequality gap.

Approximately, 400,000 working parents across NC are assumed to be constrained by child care needs given that there are an estimated 610,000 children under age 5.

HOW MANY OF THESE PARENTS COULD ADVANCE THEIR CAREER IF THEY HAD ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE?

For more context and deeper analysis, [read the full report](#) and follow NCECF.