



CCSA Communicates

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 3 | SEPTEMBER 2020

Child Care Services Association works to ensure affordable, accessible, high-quality child care is available for all young children and their families.

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From the President

One of my all-time favorite events in the Triangle is CCSA's Triangle Child Care Awards Breakfast that happens every two years. I remember going to this event long before I was ever president of CCSA. It reminds us that good things happen for young children in ECE. It always makes me smile, and this year was no exception, although it was not a breakfast at The Friday Center.

At our first Virtual Triangle Child Care Awards event on September 18, CCSA presented multiple awards to recognize the partners and



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leaders who share CCSA's passion for children and who have helped improve the lives of children throughout the Triangle. It reminded us that in spite of a pandemic, there are many individuals and organizations in the Triangle working hard to ensure the success and happiness of our

children. While these efforts sometimes go unrecognized, they don't go unnoticed.

The first recipient of this year's Child Care Services Association **Public Service Award** was **Senator Floyd McKissick Jr.** Senator Floyd McKissick Jr. served in the North Carolina State Senate from 2007 until January 2020, when he was appointed by Governor Roy Cooper to the state Utilities Commission. Senator McKissick represented Senate District 20, which includes Durham



Senator Floyd McKissick Jr.

and Granville counties. He most recently served as the Senior Deputy Democratic Leader in the U.S. Senate and also previously served on the Senate Committee on Education among many others.

The second recipient of the 2020 Child Care Services Association **Public Service Award** was **Reverend Dr. Michael Page**. Michael was elected to the Durham Board of Education in 2000 and later became its first African-American chairman. He served on the Durham County Board



Reverend Dr. Michael Page

of Commissioners for 12 years and was appointed as chairman for eight. Until just last year, he also served on Child Care Services Association's Board of Directors. We appreciated his many years of support in this role.

The winner of the **Dorothy B. Graham Child Care Leadership Award** was **Pam Dowdy**, and we were pleased to have Scottie Seawell,



Pam Dowdy

Graham's daughter, present this special award. This award, named in honor of Graham, a pioneer in advocacy for quality early childhood education for North Carolina's children, goes to someone who possessed a leadership role in improving child care in the Triangle and who

worked to mobilize others into action to accomplish goals for children and families. Pam helped found Smart Start in Wake County in the 1990s and was the executive

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From the President

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director for 18 years until she retired in 2019. While she has retired, that hasn't stopped her from ensuring all children are ready for kindergarten and a lifetime of learning.

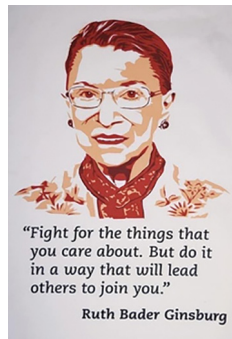
The final award presented was the **Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award**, created in the 1980s to recognize Bridgers and her dedication to and advocacy for children. Finalists were selected based on an evaluation of their education and experience in early care and education, their advocacy on behalf of children and the early childhood community, references from their employers, colleagues and parents of children in their care and an on-site assessment of the nominee in their classroom before COVID-19 hit. Finalists were **Jennifer Rannow** from Precious Lambs Early Learning Center in Raleigh and **Tashina Foust** from Harvest Learning Center in Durham.

The winner of the Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award was **Graciela Muñoz** from Spanish for Fun in Chapel Hill. With more than 30 years of experience and 11 years at her current center, Spanish for Fun, Graciela Muñoz's deep knowledge of child development allows her to assess each child accurately to work with each one according to their individual needs and interests. In her multicultural, multi-able classroom, every child feels treated equally respected and valued.



Adriana Martínez, the director of Spanish for Fun, said, "Since the beginning, Graciela has shown us what every early childhood education teacher should be. She works her heart, her brain and her soul."

You can see special short videos of our winners [here](#). I think they will make you smile! It's always a treat to celebrate the best in our community.



These award winners reminded us that good things can happen for young children in child care and that leadership and advocacy for early childhood matter.

September 18 was also a mix of emotions. A morning of gratitude and smiles, and yet that evening, feelings of great loss and sadness as we learned of the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. As a young attorney, she persisted through every challenge that she encountered to change the laws of our country and lead the legal charge to advance equal rights for women. For decades, as the second woman ever to sit on the Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg was a fighter for gender equality—someone who believed that equal justice under law only had meaning if it applied to every single American. As a trailblazing champion of women's rights, her work impacts so many of us today.

Her message to fight for the things that you care about lives on.

There is a lot at stake in early childhood right now. This year, in particular, it is especially important for children to have a sense of normalcy. While many North Carolina businesses have re-opened, the situation on the ground for child care educators hasn't changed for the better. Parents returning to the workforce need access to child care. The supply of child care depends on a stable and qualified child care workforce. There is no vaccine that has yet been approved, and child care educators remain on the front-lines. We must raise our voices to advocate for high quality early care and education and the local, state and federal investments necessary to do so.

It is an important election for our children, our families, our early childhood educators. We need you to vote! 🗳️

Best, Marsha

Thank You, Sue

Sue Russell is retiring next month after 50 years of service. Her decades of service to the early childhood community has made an indelible impact locally, statewide and nationally. She has been a leader like no other, and we cannot thank her enough for all that she has accomplished.

Sue's work and advocacy has included developing successful programs, including the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship and Child Care WAGE\$® Programs, building effective systems to improve access to high quality early childhood programs for all children and doing research on the workforce, the early care and education system and access issues for children from families with low incomes. She was the inspiration and architect of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center, becoming the executive director in 2013 after serving as Founding President of CCSA for 39 years (1974-2013).

Sue has asked us not to have a celebration for her retiring. She retired from CCSA in 2013. We want to honor her request, and we also know that there are stories, videos and pictures to share that recognize



the huge difference that she has made for generations of children and early childhood educators. We know many of you have already sent warm wishes to Sue directly.

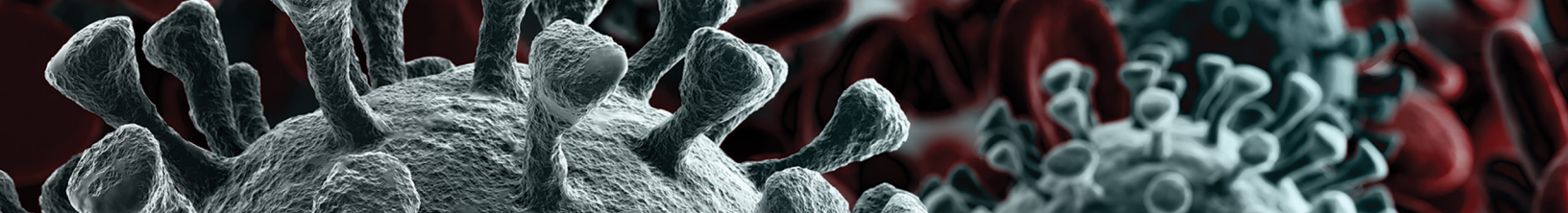
Please join CCSA in wishing Sue a happy retirement and thanking her for her years of service by emailing stories, videos and/or pictures to teresag@childcareservices.org. Please send these by October 16 so we can pull it all together for her.

For those who have asked about thanking Sue and wishing her well by making a donation, you can contribute to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center Endowment Fund [here](#). The National Center provides leadership in the early childhood education field to states across the country and to our nation's policymakers on the critical importance and value of an educated, well-paid and stable early childhood workforce to ensure the long term success of our nation's children in school and in life.

Please join CCSA in thanking Sue for her vision, leadership and contributions over the decades. 🗳️

Stay in the know and follow CCSA





Compensation in the Time of COVID-19

The world is waiting and hoping that COVID-19 can be in our rearview mirror. Yet, the pandemic has changed the early childhood landscape, maybe forever, as employers, teachers and families struggle with complex decisions about health, safety and finances. While the long-term impact is not yet known, the growing awareness of the critical needs this workforce meets has resulted in calls for much-deserved increases in compensation. Child Care Services Association education-based salary supplement programs, the [Child Care WAGES® Program](#) and [Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\\$®](#), are options for getting these increases into the hands of early educators *now*.



Financial awards are issued after six months in the same child care program to help retain educated teachers and encourage further professional development. The programs were challenged to determine the best ways to assist participants during this crisis. With funder support and guidance, participants were held harmless due to COVID-19 impact from March to June, receiving their supplements regardless of the employer status during these difficult months.

In FY20, WAGES was funded in 55 different counties that chose to support it with their Smart Start dollars; the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) supports


**Infant-Toddler Educator
AWARD\$®**

**Child Care
WAGES®
Program**

administrative costs. Participants may have education ranging from a few courses in early childhood education to advanced degrees and serve children birth to 5 years old. Recipients received an average six-month supplement of \$993, which breaks down to approximately 95¢ more per hour if considered an hourly rate increase for full-time employment. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of survey respondents said WAGES supplements help ease financial stress and 96% said they are more encouraged to stay at their same child care program.

Funded entirely by DCDEE, AWARD\$ is available in every N.C. county. To participate, full-time infant-toddler teachers and family child care providers must have at least a two-year degree with significant early childhood coursework. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of these well-educated professionals still earn less than \$15 per hour. AWARD\$ helps enhance their earnings, with participants receiving an average six-month supplement of \$1,271 (approximately \$1.22 more per hour) in FY20, and 99% of survey respondents said the supplements help ease financial stress. Ninety-seven (97%) are more encouraged to stay in their child care program as a result of AWARD\$.

According to one WAGES recipient, "A lot of teachers are unemployed because of COVID-19. I am so dependent on my WAGES check, more than I've ever had to be. I need this next check to help keep food on the table and to keep from going homeless. ... I depend on WAGES because it fills in the gaps, and now that we are dealing with COVID-19, where most of us are not working, my next check can't come quick enough. I am trying to balance how much money to spend on food vs. bills, like my mortgage, so I am very thankful for WAGES, more than I can put into words. Thank you, and I am feeling grateful."

Now, more than ever, this compensation is *essential* for an essential workforce. 



MAKE A VOTING PLAN

- ☐ I'M REGISTERED TO VOTE
- ☐ I HAVE IDENTIFICATION IF I NEED IT
- ☐ I RESEARCHED MY LOCAL RACES AND BALLOT INITIATIVES
- ☐ I ENCOURAGED MY FAMILY, FRIENDS AND COWORKERS TO REGISTER TO VOTE
- ☐ I SAVED THE N.C. ELECTION PROTECTION HOTLINE NUMBER (1-888-OURVOTE)
- ☐ I REQUESTED MY MAIL-IN BALLOT (BY OCT. 27) OR I KNOW THE HOURS AND LOCATIONS FOR EARLY VOTING/ELECTION DAY SITES NEAR ME
- ☐ I MAILED IN MY BALLOT (BY NOV. 3) OR MADE A PLAN TO VOTE EARLY OR IN PERSON ON NOV. 3



CCSA's Guide to Voter Registration and Absentee Ballots in the Time of COVID-19

Voter registration takes an average of two minutes or less to complete, but North Carolina has seen a decline in new voter registration numbers in 2020. It's time to change that.

This year, there are even more options to vote safely and correctly. To ensure that everyone is able to vote in November, save and share [this graphic](#) to make a successful voting plan.

Registering to vote is one of the most important steps in making a voting plan. The North Carolina voter registration deadline is October 9, so it's important to register as early as possible. This year, there are three ways to vote: absentee ballots, early voting and day-of-voting. This is significant because no special circumstances are required for absentee ballots this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read more here.](#) 

We're proud to support
a complete count
of young children on the
2020 Census!



Ensure the Count of Every Child Under 5 in the 2020 Census

It is crucial for North Carolina to count every child 5 and under. The last day to respond is **September 30, 2020**. [Learn more about the importance of counting every child 5 and under here.](#)

Abecedarian Approach Course for NC ITQEP

In May and June, the Infant Toddler Quality Enhancement Project (ITQEP) and NC Babies First teams completed a six-week virtual course on the Abecedarian Approach with one of its principal founders, Dr. Joseph Sparling. The two teams were joined by early childhood specialists from Meredith College, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and the country of Jordan. This was a singular opportunity that united practitioners representing an array of backgrounds.

The Abecedarian Project, pioneered by Dr. Sparling and Dr. Craig Ramey, began at

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute in Chapel Hill in 1972 as one of the first major longitudinal studies on early intervention effects across the human lifespan. Participants were children of teen mothers who were identified as being at-risk for developmental delays. The strategies used in Abecedarian Project not only improved child learning and health outcomes 40 years after the intervention, but also showed positive spillover effects on the children's mothers. The teen mothers of children receiving treatment were found to be significantly more likely to pursue education without additional financial support based on their children's demonstrated developmental progress.

The ITQEP and NC Babies First teams expressed excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to learn about the history and success of the Abecedarian Approach as an evidence-based, highly effective early intervention. Each week, the groups used an online learning platform with text and video resources (offered through Red River College) along with Zoom sessions for in-depth analysis and discussions.

The ITQEP and Babies First teams, now equipped with an understanding of the Abecedarian Approach techniques, framework and available resources, will use this knowledge to support infant and toddler teachers and administrators in their work with children and families. The teams will follow this unique training opportunity with support for strategy implementation using a practice-based coaching format. For more information on the Abecedarian Approach and its continuing research, visit <https://abc.fpg.unc.edu/abecedarian-project>.

NC Infant-Toddler
Quality Enhancement Project

Durham PreK's New School Year

Can you believe it's already time for the second year of Durham PreK? Durham PreK is contracting with 33 classrooms across Durham Public Schools, Head Start and private sites, and they are all excited to welcome their new students.

On August 3, 2020, the North Carolina Department of Child Development and Early Education (NCDCEE) released [Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs](#) outlining reopening and payment policies for the 2020-2021 school year. On August 14, 2020, Durham PreK's Governance Committee voted on the following guidance for the 2020-2021 school year:

- (a) pay providers for Durham PreK seats based on the number of seats allocated in the site contract, regardless of attendance or enrollment in alignment with NCDCEE's NC Pre-K Interim COVID-19 Reopening Payment Policies, and
- (b) waive parent fees in alignment with NCDCEE subsidy guidelines.

Universal Pre-K placement notifications began at the end of July and applications and enrollment continue on a rolling basis. The school year began on August 17 for Durham PreK spaces and classrooms at Durham Public Schools (DPS). Students in Head Start classrooms and private sites will begin on September 8. DPS and Head Start will start the school year virtually and parents at private sites can choose to

start the school year virtually or in-person. Programs will review COVID metrics in October to assess the continuation of virtual learning and/or in-person instruction in order to keep you, your children, the teachers and other pre-K staff safe.

Durham PreK is also supporting families by redesigning the Durham PreK [Family Resources Page](#) to include more services and community resources for families in the Durham community. Resources are listed by

theme so families can locate them easily, and they include child care and pre-k, child and family health and mental health, parenting and family support, literacy, food resources, housing and homelessness and race and ethnic identity in

early childhood. Durham PreK is also creating and posting home learning videos on social media for all families in the Durham community. Videos include art projects, learning numbers, learning letters, exercise and more!

Teachers or community members interested in becoming teachers, we have a **free** opportunity that may interest you.

Durham PreK's 2nd Annual PreK and Early Care Career Expo will be held virtually on October 3, 2020. The expo is presented by CCSA, Durham Tech, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, NCCU, UNC-Greensboro, UNC-Chapel Hill and Durham's Partnership for Children. Sessions include degree information for AA/AAS through MA/M.Ed, financial assistance, resume and cover letter development, application support and more. Click [here](#) to register. We hope to see you there!



The NC Infant Toddler Quality Enhancement Project (NC ITQEP) Management Team has just finished the pilot of the New Infant Toddler Teacher Orientation (NITTO) course on the Division of Child Development and Early Education's Moodle site with overwhelmingly positive feedback.

The course is designed to support new teachers working with children ages birth to 3 in their understanding of child development, the importance of relationships and age-appropriate behavior guidance. Child care administrators are provided with a packet of information to support their staff members as they become oriented to the classroom and their crucial role as early educators. The self-paced course is written to be completed by participants over six weeks as they dive into content related to NC child care resources, brain development, routine care, classroom environments, behavior guidance and self-care.

Currently, NC ITQEP is in the process of connecting Regional Infant Toddler Specialists with recent completers of the course for follow-up technical assistance related to the course material. The following are some quotes from recent course pilot participants:

"It helped me understand the steps in achieving positive social-emotional health for each child."

"[It was a] reminder that I am very important as a teacher and that the children in my care depend on me especially in the first three years of their lives."

"The information gave me more insight [in]to guiding behaviors and how it is important to take care of myself and the importance of remaining calm."

"[NITTO was] helpful to remind us that children are ever learning from those around them. We are able to be positive supports in their development and growth, or we can miss teaching opportunities by focusing on the negative."

"It reminded me that conflicts are learning opportunities within the classroom."

"[I need to] take care of myself so I can take care of the little ones."

New Infant Toddler Teacher Orientation Pilot Success



"[NITTO] is a great resource for every teacher and all infant/toddler teachers must consider taking this course."

Administrators noted the following:


"[My teacher's] enthusiasm for the toddler age group seemed to improve."

"[My teacher] became aware of hazards in her room."

"[My teachers] collaborated together and had great discussions about the class."

"My teachers were very excited about this program. I appreciate you all letting administrators be a part of it too. It was fun getting to see my teachers' [faces] light up as they explained when I asked them what they learned this week or that week. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity for early childhood educators, especially in infant and toddler care. This age is my heart!"

NC ITQEP is thrilled to continue this work, making improvements and working with infant and toddler teachers across the state to improve child learning and health outcomes, teacher job satisfaction and retention and supportive family relationships.

NITTO content includes activities that are interactive and engaging and directly relevant to classroom practice. Each section contains downloadable resources to be shared with child care administrators and coworkers. For anyone interested in seeking additional information about the New Infant Toddler Teacher Orientation course, please email itorientation@childcareservices.org. 

News from Child Care Services Association Kitchens

CCSA's Meal Services Program is getting a new face. Be on the lookout for exciting news this October.

Learn more about our [Meal Services Program here](#).





#StayStrongNC

**If you need child care for school-age children, call
1-888-600-1685 to be connected with options.**

In partnership with NC's Child Care Resource and Referral system, representatives are available to assist weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST. Care options are also available for children from infants through age 12.

When you call the hotline, child care referral specialists will provide referrals to licensed child care programs that are open and have vacancies for the age of the child(ren) for whom care is being requested.

Availability of child care varies from community to community.

Call: 1-888-600-1685



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

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T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center Implements T.E.A.C.H. Counselor Training Series

T.E.A.C.H. counselors are the face and the voice of T.E.A.C.H. programs for scholarship recipients in 23 states and D.C. Every day and in every way possible, our counselors provide information and support to encourage the early childhood workforce to complete their education. The Counselor Training Series modules give counselors consistent information about the T.E.A.C.H. program from the Center's national perspective while reminding new counselors that each state will have unique policies and practices. The modules support and augment

the on-site counselor orientation and training programs each T.E.A.C.H. state program provides. The goal of this series is to help T.E.A.C.H. counselors and T.E.A.C.H. state organizations as they support the early childhood workforce.

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

"The module provided a great overview of the program. We completed the module as a team and the questions provided a great opportunity to talk through our program and the processes in place. Our staff are in different levels of knowledge, but the questions provided a framework for us to have discussions and make sure we all knew the information. For myself it was a great reminder of the role of a counselor and how important that work is to the program."

"I like that the examples were relevant to what I do every day."

"The most helpful part of the module was to better understand that the role of the counselor is not limited to scholarship support but is also part of listening, guiding and supporting our T.E.A.C.H. recipients to move forward in their academic goals."

"I liked the networking and learning from other T.E.A.C.H. counselors. I am grateful for the connections I made and I am certain it will help me become a better counselor."

HOW IT WORKS

Each module builds on the knowledge gained in the previous module and is accompanied by homework expectations, including interviewing experienced administrators and counselors in the counselor's own state, as well as readings and policies to review on the National Center website. Following each of modules, participants join a live discussion led by a National Center consultant that also includes their peers from other state T.E.A.C.H. programs who are engaged in the training.

RESULTS TO DATE

Since January 20, T.E.A.C.H. counselors and one intake specialist from 15 states and D.C. completed the four modules and received a certificate of completion. Since evaluation is a key component of the Center's work, surveys were sent to participants as they completed each module. Initial feedback tells us the training is valuable to those who complete it. 🙌

MODULE 1

JUST THE FACTS

Provides an overview of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®.

MODULE 2

T.E.A.C.H. OVERVIEW AND THE ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR

Explains the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® program with an emphasis on the purpose and benefits of the program to the early childhood profession and the critical role of the counselor.

MODULE 3

COUNSELING ROLES AND PRACTICES

Identifies and differentiates the primary roles of the counselor in providing both counseling support and scholarship management, and best practices in each role.

MODULE 4

BEYOND THE BASICS

Identifies the state and national systems that contribute to T.E.A.C.H. and the early childhood workforce.

Working in Early Care and Education in North Carolina

CCSA's latest Early Childhood Workforce Study will be published [on our website](#) in October. Keep an eye out for it!



Interning at CCSA Offers More Than Just Opportunity

Child Care Services Association (CCSA) works to ensure affordable, accessible, high-quality child care for all young children and their families and those that educate them. And we're always looking for fresh ideas and new ways to do just that. CCSA often hires interns from surrounding colleges and universities to help drive our goals, better understand our communities and support future leadership. With the onset of COVID-19, the opportunity to work remotely allowed five interns from across North Carolina to join us this summer.

The intern for the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center was Andrea Santiago, a rising junior studying psychology and English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from Union, N.J.

"By engaging in discussions on updating website materials, strategizing a new approach for the 'I Make a Difference Campaign' and increasing accessibility to dual-language speakers, I have been able to expand my understanding and learn a few ways on how to best serve underserved communities like the early childhood workforce," said Santiago.

Destiny Harden, from Selma, N.C., joined us as the strategic planning and homelessness intern. She majored in international studies with a minor in public health and graduated from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte last May.

"Even though this internship was remote, I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to promote positive change on issues dealing with child care and homelessness," said Harden. "This was a very rewarding experience and I'm glad I was able to be a part of CCSA."



Stephen Pierce



Sydney Frost



Kayla Blanfort, from Greensboro, N.C., joined as the food services marketing intern for our Meal Services Program. She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte last May with a degree in communication studies. From this internship, Blanfort said she "gained more of an understanding of what food insecurity is and how it affects a child's development and the inadequacy that parents can feel as they struggle to provide food for their families."

The summer intern for CCSA's Development Department was Stephen Pierce from Arden, N.C., a rising sophomore studying English and communications at Western Carolina University.

"Interning at the Child Care Services Association taught me that I can use my skills to help people in a way I never fully realized was possible," said Pierce. "I'm glad to have had the chance to spend this summer a little more productively, and I hope my efforts have left an impact during this unprecedented crisis."

Sydney Frost, from Winston Salem, N.C., joined us as the summer communications intern. She is a junior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill majoring in English and comparative literature with a minor in social and economic justice. Frost said, "the most rewarding part of this summer was speaking with essential child care providers, who received a grant from the CCSA COVID-19 Relief Fund, and writing a blog about how this investment back into individuals made a significant impact on communities during the pandemic."

We are excited to have both Blanfort and Frost continue working as volunteers with CCSA this fall.

You can read more about each intern's experience on our blog. Interns and volunteers contribute a great deal to CCSA's work. If you are interested in interning or volunteering at CCSA, please [contact us](#).

 [CLICK HERE FOR BLOG POST](#)

CCSA Launches New Website

This year of crisis has upended the way we work and live, and it has also allowed us to work on some new projects. We are thrilled to invite you to visit our new website at www.childcareservices.org.

Since last winter, CCSA has worked with local web design firm, Registered Creative, to launch a new website. With this new website, our work to build a better system for our children and their families and the early childhood workforce has never been clearer.

[Check it out!](#) 



➡ Strolling Thunder Brings Advocates Together to Push for Change!

On September 3, parents, babies, child care providers and advocates from across North Carolina gathered for a virtual Strolling Thunder rally to #ThinkBabiesNC! The event featured inspiring speakers, information about policies that can make a difference for babies and tips for being an effective advocate mixed with fun activities for parents and children.

The COVID-19 crisis has had a devastating impact on many of the support systems for our state's youngest children and families, and has exacerbated the existing challenges and inequities faced by far too many in our state. More than ever, now is the time to make sure policymakers make every baby's potential a top priority and put policies, programs and budgets in place to ensure that all children have the healthy beginnings, supported families and early care and learning they need to thrive. That means:

- Babies and their parents need access to health care. Far too many citizens in our state are facing a pandemic with no health insurance, especially as many parents have lost their jobs. It is critical that we support the physical and mental health of parents to ensure the healthy birth and healthy development of our babies.
- Families need to be supported through this crisis with access to home visiting, parenting education programs and paid family leave, all of which can be a lifeline for new parents. Babies' healthy development and learning is shaped by their relationships with their caregivers, and COVID-19 is occurring during a time when their rapid brain development means they are particularly affected by the rising stress of the adults caring for them.
- Babies need high-quality, safe child care with teachers who are compensated for the essential work they're doing during this crisis. Child care providers have stepped up to stay open during the pandemic, but funding is needed urgently to support this

industry before it collapses so parents with young children can return to work and our economy can recover.

These are just a few examples of how COVID-19 has affected our youngest children and their families. The opportunity in the midst of this crisis is for our elected leaders to build a better early childhood system, one that is centered in equity to make sure all children have what they need to reach their full potential.

The Strolling Thunder rally addressed all of these issues and more, with a keynote address from a pediatrician and powerful advocate discussing health disparities, a panel discussion about the current state of Think Babies™ NC policy priorities, an advocacy training, family dance party, children's storytime and videos featuring the voices of advocates from across the state. Click [here](#) to watch the Strolling Thunder rally now!

There's still time to get involved, and North Carolina's babies and families need your voice, commitment and action—now, more than ever.

Here are a few things you can do right now for our state's youngest children and their families:

- [Sign the Think Babies™ NC petition](#)
- [Stay tuned to the Coalition's Action Center for opportunities to contact policymakers at the state and national level](#)
- [Check out this Electoral Advocacy Toolkit to help you make your vote count for young children this November](#)
- [Join the conversation on social media using #ThinkBabiesNC](#)
- [Take the Think Babies™ NC pledge](#)

Thank you for being a big voice for babies! 🙌

We need to take more than baby steps.

Strolling Thunder: A Think Babies™ NC Advocacy Day!

Thursday, September 3rd



**STROLLING
THUNDER**
North Carolina





EARLY CHILDHOOD HOMELESSNESS NEWS

BELL (Building Early Links for Learning) hosts Podcast on the Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters

In Family Homeless Shelters: The Self-Assessments for Child Development Support” is BELL’s latest podcast. Listen to PEC’s Sara Vrabic lead a discussion with Marsha Basloe of Child Care Services Association of North Carolina and Dr. Sara Shaw of Child Trends on the use and effects of the Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters.

[Listen here](#)

BELL is a project of the People’s Emergency Center

<https://www.pec-cares.org/bell-write-up.html>

More information about the BELL Project can be obtained by contacting Joe Willard, Vice President of Policy at the People’s Emergency Center, at jwillard@pec-cares.org



Sara Vrabic



Marsha Basloe

Coordinating Services for Young Children and Their Families Experiencing Homelessness

The Head Start Collaboration Office, Title I and the NC State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth recently presented **Coordinating Services for Young Children and Their Families Experiencing Homelessness** and [shared materials developed](#) for Head Start and McKinney Vento audiences. CCSA will host this webinar with Karen McKnight, Carla Garrett and Lisa Phillips this fall for early childhood partners.

North Carolina Data

Children under the age of six
732,927

Children under the age of six experiencing homelessness
27,989

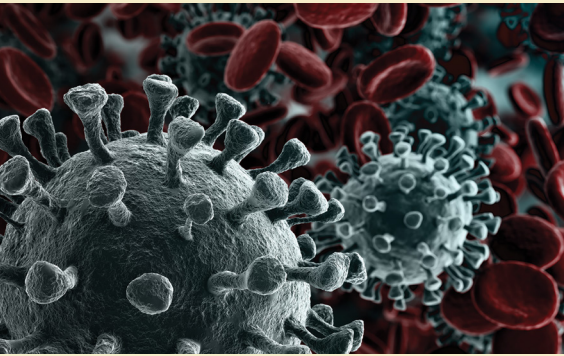
SHC Launches Public Awareness Effort to Reach Homeless Families and Youth

Public schools and early childhood programs reported a record **1.5 million** children and youth experiencing homelessness earlier this year. In the midst of the current crisis, this number is expected to spike and the role of schools has never been more critical - regardless of whether they reopen on a remote, hybrid, or in-person model. Schools are required by law to identify, enroll, and serve homeless children and youth, but distance learning and other COVID-related complications have made this harder. Without the usual methods of outreach and identification, **many families and youth experiencing homelessness may be even more disconnected from school and early childhood programs.**

To help inform families and youth about their educational rights, **SchoolHouse Connection announces two public service announcements (PSA)** aimed at reaching families, educators, community organizations, and local leaders:



1. A PSA from Sesame Street Workshop with a message from Elmo for parents and children experiencing homelessness. <https://youtu.be/j0Q7m3c25qA>
2. A PSA aimed at educators and community members to engage them in efforts to identify and assist families and youth experiencing homelessness. <https://youtu.be/iKA4tsHSZpo>



COVID-19 NEWS

To The Early Childhood Educators: You're So Much More Than 'Essential'

Their moments with you, under your care, your guidance, have shaped who they will become.

You do it all. You sing, you read, you sit on the floor and play. You change diapers, you feed, you clean messy little hands. You tie shoes, you kiss boo boos, you brush hair, you pat sleepy backs. There are letters of the week and numbers of the day and messy crafts and outdoor play.

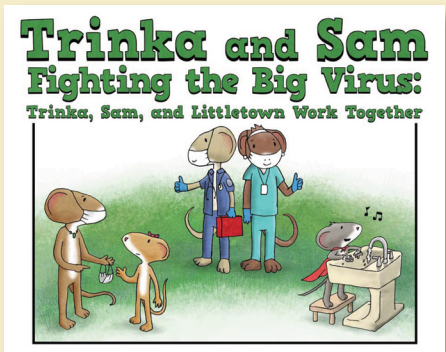
[Read more.](#)



Fighting the Big Virus Children's Book

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)-funded [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#), developed a children's book, [Trinka and Sam Fighting the Big Virus: Trinka, Sam, and Littletown Work Together](#) to help young children and families

talk about their experiences and feelings about COVID-19 and the need to shelter in place. The story, which is available in multiple languages, opens doors to conversations about COVID-19, including ways that families and communities are working together to keep safe from the virus, family and community strengths, common challenges and reactions in children and adults, ways that families support children and each other, and communities' gratitude for frontline workers. A caregiver guide is available in the back of the book that provides ways parents can use the story with their children. A companion story, [Fighting the Big Virus: Trinka's and Sam's Questions](#), about how to answer children's questions about the virus is also available.



Child Care Is Essential, but Funding is Inadequate and Inequitable

NC Early Education Coalition

Iam going to start with something we all know and something policymakers across the county are saying: child care is essential.

Child care is essential for today's workforce. Families rely on our early education system in order to keep working. Before COVID-19, two-thirds of all families with young children were working, and relied on child care to be there to support them. Now, as families return to work, the child care system is on the verge of collapse. [Continue reading here.](#)



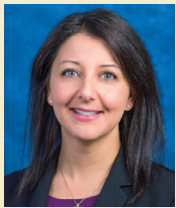
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NORTH CAROLINA NEWS

Congratulations, Secretary Cohen!

Secretary Cohen Earns Leadership in Public Health Practice Award from Harvard

DHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen will receive the **2020 Leadership in Public Health Practice Award** from Harvard



University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health during a virtual ceremony in September for her leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. The award recognizes a graduate who has been an outstanding example of effective public health leadership, and honors selfless service, significant contributions to the uptake of public health principles and demonstrated significant organizational leadership.

Congratulations, Clean Water for Carolina Kids!

The Environment and Natural Resources Program at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs announced that **Clean Water for Carolina Kids** is the winner of the 2020 Roy Family Award for Environmental Partnership. The partnership of RTI International, NC Child, the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, and the North Carolina Division of Public Health protects children and infants from exposure to lead from drinking water at child care centers and schools. The prestigious Roy Family Award is

presented every two years to celebrate an outstanding cross-sector partnership project that enhances environmental quality through novel and creative approaches. This year's winning project leveraged the combined strengths of each of the partners—a nonprofit research institute, a community advocacy group, a pro-bono public interest law school clinic and a state public health agency—to make a critical advancement in children's health in North Carolina. Read more about this project [here](#).

Congratulations to Book Harvest on receiving a 2020 Literacy Award from the Library of Congress!

Book Harvest was recognized as a **2020 Best Practices Honoree** by the Library of Congress when it announced its awards today. The awards recognize "organizations doing exemplary, innovative and easily replicable work over a sustained period." Book Harvest is one of only 15 organizations from around the world to receive this distinction.

Thank you for all your efforts in supporting children and families in their literacy journeys and in their literacy journeys and in pursuing our giant dreams of putting educational equity within reach of every child.



Sometimes donations come in different ways. Thank you, CLTgivePPE!

The Ready Infant Toddler Classroom project will work with 16 infant-toddler classrooms in Durham County this year. The project is

focused on providing infant and toddler teachers with weekly coaching focused on teacher interactions, responsive caregiving, supporting early language and language modeling. CLTgivePPE is donating clear masks to this project. The use of clear masks will enable help the infants and toddlers to see teachers' expressions and faces as teachers they engage with the children in conversation. This is a critical component in language development for birth—36 months.

Many thanks to Liz Winer, Winer Family Foundation, and Sheila Natarajan, CLTgivePPE, a volunteer group who made these clear masks.

Forward NC's Rapid Response Program

Family-friendly business practices such as support for child care, along with paid leave, flexible work options and other policies and practices are more important than ever to help employers return to business (and employees to return to work) in a way that allows for continued viability for business and continued health and well-being for the families of all workers.



Through **Family Forward NC's Rapid Response program**, employers can access services. You can learn more about **Rapid Response and access the tools** to use or share. To learn more about Family Forward NC, email Lisa Finaldi at lfinaldi@buildthefoundation.org.

NAEYC 2020 Annual Conference Registration Opened September 14!

Plan to register early and join NAEYC November 8-10 to experience the Conference in a whole new way! Visit the [webpage](#) often for updates.

Join or renew today at the Standard or Premium membership level to save significantly when registering for Annual Conference.



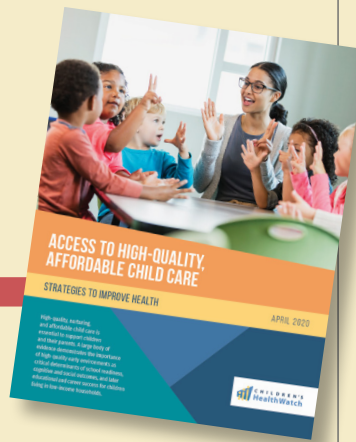
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NATIONAL NEWS

Access to High-Quality, Affordable Child Care: Strategies to Improve Health

High-quality, nurturing and affordable child care is essential to support children and their parents. A large body of evidence demonstrates the importance of high-quality early environments as critical determinants of school readiness, cognitive and social outcomes and later educational and career success for children living in low-income households.

[Children's HealthWatch](#)



Start with Equity!

The [Children's Equity Project](#) and the Bipartisan Policy Center have created a new report where they deeply examine data and research, identify key systematic obstacles preventing all children from living up to their potential, and most importantly, outline actions that can be taken to create more equitable learning systems.

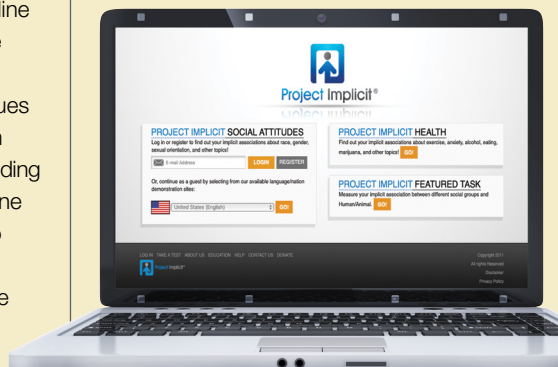
They chose to focus on three key issues that expand opportunity for children from historically marginalized communities, including addressing harsh and inequitable discipline practices, equitably expanding access to bilingual learning for dual language and English learners, and increasing inclusive learning opportunities for children with disabilities. [See the report here.](#)

Too Small to Fail is working with partners to help provide educational resources across the country. [Have you seen these resources?](#)

Project Implicit

Project Implicit is a non-profit organization and international collaboration between researchers who are interested in implicit social cognition—thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness and control. The goal of the organization is to educate the public about hidden biases and to provide a “virtual laboratory” for collecting data on the Internet.

[Check out the Project Implicit website](#), they have multiple tests for various biases.



The Kaleidoscope Project

The last five months have been filled with uncertainty, and uncertainty around school has been no exception. The majority of parents and caregivers are entering uncharted waters when it comes to virtual learning. Although many things may still be unclear about the 2020-2021 school year, there is one thing that is crystal clear: **The importance of our little learners' social emotional health.**

Find resources on how to keep kids connected to teachers and peers, building relationships virtually, discussing emotions while learning remotely and on social emotional well-being at [The Kaleidoscope Project website](#).

Research, Clinical & Data Driven Responses to Coronavirus from Yale University

“Scientists, scholars, and physicians across Yale are actively engaged in research, innovation, and clinical efforts to combat COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus). This website seeks to facilitate collaboration at Yale and across the world by transparently communicating our research progress and patient care initiatives.”

Take a look at the following topics and information you can find at the website:

- Reducing Covid-19 Home-Based Transmission
- Collection of maps visualizing the state, spread, and impact of the pandemic

There are also several other resourceful articles, especially returning to higher education campuses.

[Meeting the Challenge of Coronavirus.](#) 

Eleven Years and Counting: Ana Claros-Sanchez's Journey with CCSA

By Sydney Frost, Communications Intern at CCSA

As the communications intern for Child Care Services Association, I've had the opportunity to find fulfilling work amongst a kind group of people. This past summer, CCSA took a chance on me and I found a new career path that I enjoy. So, I was excited to speak with Ana Claros-Sanchez, who started out in a similar position as mine. Over her experience of 11 years with CCSA, she appreciates the supportive staff, the ways in which education is promoted for staff members and how rewarding the work is.



Ana Claros-Sanchez

Ana has worked her way up from a CCSA temp to the 2020 Referral and Outreach Coordinator at Child Care Referral Central with CCSA. As the Outreach Coordinator, Ana said she seeks "opportunities to participate in various community events that provide services and information or resources to families."

When she arrived at CCSA, she was struggling to find a place to start in terms of finding resources and friends in North Carolina. During her 11 years at CCSA, she has balanced a workload at CCSA, family responsibilities and furthered her own education.

"I didn't see myself staying here for 11 years. I thought that I would only last through my temp term. Then something came up, I applied for it, I got in and here I am. I didn't even believe that I was going to move up from the administrative assistant to the family support counselor and now to the coordinator, so I'm really grateful for that opportunity," Ana said.

She credits CCSA for helping her learn more about the early childhood education (ECE) field in order to go back to school. She appreciates how CCSA celebrates and supports their staff for their educational accomplishments.

"Working for CCSA has really opened doors for me in terms of

being inspired by the staff that has been working here for many, many years. It has inspired me to continue working on my education and to grow professionally in the early childhood field," Ana said.

Ana's passion for education has helped countless others and it is also a large part of her own aspirations. She is currently enrolled in her second semester at UNC-Greensboro, pursuing a master's degree in Birth-Kindergarten Interdisciplinary Studies in Education and Development, with a concentration in Early Education Leadership & Program Administration. She is also working on getting the LITL Post-Bac Certificate at the same. She has her BS in Human Development and Family Studies from UNC-Greensboro.

Ana's favorite moments with CCSA are collaborating and working with people on new cases. She has gotten to know many CCSA staff members professionally and personally while helping families and children along the way.

"It is very rewarding to get a call from a family that has been using our services with their children and now they are calling back because we would like a program for their grandchildren. CCSA is proud of the work they do, our department Family Support stands out for the level of consumer education that we provide and making sure that when we end up [on] a call, the person on the other end will have a sense of relief that they are not alone in this and that they will be better prepared to select a program for their child" Ana said. Consumer education is providing "detailed information about child care options, what licensed and non-licensed programs are, the licensing process and information about quality programs so that families can make an informed decision when it comes to selecting a program," said Ana.

CCSA's supportive and welcoming environment has helped many families, and Ana has found it to be an incredible work environment.

"It feels like a big family," said Ana. "I'm looking forward to another ten years." 📞



Sydney Frost

SUPPORT CCSA

Whether through helping low-income families afford quality child care, child care referrals, salary supplements for our underpaid early childhood educators or educational scholarships to allow the men and women who teach our young children to continue their own education, CCSA is dedicated to ensuring that our children grow up happy, healthy and ready to succeed. We can't do it without you!

Please consider giving to CCSA online at <https://www.childcareservices.org/donate> or by calling Kara Shultz at (919) 969-1927. Checks may be mailed to CCSA, PO Box 901, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Thank you!



CHILD CARE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

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www.childcareservices.org



The CCSA Communicates newsletter contains links to other websites and news articles. These links represent just a few examples of the numerous reference materials currently available to the public. The opinions expressed in any articles or web pages do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of Child Care Services Association. The inclusion of resources should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement of any private organization or business listed herein.