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is a
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CCSA Communicates

VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 1 | MARCH 2021

Child Care Services Association leads efforts to strengthen accessible and affordable quality early care and education by providing supports for families, communities and the workforce.

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From the President

This is our first quarterly newsletter of 2021, and so much has happened in the first quarter that every time I sat down to write this article, there would be another item I didn't want to forget! Of course, there is no way to capture everything, yet I want to give you an idea of all the items swirling around in my mind...

Congrats to **Dr. Mandy Cohen** and **Governor**

Cooper for the great plan to get North Carolinians vaccinated. One of the recent charts I saw showed N.C. at the top of the chart! I am also thrilled that our NC CCR&Rs across the state contacted all child care providers to help get them vaccinated when that option opened up. We worked with DCDEE, Smart Start and the Child Care Health Consultants on quite a system of outreach. Although we don't yet have 100% of our providers vaccinated yet or even willing to be vaccinated, I see that number going up every day. I want to give a shout out to **Monnie Griggs** in our CCSA TA Department who became our "CCSA Vaccine Guru." She helped so many, answered questions, had direct contacts with partners and health departments and answered our emails at all hours. N.C.'s goal is to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible, and we are happy to be a part of the state's efforts to ensure every early childhood provider that wants to be vaccinated can be vaccinated.

President Biden has promised that enough vaccines will be available for all Americans to be vaccinated by May 2021. And the CDC just said I could give my daughter, son and grandsons a hug even if they weren't vaccinated yet. Honestly, it doesn't get better than that!

With the passage of the **American Rescue Plan Act** on March 11, American families and child care providers

can celebrate a \$40 billion infusion for an essential child care industry that has been taking care of our children without missing a beat, yet rocked with closures and dramatically higher operating costs amid the pandemic. N.C. will receive approximately \$1.3 billion to help sustain child care providers and help families.

I bristled at one of the headlines that called this a

"bailout for child care." These funds do not mean the system is fixed. Our child care programs operated on a shoestring before the pandemic. Our child care teachers are not well paid personnel or executives who received a "bailout" like the banking industry or the airlines. They are early childhood educators, one of the lowest compensated professions in the country.



Underfunded and diverse, yet invaluable, child care educators struggle from poor compensation due to the economic realities of the child care business. The average wage of N.C. child care teaching staff is \$12/hour, more than 20% have no health insurance from any source and 38% received public assistance in the past three years. This funding will help child care providers and their amazing staff continue to teach and nurture our next generation of N.C. citizens. Supporting child care programs and the early childhood workforce will serve children, families and support our economic return.

The NC General Assembly recently allocated approximately \$336 million received from the federal government for child care through the Child Care and Development Block Grant as part of a H196/S172, a bill to allocate \$1.7 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funds. The bill provided for the continuation of several of the critical emergency initiatives enacted last spring. It sadly prohibited the use of

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From the President

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these funds for bonus payments/hazard pay for child care teachers and staff, the same staff who make \$12/hour on average educating and caring for our children. I hope, as the new funds from the American Rescue Act come into our state, our early childhood educators are not left behind.

Child care is a critical part of our response to the pandemic and broader economic recovery. At CCSA, we strive for a future where early childhood educators are highly educated and compensated at a level that recognizes their importance to our children, families and the economy and where all children have access to affordable, high-quality child care.

In early 2021, CCSA's Board approved a new [Strategic Plan](#). As CCSA continues to grow and build on our work, it is vital to have a plan to guide us over the next three years. We had the chance to work with Staci Barfield of Armstrong McGuire and Cass Wolfe, Chief Strategy Officer at CCSA, for several months to create the new plan. It was the first time we'd ever worked on a strategic plan virtually, yet our Board of Directors, Strategic Planning Committee and Leadership Team all participated in multiple sessions and in breakout rooms on Zoom. A highlight was being able to see people come back together and share their thoughts online. I am so glad we did not wait until we were face to face to do this important work. We invite you to continue to engage with CCSA and look forward to new and continued partnerships. You can read more about our new Strategic Plan on page 4.



The first of five core values at CCSA is to act with integrity, trust and respect—this includes transparency. CCSA is honored to receive a GuideStar® Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level of recognition, and will continue our commitment to lead efforts strengthening accessible and affordable quality early care and education by providing supports for families, communities and the workforce. CCSA values the trust our funders, families, communities,

early childhood workforce and staff have in us. Read more [here](#).

Due to COVID-19, we had to cancel last year's A.S.K. (Advancing Skills and Knowledge) Conference, so I'm happy to say we were able to host the 47th Annual A.S.K. Conference virtually this February, and it was a success! Thank you to our sponsors Lakeshore® Learning Materials and Kaplan® Early Learning Company. Read more about it on page 3.

We're also excited to host the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGES® 2021 National Professional Development Virtual Symposium this April 27-29. The focus will be *Supporting the Essential Early Childhood Workforce Behind the Workforce*, with keynote speaker [Calvin Moore, Jr.](#), CEO of the Council for Professional Recognition. [Katie Hamm](#), Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development and Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD) at ACF will join us to close out the Symposium. Read more and register on page 14.

Although 2021 had a bumpy beginning, I am optimistic it will bring improved circumstances for our country and our early learning efforts. This will be a year of big changes and continued challenges as we manage the pandemic and address its inequitable economic damage.

I look forward to the possibilities ahead. 🌟

My best,
Marsha

A Big Plus for Early Educators Pursuing Education Beyond the BA Degree

North Carolina's early care and education workforce has made significant gains in education over the past 20 years, and now the need for expansive scholarship opportunities is calling. As the world changes, early educators are also being asked to support young children and their families with very little specialized training to equip them for new challenges. Keeping up with the



workforce's evolving needs, the [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program](#) is excited to launch a new and expanded scholarship opportunity for the early care and education workforce to earn advanced and specialized education in graduate coursework.

In North Carolina, the early care and education workforce is well educated, with 59% of teachers reporting in 2019 that they either had a degree in the early education field or had a bachelor's degree or more in another field and early childhood coursework ([2019 Working in Early Care and Education in North Carolina Workforce Study, CCSA](#)).

In addition, the study showed that early educators lack skills and knowledge in critical areas such as working with children whose families have addiction issues, homelessness and other child mental health issues. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program recognized that the framework already existed to support more diverse programs of study by expanding the existing Birth-Kindergarten (BK) Licensure Scholarship Program, which was already supporting graduate level coursework toward the BK Teaching License.

The new T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Bachelor's Plus Scholarship Program provides financial support and incentives to early educators and administrators working in licensed facilities and those working as system specialists who support early educators serving infant and toddlers in classrooms or homes. The type and amount of financial support varies depending on the role, type of employment setting and employer support. Early childhood-focused licenses, certifications and master's degrees are all supported now through this expansive model.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Work at least 30 hours per week in an approved setting with an annual salary of \$58,000 or less;
- Be admitted to an approved in-state university graduate program; and
- Demonstrate a strong commitment and emerging leadership skills to the early childhood field.

If you or your staff are interested in finding out more information about this exciting new scholarship opportunity for graduate level coursework, please go [here](#) for more information. More specialized education is a big plus for children and the early care and education workforce, and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program is here to help! 🌟

The 2021 First Virtual A.S.K. Conference: A SUCCESS!

More than 250 early childhood educators joined CCSA February 20-25, 2021, for the first virtual A.S.K. (Advancing Skills and Knowledge) Conference. This annual event allows teachers, directors and administrators to step back from their daily grind and open themselves to new and creative ways of inspiring children's learning. Attendees meet to share ideas, rejuvenate their creativity and translate ideas into solutions to implement in classrooms.

Due to COVID-19, our 47th Annual A.S.K. Conference was canceled in February 2020, so we're proud to have successfully provided the conference virtually this year. Thank you to our platinum sponsor, Lakeshore® Learning Materials, and our gold sponsor, Kaplan® Early Learning Company.

Conference attendees had the option to sit in on 37 workshops throughout the week of online learning, with a keynote, four featured sessions and a Reggio learning thread in collaboration with the North Carolina Reggio Emilia Collaborative. The keynote, *Foundations for Life: Being Emotionally Responsive for Young Children*, was presented by Ron Mohl. Featured sessions included keynote speaker Ron Mohl's *Being a Partner in Play*, Erica Berry's *How to Crack a Walnut*, Kim Hughes' *I Can See it So I Can Do it: Using Visuals to Promote School Success* and Rhodus Riggins Jr.'s *Implicit Bias: What Educators Need to Know*.

The keynote speaker, Ron Mohl, brings more than 20 years of experience in the education industry to his position of Lead Educational Presenter for Lakeshore® Learning Materials. In this role, Mohl has presented to school districts, public and private institutions, Head Start programs and military bases across the country. By focusing on the importance of play in the learning process, Mohl's interactive training helps educators enrich the curricula related to language development, math, science, music and diversity.

Mohl hopes attendees left his keynote knowing and understanding "the connection to the 'why' behind what we [as educators] do." He shared, "Knowing that, as we connect with children, we support the relationships we have with them, and that there's a real connection to brain development and why that's important."



Ron Mohl

One attendee from the keynote said they "really enjoyed how open and understanding [Mohl] was, besides demonstrating lots of knowledge on the subject."

Mohl also hopes attendees of his featured session take away that educators are a partner to a child's play. "So once we [educators] set them [children] up for success, we can then be present during their play through being a



Pebbles Lucas

partner, and not just feel like we have to only lead their play or guide it, but to also have a back and forth that naturally occurs when we're present in their play," he said.

An attendee from the Reggio learning thread shared, "I was absolutely speechless. The information [of the presenter's] video experiences have been life-changing for me, personally and professionally."

Another attendee of the A.S.K. Conference is Pebbles Lucas, Director of First Chronicles Daycare Center in Durham, N.C., and winner of the ASK Conference Early Registration drawing, a \$50 Lakeshore® gift card.

Lucas attended the Applying an *Anti-Racism Framework in Pre-K* workshop led by Dr. Ronda Taylor Bullock and sponsored by Durham PreK. She said, "I learned about the importance of

looking through a racial equity lens when you are engaging in conversation about race and racism. Also, I enjoyed the break out sessions with my peers in early childhood education. It was an awesome experience to help teachers walk through racism experiences."

Lucas has attended the A.S.K. Conference for the past six years. "The 2021 A.S.K. Conference was phenomenal! The highlights of the A.S.K. Conference for me are having an opportunity to meet presenters, visit exhibitors, engage with peers and engage in high-quality presentations," she said. Lucas said this year's virtual experience was "a great opportunity to have the A.S.K. Conference in our home."

For many years, the conference was known as *Day for Day Care*. It began in 1974 as a community fair sponsored by the Orange County Child Care Coalition. In 1976, the first Day Care and Early Education Institute was sponsored by the Durham Day Care Council. From the combined humble beginnings of these two county-level events, the A.S.K. Conference has matured into an outstanding opportunity for educators from all over North Carolina to gain inspiration and hone their skills and knowledge around effective teaching and developmentally appropriate practice. The A.S.K. planning committee works hard to adapt the workshop content each year as research expands our knowledge about children's learning and brain development.

CCSA admires and is grateful for our early care and school-age education professionals. Despite the challenges in the past year, they showed up eager to learn, and we want to thank everyone for joining us at this year's virtual A.S.K. Conference. We hope you will join us again in 2022. 🙌

A week of virtual professional development for early educators!



Saturday, February 20, 2021 – Thursday, February 25, 2021



#KidsAreEssential

INVEST IN THEIR
FUTURES.

#KidsAreEssential

CCSA is also pleased to be part of a new national movement, [#KidsAreEssential](#). Organizations are committed to the success of children that calls on our leaders to invest in children and their families as early as possible, and address the economic, racial and health disparities that were made worse by the pandemic. Check out the [#KidsAreEssential website](#) and join us. The early childhood workforce is crucial to ensuring that our [#KidsAreEssential](#).

CCSA Launches Three-Year Strategic Plan

With a new year, CCSA has launched a new [Strategic Plan](#). As CCSA continues to grow and expand our work, it is vital to have a plan to guide us over the next three years.

CCSA's Board of Directors and Leadership staff worked with Staci Barfield of [Armstrong McGuire](#) and [Cass Wolfe](#), Chief Strategy Officer at CCSA, for several months to create the new plan. While we initially halted this work before it began in March 2020, we came to understand that there was no better time to engage in strategic thinking than during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the pandemic allowed us to reimagine how we do our work and what we need to do to support children, families and the early childhood and school age workforce.

Guided by new a mission, vision and [core values](#), CCSA renews its commitment to our work through [four goals](#), each of which have specific strategies, action steps and metrics. CCSA's staff and board will guide the plan's implementation through targeted actions and accountability measures. We invite you to continue to engage with CCSA and look forward to new and continued partnerships.

The Child Care WAGES[®] Program: A Year of Change

Child Care
WAGES[®]
Program

COVID-19 brought many changes to all of our lives, and it's had a notable impact on the early care and education field. Many teachers have chosen not to return to their classrooms due to the pandemic, some child care programs have been forced to close their doors and others are still struggling with low enrollment. We hope the opportunity for teachers to be vaccinated will bring some relief and a path forward.

[The Child Care WAGES[®] Program](#), an education-based salary supplement program created and implemented by Child Care Services Association, continues to award payments despite the pandemic. The workforce needs and deserves these payments now more than ever, and we hope to be one of the many services that helps early educators weather the COVID-19 storm.

The current fiscal year, though, has brought positive changes to the Child Care WAGES[®] Program. First, we are so happy to have added five new counties: Greene, Henderson, Lenoir, Montgomery and Richmond. Early educators in these communities can now participate in WAGES, earning supplements that reward their education and dedication.

Kelly Hart from Smart Start Partnership for Children in Henderson County said, "Smart Start Partnership for Children has long recognized the tremendous value of highly qualified early educators on our community's overall well-being. We also know that teachers in early care and education settings are drastically underpaid for the important work they do. We are thrilled to partner with CCSA to provide the WAGES Program in Henderson County to help increase compensation for early educators who are teaching our children in the most formative years of their lives and making a lifelong impact on children and families in our community."

Deborah Musika, Executive Director for the Montgomery County Partnership for Children (MCPC), said, "When the Board of Directors here at the MCPC first started talking about adding WAGES to our Smart Start funded mix of ECE workforce-focused programs, we had no idea that the actual roll-out would take place several challenging months into a global pandemic... but we are SO GLAD we have been able to provide these critical salary supplements to [more than] 20 local ECE professionals in just the first few months of our launching the program in Montgomery County, N.C."

In addition to this slate of new counties, WAGES also rolled out new income requirements, giving participating Smart Start partnerships a chance to choose from caps that were increased by \$1 at each level. Applicants must now earn at or below \$15, \$17 or \$19 per hour depending on the partnership choice. More counties have elected to use one of the higher caps, which extends eligibility to more early educators who need this additional compensation. In FY20, 78% chose one of the two higher caps as opposed to 81% in FY21.

Many partnerships are also supporting higher compensation levels for participants in their counties. Participants in at least 20 counties will receive higher award amounts as of January 2021, at least for the duration of this fiscal year.

WAGES appreciates funding support from the Smart Start partnerships and the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education. We are happy to implement these encouraging changes at a time when they are most needed.

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“Smart Start Partnership for Children has long recognized **the tremendous value of highly qualified early educators** on our community's overall well-being.

—Kelly Hart



RICH BURTON received his DBA from the University of Illinois and was a professor of Duke University's business administration in Fuqua's strategy area from 1970 until his retirement in 2013. He joined CCSA's Board of Directors in 2018 before becoming treasurer of the board. He has been a member of many other boards throughout his career and thereafter, including Senior PharmaAssist for six years and Durham Health Partners

for three years. In the 1980s and 1990s, he was on the board of Durham County Hospital Corporation, which was a county hospital before joining the Duke system, and also in the early 1980s, he was chairman of the Durham City School System Wide Advisory Board for two years.

As treasurer of CCSA's board, Burton shared the impact he's seen COVID-19 have on CCSA:

"In terms of revenue, grants and so on, we've been pretty fortunate. We had a lot of continuity in that. More recently, the gifts and endowments have grown, which have been very helpful, and we've had some special campaigns during the pandemic that have been very helpful to the organization.

"On the cost side, there have been some added expenses. One has to do with a large investment in information technology, which probably needed to be done anyway but COVID-19 moved the timeline forward. Our biggest budget item is personnel, and we've hired some new people to do new jobs, but it's not too many. We've been able to do the work of the organization with the staff and management that we have and we've also made necessary investments, ...[such] as a [new] telephone system.

"One thing is going to change. Everybody would like more face-to-face, but on the other side, it's been amazing how much we've been able to do, learn so quickly and do so well using Zoom and new information technologies. We're not going to go back to where we were before. We may still do face-to-face, but not like how we were doing before. We did things in one year that we thought might take five to 10, and that's because of the management and staff taking on the challenge and doing it.

"We need individuals who are up to par on these new information technologies and new programs could then be developed. The reason you do it is the children, and certainly their direct support, those that teach kids that need help with their education, is a very important mission of CCSA."

In his spare time, Burton said, "I'm trying to do some travel, gave up skiing a little bit ago and I'm taking a more direct interest in history than I did a few years ago. The last place I traveled was New Mexico in the summer and was caught there because of the pandemic, so we returned in January instead of August, staying there for six months instead of three."



KIMBERLY SHAW is the Founder and President of A Safe Place (ASP). She started as a family child care home in August 1997 and the business has been growing ever since. It now includes two full-time five-star, NAEYC-accredited centers in Raleigh and Garner, N.C., dedicated to providing quality child care to families that would otherwise not be able to afford it. Shaw has been on CCSA's Board

of Directors for five years now and serves on the Executive Board and Board of Directors for Wake County Smart Start. She previously served on The Early Education Coalition Board of Directors. In 2014, she received the Dorothy B. Graham Child Care Leadership Award. In 2015 and 2017, ASP received the City of Raleigh Urban

Agriculture Award. In 2017, she served as a Statewide Mentor for the Farm to Early Care and Education Initiative.

Shaw said the pandemic has affected her child care centers by "more than fifty percent reduction in on-site care and some loss of staff due to health reasons and family accommodations... Many [families] suffered financially, and we were able to support them with resources for food and connecting them with any community resources. Of course, also the fears, the emotional toll that we all experienced, the needing to be safe again... Overall, [my staff] have been a bright light and true heroes."

Shaw even tested positive for COVID-19. "I was gravely ill, losing 20 pounds in 14 days, and still have some residual health issues," she shared.

When asked what support is needed for the child care field as we recover from the pandemic, Shaw said, "I think teachers' wages and center budgets, and these are not easy solutions, but can not be postponed. Also, the benefits of being outdoors, more use of the outdoor classroom."

But Shaw is hopeful. "I believe that America will rise to this challenge and this workforce will receive the recognition and compensation that's deserved. I'm hopeful that the families of the neediest children will receive the services and high-quality child care, that the time at the center would be whimsical, full of wonder and

exploration. I'm hopeful that every parent, the household would be safe and full of joy, and when it's not, every resource would be there to turn it around."

Shaw is a grandma to 18-month-old Tiana Olivia who calls her "Nana," and likes to travel, garden, dance and decorate in her spare time. 

—Kimberly Shaw

Highlight:
Meet CCSA's Board

Carolina Seminar Series: “Dual Impact of COVID-19 and Systemic Racism and Inequity on Children’s Developmental Trajectories in the Early Years: Interdisciplinary Conversations and Development of a Research-Policy Agenda”

Linda Chappel, Ph.D., Senior Vice President of Triangle Area Child Care Resource and Referral Services at Child Care Services Association, was invited by the University of North Carolina to be the discussant for the Carolina Seminar Series for a panel February 5, 2021, featuring NC Division of Child Development and Early Education Director [Ariel Ford](#) as the main speaker.

This seminar convened with scientists and policymakers around the topic of “Dual Impact of COVID-19 and Systemic Racism and Inequity on Children’s Developmental Trajectories in the Early Years: Interdisciplinary Conversations and Development of a Research-Policy Agenda.”

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Black and African-American communities relative to Caucasian groups. In our own backyard, 11.8% of Orange County is Black or African-American (AA), yet 37% of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Orange County were Black or AA. This disproportionate effect of COVID-19 is likely to affect many facets of child development during the critical early period of birth-age 8, exacerbating existing health, education and economic disparities.

COVID-19 has significantly affected the social emotional well-being of children through first- and second-hand trauma for themselves and their families, households and communities related to the pandemic. This dire scenario of disproportionate incidences of COVID-19 cases in minority communities has particular relevance for children from disadvantaged households and communities, who already struggle to advance academically and socially because they are “at-risk” due to disadvantaged conditions that are further exacerbated by food insecurity, poorly resourced school systems, maltreatment and community violence, for example. These conditions adversely impair brain function and other aspects of development.

The Carolina Seminar Series is a series of informative lectures that bring together scientists and child advocates across disciplines is needed to build a bidirectional translational bridge between research and public policy. These conversations have the potential to improve the lives of children and families within North Carolina, as well as affect research and policy beyond our borders. 



Introducing Leading the Way: An Early Childhood Leadership Academy

In 2020, the [North Carolina Infant Toddler Quality Enhancement Project \(NC ITQEP\)](#) staff attended training presented by Jill Bella and Barbara Volpe from the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership. The week-long sessions allowed the 21 statewide Infant Toddler Specialists and four Babies First NC Infant Toddler Specialists to receive training on the Director’s Toolbox Management series.

After the training, the education manager and three other specialists formed a workgroup. They began brainstorming ways to use the Director’s Toolbox materials to help early childhood administrators improve their leadership skills. Too often, the infant toddler specialists encounter administrators promoted from

NC Infant-Toddler Quality Enhancement Project

classroom teacher to administrator because they have the required education and credentials for the position;

however, they lack the skills to be an effective leader. With this in mind, and understanding that the administrator’s role is a highly demanding job that many center directors find gratifying and welcome support, NC ITQEP staff decided to develop the Leading the Way: An Early Childhood Leadership Academy.

The Leadership Academy’s goal is to help novice child care administrators grow in their leadership roles. Through professional development and coaching, each administrator will develop the essential skills and awareness needed to become a valued leader in early care and education. Attendees will explore an array of topics researched and developed from the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership. They will make self-discoveries about their leadership style and sharpen their leadership skills by engaging in thought-provoking exercises during professional development events and coaching sessions with experienced infant toddler specialists. We hope to share this exciting venture with interested child care administrators later this year. 

Ring, Ring, Ring, CLASS[®] is in session at CCSA!

What CLASS are we referring to? CLASS[®] stands for Classroom Assessment Scoring System created by Teachstone[®] out of Virginia where they provide research-based, reliable professional development programs, certifications and trainings. CLASS[®] helps teachers create a secure, respectful, supportive classrooms for learning and exploration for infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers and elementary, middle and high schoolers.

The technical assistance (TA) department at CCSA is an authorized Teachstone[®] affiliate agency and uses many of the tools offered by Teachstone[®] such as infant/toddler/preschoolers measures, Coaching with myTeachstone[®] and CLASS[®] Group Coaching as resources in our TA services. Our TA specialists are certified trainers and CLASS[®] observers.

What is CLASS[®] Group Coaching (MMCI)? It's often referred to as Making the Most of Classroom Interactions until the recent name change to CLASS[®] Group Coaching. It is designed to support teachers' understanding of what effective interactions are and why they matter. Teachers attend a 12 session course to learn strategies that will enhance their teaching practices. The domains and dimensions covered in the course depend on the age of the children they are teaching. TA specialists lead these sessions and then spend time observing and coaching the teachers as they implement the strategies covered in the course. This combination of professional development, observation and coaching provides teachers with the resources needed to learn, reflect and implement best practices in their teaching.

We are currently hosting four MMCI group sessions with amazing teachers who are learning alongside their peers in small group-coaching environments. When the TAs are coaching the teachers, they use a parallel process. The parallel process shows teachers that the TA/coach is:

- building a warm, supportive relationship,
- demonstrating respect for their perspectives by being flexible and having a genuine interest in their processing of learning, while
- encouraging them to problem solve and try new suggested strategies and give feedback that encourages teachers' efforts and expands their skills just as the teacher does with children.

Kamika Henderson, one of CCSA's TA specialists linking MMCI and coaching to the four cohorts of teachers, shared, "I have noticed that MMCI has had a great impact on how I set up my coaching for TA visits. For teachers who are currently attending MMCI training, whichever dimension we are focusing on will be part of our focus for our TA coaching session. After teachers have identified one or two strengths to build on, I follow-up with them and we discuss those challenges or barriers they have experienced and identify ways to overcome them.

"In results, teachers are becoming more aware of their social interactions with their students, intentional with their practices and open to building on their strengths. In addition, I am able to share with the directors what we are focusing on for TA coaching. Most of the directors I work with have a CLASS[®] Pre-K Observer certification, so they are aware of that shared language I am using with teachers as it relates to CLASS[®], which has been very helpful. I have noticed that some directors are becoming more interested in what I am working on with teachers and wanting to know how teachers' social interactions are improving."

In these uncertain times interactions between teachers and children are critical in helping children learn and feel comfortable and confident in the classroom. [Read more](#) about what other technical assistances specialists from CCSA, who are linking MMCI and coaching to our four cohorts of teachers, have shared. 



T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] National Center Symposium

Highlights and Special Events

OPENING WELCOME AND KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Tuesday, April 27, 10:00 a.m.—11:15 a.m. EDT



We kick off the symposium with a welcome and roll call/recognition of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ state programs and staff. This year we are very pleased to welcome **Dr. Calvin Moore Jr.**, CEO of the Council for Professional Recognition (CDA), who will present

Exploring and Ensuring Equitable Pathways Leading to a Diverse, Well-Compensated and Professional Early Childhood Workforce.

PLENARY SESSION

Wednesday, April 28, 11:45 a.m.—12:45 p.m. EDT

Following a review of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] and Child Care WAGE\$[®] Program highlights from the past year, we welcome **Marica Cox-Mitchell**, Director of Early Learning, Bainum Family Foundation, who will discuss *Reimagining Child Care Means Centering Equity.*

CLOSING ROUNDTABLE CONVERSATION

Thursday, April 29, 2:00 p.m.—3:15 p.m. EDT

A panel of funders will join us at the closing session to discuss, *From the Funders' Perspective: Making the Case for Early Childhood Workforce Investment.* The panel includes **Sara Slaughter**, Executive Director, W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation; **Ariel Ford**, Director, Division of Child Development and Early Learning, NC; and **Rachel Spector**, Associate Director of Programs, The Children's Trust. The panel will be facilitated by **Albert Wat**, Senior Policy Director, Alliance for Early Success.

CLOSING SPECIAL GUEST

At the end of the Closing Roundtable Discussion, we will welcome **Katie Hamm**, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood



Development and Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD), who will say hello and share some top priorities of the Administration. Before joining the Administration for Children and Families at HHS in February 2021, she was the Vice President for Early Childhood Policy at the Center for American Progress, where she oversaw the organization's early childhood program to advance child care, preschool, Head Start and home visiting investment.

[Learn more and register here.](#) 

Durham PreK Now Receiving 2021-22 Applications

We are excited to share the 2021-2022 Durham universal pre-K application with you! This year, Durham PreK has transitioned to an online application tool through Survey Monkey Apply. This [online application](#) will allow families to apply safely from home and increase collaboration between the pre-K partners. Read below for more information on eligibility and the online application.

What is Durham PreK?

Durham PreK is Durham's local investment in high-quality pre-K experiences for all children in Durham County. Durham PreK supports high-quality learning environments by ensuring teachers have Birth-Kindergarten licenses, paying all teachers on the Durham Public School Teacher Salary Schedule and weekly technical assistance.

This application includes Durham Public Schools Title I classrooms, Head Start classrooms and classrooms in community-based child care centers funded by NC Pre-K and Durham PreK. You can find a full list of schools included in the universal application at Durham PreK's [Site Locations webpage](#).

Durham PreK's website has many other resources for families, teachers and community members!

■ [Why Pre-K?](#)

This page provides parents with more information about the quality components found in Durham PreK, what to expect from a typical pre-K day and an informational video and infographic about Durham PreK and the application process.

■ [Community Calendar](#)

The calendar includes events hosted by Durham PreK and

pre-K partners for teachers and families. Other agencies in Durham are also welcome to [submit family-centered events](#) for us to include on the community calendar.

■ [Racial Equity in Early Childhood Education](#)

This page displays Durham's commitment to equity in early education, provides online resources for learning about racial equity within and outside of early childhood and highlights some local organizations that are working toward equity.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR DURHAM PREK?

All children living in Durham County who will turn 4 years old by August 31, 2021, are eligible to apply. Many families will qualify to attend for free! Families with annual household incomes below

400% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) will have no monthly parent fee, and families with incomes at or above 400% FPL will pay a monthly parent fee on a [sliding scale](#).

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply, visit Durham PreK's [Enrollment webpage](#) for the steps to apply and to find the online application. Families can also call 1-833-773-5338 to speak with the Bilingual Pre-K Information Desk Counselor.

If a family would like to complete the application with an application counselor, they can schedule a **virtual application appointment** by calling 1-833-773-5338 or emailing prek@childcareservices.org. Appointments are always available in English and Spanish, and can be made available in other languages upon request.

We are excited to hear from you! 



March 14-20 is CACFP Week!

What is CACFP Week?

CACFP Week is a national education and information campaign sponsored annually the third week of March by the National CACFP Sponsors Association. The campaign is designed to raise awareness of how the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) works to combat hunger. The CACFP brings healthy foods to tables across the country for children in child care centers, homes and afterschool programs as well as adults in day care. Learn more [here](#). 

March is National Nutrition Month®

March is National Nutrition Month®, and this year's theme is *Personalize Your Plate*. Along with the new [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025](#), there are tools to help everyone make the best choices for every stage of life, from infancy through senior years. *Personalize Your Plate* builds on the My Plate meal pattern by encouraging Americans to honor their own preferences, goals, culture, lifestyle and budget while optimizing nutrients in meals. Starting with My Plate makes it easy: two quarters (half) of your plate is fruits and vegetables and the other quarters are whole grains and a variety of mostly lean proteins. Learn more about [My Plate](#).

Nutrition Month's *Personalize Your Plate* promotes creating nutritious meals to meet cultural and personal food preferences. "America is a cultural melting pot, so you can't expect everyone's food choices to look the same," said registered dietitian nutritionist Su-Nui Escobar, a national spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "Eating is meant to be a joyful experience. As supermarkets increasingly diversify their shelves to meet the needs of their customers, it's becoming easier to create nutritious meals that align with a variety of cultural preferences."

Many Americans have spent more time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, cooking more for themselves and, for some, cooking for the first time. Some ventured into new projects like sourdough bread baking and some revisited family and childhood favorites for comfort during difficult times. This is a great starting point for a variety of possibilities and tools to use throughout the year. Whether cooking at home or patronizing your favorite restaurants for takeout, you can build plates to maximize nutrition.

Cooking at home gives you more control over your food choices and more control of your budget and time. Being creative with meal planning and cooking makes eating healthy more exciting and offers a chance to save money while reducing food waste. Some tips to follow:

1. Plan meals with what you already have on hand.
2. Get creative with leftovers by using them in sandwiches and wraps or salads, or freezing for a convenient meal at another time.
3. Make your own healthy snacks by buying larger containers of items such as yogurt or cottage cheese to make your own parfaits, enjoy whole fresh fruits, mix up your own trail mix and air pop your own popcorn.
4. Look for sales in your area and plan a meal around some featured ingredients or stock up on non-perishable staples to use another time.
5. Shop in season. This can happen at the grocery store or a farmer's market. Buying foods in season gives you the best quality and often the best prices.
6. Start a garden with some of your favorite vegetables or try something new that grows where you live. Containers work for many things like tomatoes, peppers, carrots, radishes and herbs if you do not have a lot of space. The whole family can join in and enjoy the harvest.
7. Experiment with plant based meals. Meatless meals are budget friendly, and many recipes work without meat. Vegetables, beans and lentils are all good and healthy substitutes. Try one meatless meal per week.

During National Nutrition Month®, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics encourages everyone to make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits they can follow all year long. "Variety is the spice of life and that's how people should view their meals," Escobar said. Spice up your menus with the foods and flavors you enjoy and add new flavors to spark excitement in your cooking. "Developing healthful eating habits does not require drastic lifestyle changes." 🍴



CCSA Interns and Volunteer Make a Positive Impact During the Pandemic

At CCSA, we lead efforts to strengthen accessible and affordable quality early care and education by providing supports for families, communities and the workforce. Since families, communities and the workforce have struggled during the pandemic, we opened our doors looking for fresh ideas and new ways to strengthen CCSA's support.

We often recruit volunteers and hire interns from surrounding colleges, universities and high schools to help drive our goals, better understand our communities and support future leaders. Due to COVID-19, the opportunity to work remotely allowed two interns and one volunteer from across North Carolina to join us this spring and the previous fall semesters.



KATIE BRYANT
CCSA COVID-19
Relief Fund
Volunteer

Katie Bryant, a junior at J.D. Clement Early College High School in Durham, N.C., has been volunteering

with us since September 2020. "I chose to volunteer with CCSA because I feel that equal access to early care and education is an important foundation towards improving society," Katie said.

Katie analyzes the results of the CCSA COVID-19 Relief Fund Phase II and organizes the data into charts. With her help, we are better able to share the many stories of the child care programs that applied in Phase II and relay those stories to our funders.

"From volunteering with CCSA, I learned how the money from the CCSA COVID-19

Relief Fund was distributed, the common needs from the child care providers and the communities who most needed help from the CCSA fund," she said.



DANTE SPADO
Communications
Intern

From Charlotte, N.C., Dante Spado joins us remotely this spring as our communications intern. He is a senior majoring

in Advertising and Public Relations at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Dante has seen a direct impact of the pandemic on our communities. "As a senior at UNC, I've had four years to fall more and more in love with Chapel Hill. The way the pandemic has affected things, such as all of our classes being held online, really was taking a toll on me. It was sad to see businesses I love in the Chapel Hill area struggle. So, when I learned about ... CCSA [last fall], it seemed like the perfect opportunity to both help an organization based in North Carolina and the children, families and educators that have been affected by the pandemic."

He shared, "The passion I have for helping children succeed and the desire I have to make a positive impact during the pandemic, combined with the skills I've learned from the UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media, [have helped me] ... share the stories of educators in North Carolina, in addition to spreading awareness about everything CCSA has to offer to those who need it, especially during these difficult times."



JENNA SETTLAGE
Durham PreK Intern

Our other intern for this spring is Jenna Settlage, a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill from Raleigh, N.C., working with our Durham PreK program.

She is double majoring in human development and family studies (HDFS) and psychology with a minor in education.

When asked why she applied for this internship, she said, "...because I am passionate about early childhood education (ECE) and assisting families with young children. I understand the importance of high-quality preschool and pre-K, especially as kindergarten standards have become more rigorous. I believe universal early childhood education is a great way to promote equity and level the playing field for children who may not otherwise have access to high-quality care."

While attending university classes and interning with Durham PreK, Jenna is also a postpartum doula. "...started supporting my first client a few weeks ago!" she said. "I heard about postpartum doulas in one of my [university] classes and almost immediately signed up for a workshop. It involves supporting families after they've brought their new baby home and some baby care, both of which I love."

You can read more about Katie, Dante and Jenna [here](#).

CCSA is fortunate to have such dedicated and passionate interns and volunteers working with us as they contribute a great deal to CCSA's work. If you are interested in interning or volunteering with CCSA, please [contact us](#) today. 

“I believe universal early childhood education is a great way to **promote equity and level the playing field** for children who may not otherwise have access to high-quality care.

—Jenna Settlage, Durham PreK Intern

Stay in the know and follow CCSA





NORTH CAROLINA NEWS

Vaccines Work!

from NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center

Below is information regarding vaccines safety. Please share these points with those who are worried about getting vaccinated.

- **Vaccines prevent disease through immunity.**

Immunity is the ability of the body to defend itself from disease. Vaccines imitate the germs that cause disease. The body then creates a defense against the disease. If a person is then exposed to that disease, the body knows how to fight them off.

- **Vaccines work.**

Vaccines are more than **90% effective** in fighting disease. If a vaccinated person does get the disease, symptoms are usually less serious than in someone

who was not vaccinated. It is estimated vaccines save as many as three million lives in the United States each year.

- **Vaccines are safe.**

Every year millions of people receive vaccines with no serious side effects. Vaccines are safer than the disease they prevent. They do not weaken the immune system, cause a person to get that illness, or have any link to autism.

- **Vaccines are tested.**

Before a vaccine can be given, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) puts them through an extremely thorough review process. The FDA does not approve a vaccine unless it is proven safe and effective.

- **Side effects are often mild.**

The most common side effects are soreness where the shot is given and a slight increase in temperature. These effects are often mild and go away in about a day. About one in a million people have a serious reaction. However, vaccines are given by professionals trained to treat these reactions.

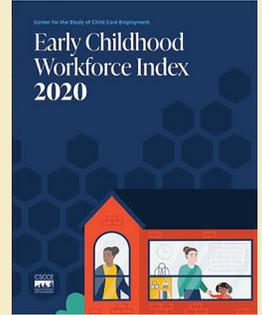
- **Vaccines protect the community.**

Vaccines help the people who get them and those around them. These include elderly, infants, or those who are not able to receive vaccines due to other illnesses. When enough people are vaccinated, the disease is no longer able to spread.

NATIONAL NEWS

The Early Childhood Workforce Index

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment just published the third edition of its **annual index** that describes early childhood employment conditions and policies on a state-by-state basis. This year's edition includes an interactive state map, a spotlight on state responses to COVID-19, policy recommendations and an advocacy toolkit.



N.C. early educators are seven times more likely to live in poverty than K-8 teachers, report finds by Liz Bell, Education NC.

The poverty rate for early educators in North Carolina is 17.6%, compared with 10.6% of N.C. workers in general and 2.4% of K-8 teachers, according to a new report from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD HOMELESSNESS NEWS

Preschool Development Grant Tackles Early Childhood Homelessness



Homelessness is a systemic problem, often affecting people of color and families with young children, and in many cases with roots in institutional racism. Additionally, many shelters were not designed to serve families and are not grounded in developmental best practices for young children. With a focus on providing access to high quality early childhood education and other services for young children experiencing homelessness, North Carolina's Preschool Development Grant will pilot the use of the revised and validated **Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters**. The pilot, led by **Partners for Impact**, will guide participating shelters' efforts to create environments, policies and practices that support children's development and help ameliorate the traumatic experiences of being uprooted and living in temporary housing.

This work is also designed to create community connections between shelter staff and local early childhood leaders and programs, so collaboration and referrals can grow. This ensures that parents of infants, toddlers and preschoolers experiencing homelessness receive early childhood supports to promote their children's wellness and school readiness and are connected to necessary resources, including high-quality child care. This work ties to the NC Early Childhood Action Plan (ECAP), Goal 4: Safe and Secure Housing.

Partners for Impact consultants have close to a century of combined experience working directly and indirectly with a wide variety of human services agencies and the systems in which they are embedded. Three of the team members have been directly responsible for running family shelters; two of the team members have specific experience in early childhood environments and systems as well. Through this work, they have gained an understanding of the complex service systems and the challenges families with children face when they are homeless.



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Transforming Child Care: Cross-Community Voices to Inform Change

Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA) released [Transforming Child Care: Cross-Community Voices to Inform Change](#). This paper reflects information gained during five fall roundtables with



both newly-engaged and long-time child care stakeholders, as well as from discussions with CCAoA's membership on the roles they can fulfill in a re-imagined child

care system. These roundtables were convened to hear the lived experiences of parents, providers, employers and child care resource and referral agencies, as well as to consider necessary changes to the system with CCAoA's national partners.



Did you miss The Daily Show with Trevor Noah?

On February 3, Trevor Noah, host of The Daily Show, presented a 10-minute segment on the child care crisis in this country. It is not to be missed!

[Watch Here.](#)



Investing in the Early Care and Education Workforce

By Michelle Maier

MDRC highlights both the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship® and Child Care WAGES® programs across the country in its "Ideas and Evidence 2021" briefs.

High-quality, stable early care and education can have [long-lasting benefits](#) for both children and society.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reaffirmed the importance of the role early educators play as an essential source of support that anchors our communities. It also has exposed the underlying fragility and economic vulnerability of our early care and education workforce.

Read the brief [here](#).

Early Care and Education Providers: Taking Advantage of the New Small Business Administration Loan and Grant Programs

The following resources have been compiled for early care and education programs in centers, family child care homes and school-age care settings to ensure that information about the COVID-19 federal financial

support for small business is accessible.

Included are recordings of webinars that provide an overview of the business resources in the [Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021](#) (CRRSA), enacted December 27, 2020. CRRSA appropriates funds to help small businesses, including minority-owned businesses and non-profit organizations, recover from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic through the continuation of an improved version of the [Payroll Protection Program \(PPP\)](#), [Economic Injury Disaster Loans \(EIDL\)](#) and other supports.

There is a wealth of information you can find [here](#).

Make Every Bite Count: USDA, HHS Release Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025

Nutrition in America took a major step forward on December 29, 2020, with the publication of Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. Jointly published by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services every five years, the guidelines provide science-based recommendations designed to foster healthy dietary patterns for Americans of all ages – from birth through older adults. Importantly, this edition expands the guidance, for the first time including recommended healthy dietary patterns for infants and toddlers. Go [here](#) for the complete news release.



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Policy Drives Practice: Building the Roadmap for Staffed Family Child Care Networks

By Louise Stoney

The COVID-19 pandemic has been tremendously challenging for early care and education. The new year promises hope—we now have a vaccine and

strong national leadership—but a return to the pre-pandemic normal is unlikely. How do we reinvent early care and education in a new world? What role should home-based care

play? Opportunities Exchange believes that home-based care is essential and that policy and finance to bolster provider networks—commonly referred to as Staffed Family Child Care Networks (or SFCCN, for short)—is a foundational strategy. Read the rest of this article at [Opportunities Exchange](#).



can support child care access and ensure child care is available for children and parents.

■ [Payment Practices to Stabilize Child Care](#) shows how grants and contracts for child care subsidy payment can both support programs and increase child care quality. Grants and contracts are largely underutilized—



across all states, 92% of child care subsidy is distributed by portable certificates. While certificates support parent choice, they also can destabilize the child care market

as funding follows children who exit programs. By incorporating some grants and contracts into their child care subsidy programs, states have an opportunity to bolster the economic foundation of the child care market.

■ [Increased Payment Rates to Support Child Care](#) explores how states



used the 2018 increase of Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to increase payment rates for child care subsidy. The brief concludes that while 43 states have increased rates since 2018, significant invest-

ments are still needed to meet the true cost of providing child care.

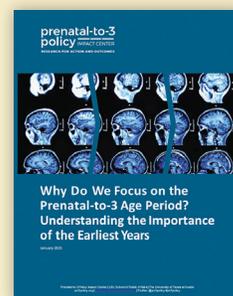


Too Young to Vote, Too Important to Ignore: 5 Things New Legislators Need to Know About Infants and Toddlers

By Jennifer Palmer, State Legislatures Magazine

As legislators head into the most unusual of sessions, here are five things to consider about the infants, toddlers and families in your states. [Read the article here.](#)

Why do we Focus on the Prenatal-to-3 Age Period?: Understanding the Importance of the Earliest Years



This research brief provides a comprehensive yet easy-to-read overview of the science of the developing child and what it means

for parents, caregivers and systems to ensure that children get off to a strong and equitable start. Read the brief [here](#).

Two New Policy Briefs from the Bipartisan Policy Center

The Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) recently shared two policy briefs focused on state policies that can support and stabilize child care businesses. During the pandemic—when the child care market is more fragile than ever—these practices

What If We Made Well-Being Our Bottom Line?

Read an [open letter to state and national policymakers](#) from Helene Stebbins, Executive Director of Alliance for Early Success, to show how other countries are aligning their values with what they value.



**EARLY CHILDHOOD
HOMELESSNESS NEWS**

**New Report
Released on
the Benefits
of Head Start
for Children
Experiencing
Housing
Insecurity**

Dr. Mary Haskett, Professor of Psychology at North Carolina State University and Director of the Family Studies Research Team recently summarized the report **“Exploring variability in social and behavioral adjustment among children in Head Start who are unstably housed,”** (by Haskett, M. E., Neal, S. C., & Norwalk, K., 2020) from the Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk in the **People’s Emergency Center’s** most recent BrainGain.



Explore the findings of this [study here.](#)

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 workforce who teach our young children to continue their own education, CCSA’s vision is that all children have equitable access to affordable, high quality early care and education to lay the foundation for successful life outcomes. 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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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.