



# CCSA Communicates

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**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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1829 E. Franklin St.  
Suite 1000  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
(919) 967-3272

1201 S. Briggs Ave.  
Suite 200  
Durham, NC 27703  
(919) 403-6950

## From the President

**H**appy Spring!  
As you read through our March 2022 newsletter, you will see that we are on the cusp of finding a “new normal.” We are not quite there yet, but there is optimism and hope for the future. Although I will start with our news that made me smile, our Triangle Child Care Awards, I also felt this month marked a time for reflection. It has been two years none of us will ever forget.

CCSA recently gathered in person for one of my favorite events, and to be candid, it was quite an emotional morning to have our first face-to-face event! Community leaders, child care providers and advocates joined together at The Friday Center on March 18 for the 2022 **Triangle Child Care Awards** to celebrate the dedicated individuals working to ensure the Triangle’s children receive the highest quality of early care and education. Representative Julie von Haefen received the CCSA Public Service Award and Peggy Ball, past Board Chair, received the Dorothy B. Graham Early Childhood Leadership Award. It is always an honor to celebrate those who guarantee our children have the best possible start in life. We also gave out a number of child care awards for the Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award. We presented two Teacher Awards and recognized our finalists and semi-finalists. It was so special to be able to recognize our early childhood teachers who went above and beyond during the pandemic and every day. Read more about the event on page 3.

Let’s look back for a minute.

In March 2020, Governor Cooper announced a stay-at-home order for North Carolina as COVID-19 came to our state and non-essential businesses were closed. Child care centers and homes were considered essential

businesses under the order and private child care centers and family child care homes in North Carolina applied to stay open as emergency providers.



Approximately 3,800 of North Carolina’s licensed child care settings had applied to remain open to meet the needs of our state as we all grappled with what this was going to mean. *(Statistics source: NC Early Education Coalition Webinar April 1, 2020)*

Also in March 2020, in response to the pandemic, CCSA established its **COVID-19 Relief**

**Fund** to support child care programs through this unprecedented challenge. We also had a **Voices of Strength and Resilience** in Early Childhood Series. Looking back, we actually had no idea what was ahead. We learned to be nimble through Zoom, Google and Teams, delivered PPP and masks, helped set up vaccination sites, and more. That was actually two years ago and the challenges were throughout. We so appreciate the leadership provided by **Dr. Mandy Cohen** and **Governor Cooper** to keep us safe.

Also in March 2020, the national COVID-19 stimulus, **the CARES Act**, was passed. As part of the CARES Act, North Carolina received more than \$100 million through expansion to the Child Care Development Block Grant for assistance with child care closures, provider wages and child care subsidy for essential workers. Let’s not forget though, that before COVID-19, child care providers were called to risk their livelihoods for the greater good. More than one-fifth of child care workers do not have health insurance, and providers are among the lowest-paid workers in the country. Child care providers with bachelor’s and master’s degrees accept a significant **wage penalty** for choosing to work in preschool education as opposed

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## From the President

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to the public schools. And, even in the problematic conversation naming essential workers as heroes, [child care providers are often left out](#).

The [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) passed in March 2021. This provided additional relief to address the continued impact of COVID-19 on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses. March 2022 was the one-year anniversary of the [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\)](#), which provided much necessary support for our states, counties, cities and especially our child care community. We thank the [Division of Child Development and Early Education \(DCDEE\)](#) for rolling out the Stabilization Grants and for having a focus on funds for our early childhood educators. You may have seen Governor Cooper highlighting the need for support across the state.

More is needed as these are **temporary funds** supporting the early childhood world today; this funding is **not sufficient** to build our child care system to be the strong support for children, families and communities, and businesses trying to hire a workforce. What happens when these funds are depleted?

We know we need to build a new high-quality workforce and support the workforce that has given their hearts and souls to young children during this pandemic. Twenty-three (23) states included a specific requirement for stabilization grants to be used to support the ECE workforce. Look for more information on the [use of ARPA funds](#) in our [blog and map](#). Child care is operating, and the ARPA funds are helping to stabilize a system that was under-funded before the pandemic. Post-pandemic, we cannot go back to where we were before the pandemic. Our educators and our programs are too important to developing young minds and supporting County and State levels of workforce engagement.

The National Collaborative of Infants & Toddlers (NCIT), composed of more than 2,500 local, state and national organizations, [released a letter](#) outlining top priorities to create a better future for infants and toddlers. Priorities in the letter included economic security for all, high-quality, affordable child care, comprehensive family support,

maternal and child health and equitable policy implementation. Child Care Services Association and its National Center was pleased to sign on to this letter and many of our partner agencies also signed on.

Coming up in April, we have the 2022 [National Center's Early Childhood Education Workforce Convening](#). We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Iheoma Iruka, Research Professor, Department of Public Policy, Frank Porter Graham Institute, UNC-Chapel Hill, Founding Director, [Equity Research Action Coalition](#) and Dr. Shantel Meek, Founding Director, [The Children's Equity Project](#), Arizona State University, as our keynote presenters. We have a [Funders Panel](#) and a closing [Keynote](#) as well, and we look forward to sharing key take away items from this Convening! This event brings together professionals from across the country working on advocacy, policy, funding, strategy development and systems building focused on the early childhood workforce. I look forward to hearing about new strategies being embraced across the country.

Last year I talked about my optimism that 2021 would bring improved circumstances. I knew it would be a year of big changes and continued challenges as we managed the pandemic and addressed its inequitable economic damage. We have learned so much and there is so much more ahead. I remain optimistic. Together, we can build an early childhood system for the future.

As I close this message, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the new challenges for children and families. Once again, the world is witnessing the destructive impact of war on children and families. Our hearts and prayers are with Ukraine. 🇺🇦

*My best,  
Marsha Basloe*

**P.S.** I am also thrilled to say that for the second straight year, CCSA has received the Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar®. You can learn more about it below left.

## For the second straight year, CCSA receives a Platinum Seal of Transparency

In 2022, for the second straight year, CCSA is honored to receive a Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level of recognition from GuideStar®. GuideStar® analyzes and lists robust data on millions of nonprofits allowing potential donors and funders to make educated decisions in their charitable giving. GuideStar® Seals of Transparency indicate that a nonprofit has provided key information to its GuideStar® profile, showing a commitment to transparency. You can view CCSA's GuideStar® profile [here](#). Learn more about CCSA [here](#). 🇺🇦



# Get to Know the 2022 Winners of the Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award

By Logan Jackson, CCSA DevCom Associate

On Friday, March 18, 2022, CCSA recognized the impact of early childhood educators, public servants and advocates on young children and their families at the 2022 Triangle Child Care Awards in Chapel Hill, N.C.

This year was unlike others as we recognized three individuals as early childhood champions and received 13 nominations for the Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award, more than we have received in the recent past. This shows our teachers deserve more as they have done so much more these past two years since the pandemic, working directly with young children every day to create safe, nurturing and effective learning environments.

The Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award was created in the 1980s to recognize Bridgers and her dedication to and advocacy for children. Because of the unprecedented amount of nominees this year, there were two winners of the Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award, two finalists and two semi-finalists.

Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award winner LaTida Adams has been the director of A Brilliant Beginning Daycare, a family child care home, in Durham, N.C., for 23 years.



"I feel appreciated, and this [award] has helped me to understand my 'why.' It's a rewarding reward because we don't do this, or at least I don't do this, for any recognition," said Adams. "I do it because I love the children and I do understand that the first five years are the most important years. Being able to share that with the families, my community and all the advocates that were here today meant a lot to me."

"I always wanted a daycare.

In middle school, I wrote in a journal that I was going to open a daycare and name it A Brilliant Beginning after my daughter, Brylliant," said Adams. "I want to give my kids a daycare feel in a home setting, inviting them to use my house, but giving them their own space... So, I opened up a daycare and connected with Child Care Services Association. They awarded me the best support from '99 to today. They put me in the substitute program, they came over and watched the kids while I went to school."

Adams said, "Out of the 23 years, honestly, my best years and most rewarding years was 2020 to now...I want [the children] to have a normal

day...My family has been very supportive, the daycare families have been supportive. The pandemic opened up my eyes even more and showed me even more that I am living in my purpose and doing what He has called me to do, and that is serve our children and help our families, 'cause it's not just about the children, it's about the families."

Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award winner Michelle Tuttle has worked in licensed child care in North Carolina for 23 years. She is currently the owner and operator of Estes Children's Cottage, in Chapel Hill, N.C., with her mother, Cathy.



"I am very honored to receive this award. In the field of early childhood, there are rare opportunities to get recognition and so this is very important and impactful and I'm very excited about it," said Tuttle. "My journey began a long time ago. I've always had an interest in working with young children, when I was around 4 or 5 years old, [I] said I wanted to own my own child care center and I set up a center for my Cabbage Patch dolls."

"The most rewarding part is being with children and seeing their joy in learning while also continuing to cultivate mine," Tuttle said. "That is something I take from Reggio-inspired practice, that I don't know how to do everything for every child, I am constantly learning. Each new child is different, each new child is a new person, a new family and a new relationship to build. We adapt our program curriculum based on each child."

When asked about what advice she would give to others who are considering a career in early child care, Tuttle said, "The advice I would give is to follow your passion, connect with other people in the field and to continue to further your education and attend professional development opportunities. It's a challenging field but it's very rewarding."

At the ceremony, two other awards were presented. The Child Care Services Association Public Service Award was presented to N.C. Representative Julie von Haefen and the Dorothy B. Graham Early Childhood Leadership Award was presented to Peggy Ball. U.S. Congressman David Price, N.C. Representative Verla Insko and Michele Rivest were honored as early childhood champions.

"Congratulations to all our early childhood champions and award winners," said Marsha Basloe, president of CCSA.

Read the rest of on CCSA's blog [here](#).

“My family has been very supportive, the [child care] families have been supportive. The pandemic opened up my eyes even more and showed me even more that I am living in my purpose and doing what He has called me to do, and that is serve our children and help our families, **‘cause it’s not just about the children, it’s about the families.’**”

—LaTida Adams



## CCSA Offering Curbside Services at Durham Office

As our building opened to the public once again in February, we knew it would not be “back to normal” right away. With great customer service as one of our foundational principles, our child care resource and referral (CCR&R) team started to think of ways to serve all our clients in the safest, most convenient way.

Since the onset of COVID-19, curbside experiences have become the new big thing in the food and retail industries. So, we thought we would give it a try! Our outdoor station for curbside allows families to have the option to drop off documents for their scholarship or Durham PreK applications while limiting contact. With our portable consumer education and referral station, referral counselors can provide services without the client having to leave their vehicle.

Curbside is not only useful for families; child care providers can deliver attendance sheets, food program documents or Durham PreK contracts as well.

Families, providers or community partners can use our curbside service by appointment prearranged with CCSA staff or they can simply call the number on the sign when they arrive to make a request. Of course, we are still offering all of our on-site services within our building, but now our community has different options to do business with us in a way that best fits their needs. 📍

# The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Program: Moving the needle on student success for the past 30+ years

Earning a college degree is promised to be the ticket to professional and economic advancement. However, the journey toward educational opportunities often involves obstacles. While traditional approaches focused on financial support have increased access to college, they have not necessarily addressed all the challenges students face to complete educational goals.

Recently, MDRC published [How Congress Can Move the Needle on College Completion](#), a commentary advocating for evidence-based student success initiatives to broaden support. Although the federal government’s interest in implementing a multifaceted approach to student success may be new, the [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program](#) (T.E.A.C.H.), an early care and education workforce initiative, has used many of these student success strategies over the past 30+ years to help the workforce complete formal education and college degrees.

Paying for college remains a primary challenge for students, and it is even more difficult for the early care and education workforce who are already undercompensated. T.E.A.C.H. alleviates that by offering both comprehensive and capped scholarships. Federal financial aid alone does not always fully cover the rising cost of college. Also, some students take student loans because they do not qualify for grants.

T.E.A.C.H. covers a large percentage of tuition, books and course access or pays a capped amount that is adequate to cover tuition and books. Scholarship recipients also earn raises or bonuses after completing a set number of credits each year. Thus, T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients can essentially earn a debt-free education through all the supports provided. Scholarship recipients are also encouraged to seek other sources of financial aid to wrap around the scholarship support they receive.

Even when the financial worry of paying for college is removed, time and motivation are other challenges, especially for those already in the workforce. From its inception, T.E.A.C.H. has recognized this barrier and designed scholarships to provide teachers with paid release time to balance work and school. Other program incentives, such as awarding bonuses to those who progress toward a degree and a more substantial bonus upon degree attainment, help stimulate motivation.

Scholarship recipients can enroll in a variety of course formats at participating colleges, including online coursework and accelerated programs. T.E.A.C.H.’s survey research also has been instrumental in helping higher education systems better respond to students’ needs. Since scholarships are aligned with existing pathways toward formal education, students can build on their education and reach milestones on their educational journeys.

Finally, another significant difficulty some college students face is navigating the higher education system, especially first-generation students who may have little to no experience with college. College advisors often carry large caseloads and cannot always provide hands-on support to all students or fully understand the needs of working students. The entire process from application to graduation and everything in between can be overwhelming and confusing and may deter some students from continuing.

T.E.A.C.H. understands the need for one-on-one support. Therefore, scholarship recipients are assigned a scholarship counselor who is there to guide them through the scholarship process, encourage them, cheer their successes, listen to any challenges and provide information and other resources as needed. Scholarship counselors also have relationships with the early childhood departments at participating colleges and work collaboratively with them to help students succeed.

As the focus shifts to more comprehensive student support to ensure success, T.E.A.C.H. will remain a vanguard for the early care and education workforce seeking to advance their education. Through its scholarship principles and design, T.E.A.C.H. is already actively tackling the many challenges that students face as identified by The College Completion Fund.

The early care and education workforce is already very vulnerable, and advanced education is crucial to the field. In order to ensure prosperity and equity for all individuals, it is paramount that multifaceted strategies aimed at ensuring college completion remain the focus and are adequately funded. 📍



# Is a New Day on the Horizon?

The child care field is in crisis. Deep problems existed before the pandemic, particularly associated with compensation, and they have worsened. Child care programs are losing teachers and cannot offer families the care and opportunities they need. Without that, the economy cannot rebound as parents are left without the stable, quality options they need to enable their own participation in the workforce. But is a new day on the horizon?

We now have broad acknowledgement that early childhood is a critical industry, the workforce behind the workforce. In addition, that awareness is leading to investments in compensation. As an example, with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), North Carolina has provided stabilization grants to more than 4,000 child care programs, and most of those who applied for the funds chose to provide additional compensation to their staff members through an increase in pay and/or benefits or through a bonus.

The [Child Care WAGES<sup>®</sup> NC Program](#) is also receiving increased investments from participating Smart Start partnerships. February saw the WAGES<sup>®</sup> supplement budget grow. These are funds going directly to our workforce and can happen thanks to the increase in Smart Start funding from the North Carolina legislature. Partnerships are now planning for their 22-23 budget.

The Partnership for Children of Cumberland County in N.C. provided a significant increase for WAGES<sup>®</sup>, which will enable participants to get Tier Three supplements (the highest base tier payments) as of January and will allow many new applicants to receive their first supplements.

According to the Partnership's president, Mary Sonnenberg, "The Partnership for Children of Cumberland County has a long history of

“At the same time, it has never been more evident that **child care is an essential service** so that the rest of the workforce can indeed go to work every day.

—Mary Sonnenberg, President,  
Partnership for Children of Cumberland County in N.C.

supporting WAGES<sup>®</sup> for providers in our county. We have systematically increased the tier level we have paid over the last few years in order to support teachers and directors with carry-forward funds and new Smart Start allocations. It has become even more apparent how undercompensated those in the field are during the pandemic.

“At the same time, it has never been more evident that child care is an essential service so that the rest of the workforce can indeed go to work every day. While there needs to be systemic change on how we

compensate the early care and education workforce, WAGES<sup>®</sup> and AWARD<sup>®</sup> provide critical tools for recruitment and retention of the current workforce. It is a key part of ensuring that we have highly qualified staff teaching in our programs while at the same time supporting continuity of care for our youngest children. Supporting the early care and education workforce is critical to the economic vitality of our community, our state and our nation.”

[Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD<sup>®</sup>](#) also currently has funds for new applicants and is providing much-needed income to a group of educators who are typically paid less than their preschool counterparts. To date this year, 1,161 teachers and family child care providers working with children birth through 2 have received an average six-month supplement of \$1,276.

North Carolina isn't the only state getting in on the action. Iowa, a long time WAGES<sup>®</sup>-licensed state, received \$7 million in COVID-19 relief funds to take their previously county-funded program statewide. Nebraska is hopeful that they will be equally successful in obtaining funding to grow their WAGES<sup>®</sup> program.

Many states have consulted with Child Care Services Association about getting compensation into the hands of the early childhood education workforce. CCSA is offering [Step Up to WAGES<sup>®</sup>](#), a more streamlined opportunity for states to use their ARPA funds on WAGES<sup>®</sup>-based supplements, and several states are considering this as an option. Arkansas has already been awarded more than \$20 million for *Step Up to WAGES<sup>®</sup>* and has begun training to get their program up and running in the coming months.

Executive Director Paul Lazenby said, "Arkansas Early Childhood Association is thrilled with the opportunity to both expand our T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood<sup>®</sup> Scholarship Program and initiate *Step Up to WAGES<sup>®</sup>* at that same time. Our state has been needing an opportunity like this for so long. Sixty-two percent of the early childhood workforce has less than a college degree in any field. And our early childhood teachers who are not employed by the public schools have an average pay of less than \$12 per hour.

“With the Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education supporting the use of \$40 million from the American Rescue Plan Act for T.E.A.C.H. and WAGES<sup>®</sup>, Arkansas can address head on these systemic issues that hinder our state's ability to expand quality care. It is an unprecedented opportunity to alter child and family outcomes for decades to come.”

This exciting movement in early childhood compensation should not stop until we find a permanent solution to ensure this valuable workforce is paid what it deserves, and CCSA is proud to offer strategies that can be part of that effort. <#>



## Step Up to WAGES<sup>®</sup>

A demonstration program of  
Child Care Services Association

Child Care  
**WAGES<sup>®</sup>**  
Program

Infant-Toddler Educator  
**AWARD<sup>®</sup>**

Stay in the know and follow CCSA



# ☼ Updates on and Successes with NITTO

## WHAT IS THE NEW INFANT TODDLER TEACHER ORIENTATION (NITTO)?

The FREE, fully online, self-paced course is offered through NC DCDEE's Moodle platform and 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. Participants receive **14 contact credit hours** upon completion. The 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.

## HOW DO WE KNOW IT WORKS?

The course content was written by the management team of the Infant Toddler Quality Enhancement Project (ITQEP) in 2019. To receive informed feedback on course delivery, topics, activities and assignments, it was first piloted by statewide seasoned early childhood education administrators, technical assistants and college course instructors in 2019. Using the valuable feedback, ITQEP updated NITTO content and implemented another pilot with both experienced and new infant and toddler educators in early 2020.

Comprehensive course evaluations helped the ITQEP team to build on perceived course strengths and address any material that was unclear, and the course was updated a final time before its official public launch. By December 2020, the course was made available for self-enrollment through NC DCDEE's Moodle. The ITQEP team continues



to collect feedback from course participants, adding resources and updating videos regularly. In February of 2022, 575 participants across 76 N.C. counties have completed the training.

## WHAT ARE PARTICIPANTS SAYING?

- "I learned about emotional and brain development and about guiding children through their rough moments. This is invaluable to me!"
- "[NITTO taught me] to work on my composure when dealing with the students and build good relationships with them."
- "The design and set up of any classroom is essential to how the children are able to learn and focus."
- "I learned that my health and well-being also matters."

Learn more about NITTO [here](#). 📺



## Durham PreK 2021-2022 School Year Winter Highlights

**2022** is already off to an exciting start! The staff at Child Care Services Association, Durham's Partnership for Children, Families and Communities Rising, Inc., and Durham Public



Schools have been working tirelessly to prepare for the 2022-2023 application cycle. We have also been working on our current NC Pre-K and Durham PreK site selection process. Thankfully, we have some new team members on board!

Read more: <https://www.durhamprek.org/durham-prek-spotlight-february-2022/> 📺



## Early Childhood Homelessness— a Head Start Referral App

North Carolina is stepping forward again. The North Carolina Homeless Education Program (NCHEP) is dedicated to ensuring that all children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to the public education to which they are entitled under the federal McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act. NCHEP, McKinney-Vento homeless education liaisons, along with staff of NC's Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs, have been introduced to and received training on a referral app designed to connect young children to HS/EHS programs.

As part of a pilot program, North Carolina and Pennsylvania began using the app statewide this school year. The purpose of the app is to provide a system for McKinney-Vento liaisons to connect families experiencing homelessness to services for their young children. The pilot's intent is to assess how the app works in communities and to gather feedback about its use and suggested improvements.

Use of the app begins with school-based homeless education liaisons. When a liaison determines that a family with whom they are working has a young child (5 and under), they use the app to refer the family to a local HS/EHS program. HS/EHS intake staff receive the referral and reach out to the family to complete an enrollment (or waiting list) application. The HS/EHS staff also enter information into the app so that the liaison can learn how the referral process was completed. In some communities, liaisons and HS/EHS staff are developing closer relationships because of the app and the ability to easily connect with each other.

Many thanks to [SchoolHouse Connection](#), the [National Head Start Association](#), the [NC Homeless Education Program](#) and the [NC Head Start Collaboration Office](#). We are excited to have North Carolina be part of the pilot. 

## Yay Babies! Homelessness Workgroup Update

Children experiencing homelessness face multiple challenges, including precarious housing arrangements, family financial difficulties and deep protracted poverty, inadequate health care, potential abuse and neglect, and exposure to violence and other traumatic experiences. They are also more vulnerable to developmental delays and social emotional problems than their peers with stable housing. Infants and toddlers are particularly vulnerable to developmental delays when affected by traumatic experiences in general, and experiencing homelessness and a lack of continuity of care may increase these delays. Given the negative impact of homelessness on young children, ensuring safe, stable housing for all North Carolinian children is a primary goal in the [NC Early Childhood Action Plan \(ECAP\)](#).

Yay Babies! is developing a strategic plan for assisting the state in meeting several areas of the NC ECAP (i.e., Goal 4: Safe and Secure Housing, Goal 7: Social Emotional Well-Being and Resilience and Goal 8: Access to High Quality Early Learning).

Yay Babies! distributed a survey through the NC CCR&R Council to early childhood providers as part of the strategic planning process. Programs were invited to participate in a brief survey about their experiences as a provider of early childhood education in North Carolina. All those who completed the survey had the chance to enter their email for a gift card.

Many thanks to all who completed the survey.

Congratulations to A Child's World Learning Center in Clemmons, N.C., who received the gift card!

Yay Babies! will next be distributing a survey to the housing community.

Find additional information on homelessness or Yay Babies! [here](#) and [here](#). 





Chris Ratté

**CHRIS RATTÉ**, Assistant Treasurer on the Board of Directions for CCSA, has been a long-time servant of his community. Having graduated from East Carolina University as an Air Force ROTC cadet with an undergraduate degree in English and aerospace and computer sciences, Ratté enrolled in the United States Air Force before continuing his education and working in the private sector. He received his MBA in management and finance from the University of

North Carolina at Greensboro and a master's degree in banking from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Chris Ratté moved back to his hometown of Raleigh, North Carolina, in 2008, where he quickly got involved in the community by joining the Crabtree Rotary Club. His first involvement with CCSA was as a bank representative, a position he held from 2015 until 2019 when he joined the Board of Directors. "The more I learned about the organization, the more I became a fan, so I joined the Board," said Ratté.

When Ratté was asked if anything surprised him as a Board member versus being the banker, he said, "How deep the organization is and what it does... I had no idea the depth and breadth of what the organization did, for example subsidizing teachers' education."

As a Board member, Chris Ratté even got his current employer, F&M Bank, to invest in CCSA's mission. "Just seeing all the good things that they do and when I'm out in the business world and I hear about CCSA or I hear about folks who want to donate to a very worthwhile nonprofit, I immediately talk about CCSA and everything that they do," said Ratté. He continued, "My bank has become a big fan. My bank actually supports my Board role." Working in an industry outside of both child care and the nonprofit sector, Ratté was able to give insight into why other industries should invest in improving the field of child care. Ratté said, "The nature of how business across industries run with people having to be active and involved and not strapped down with taking care of kids. It's a very vital component and it's never been more in the spotlight than during COVID."

**DAN HUDGINS**, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of CCSA and Chair of the Board of Commissioners for the Durham Housing Authority, has long been a pillar of the community since he first moved to Durham, North Carolina, in 1977 to swerve as the Director of the Durham County Department of Social Services, which he faithfully did for 27 years. Not long after moving to Durham, in 1980, he was asked to become a member of the Board of the Durham Day Care Council led by Dorothy Graham at the time.



Dan Hudgins

"I had a professional and a personal interest in child care, especially quality child care," said Hudgins. "When I was the Department of Social Services Director, we had a contract with

the Durham Day Care Council to help parents locate quality child care. The other big part of it was improving the quality of child care."

In 1999, after recognizing the need for coordinated and consolidated efforts, the Durham Day Care Council and Day Care Services Association in Orange County merged to become Child Care Services Association. Hudgins continued his commitment to procuring high-quality child care for the community and first joined the Board of CCSA in 2003. Hudgins served CCSA's Board for

12 years until 2015 before rejoining the Board in 2018. This year will be his last year on the Board, marking 17 years of dedicated service.

Dan Hudgins is a long-time runner, first discovering his love for running when he was in the United States Army. He has run in 25 marathons, including the New York Marathon and the Boston Marathon, and he says that the Grandfather Mountain Marathon is his favorite, "because it's much more challenging, not one you run for time." Hudgins also enjoys traveling; in February 2022 he traveled to Panama with his wife and in March 2022 he traveled to Egypt and Jordan with Duke University. 🇺🇸

**Highlight:**  
**Get to Know the Board**  
*By Logan Jackson, CCSA DevCom Associate*

“The nature of how business across industries run with people having to be active and involved and not strapped down with taking care of kids. **It's a very vital component and it's never been more in the spotlight** than during COVID.

—Chris Ratté



# Meet the 2022 A.S.K. Conference Keynote Speaker, Dr. Ronda Taylor Bullock

By Logan Jackson, CCSA DevCom Associate

**M**ore than 297 early childhood educators joined CCSA February 19-22, 2022, for the second 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 and our 48th Annual A.S.K. Conference was held virtually so we're proud to have improved the structure and successfully provided the conference virtually for the second consecutive year.

Dr. Ronda Taylor Bullock, the keynote speaker at the 2022 A.S.K. Conference, is the co-founder and Lead Curator (executive director) of [we are](#) (Working to Extend Anti-Racist Education). As a former high school English teacher of 10 years, this educator works with both kids and fellow educators to promote anti-racism in schools, something she's been doing since founding we are in 2015 with her husband, Dr. Daniel Kelvin Bullock.

Dr. Taylor Bullock cites a multitude of reasons for shifting from working in schools to working to make schools and their curriculums anti-racist, including the acquittal of George Zimmerman and the murder of Mike Brown. "It was a combination of the current context that we were in and being a parent. When I started my Ph.D. program, I was a mother to a 3-year-old and a 3-month-old thinking about what type of world we are bringing these children into," said Dr. Taylor Bullock. She continued, "Around December of my fall semester, I was having racist counters back at UNC almost every day and I just felt a calling." Dr. Taylor Bullock is a three-time UNC-Chapel Hill grad, having earned her bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from the institution.

As the keynote speaker, Dr. Taylor Bullock touched on many ways that even early child care providers can work on being anti-racist in

their classrooms. "Children, even in the birth to 5 space, pay attention to race and skin color," said Dr. Taylor Bullock. She continued, "Early childhood educators can recognize that we all have biases and we need to be intentional about attending workshops and training so that we can, first of all, make our biases visible to ourselves and try to unlearn them and be very intentional."

When asked about applying anti-racist education to early childhood, Dr. Taylor Bullock said [we are](#) is working on an early childhood play-based anti-racist curriculum with other community leaders. She also said, "The school to prison pipeline starts in a pre-K space, a lot of people think it's a middle or high school thing because that's where you have school resource officers and people are more likely to be suspended. In the pre-K space, it looks like removing a child from the carpet."

When asked what she hopes early childhood providers and educators took away from her keynote speech at the A.S.K. Conference, Dr. Taylor Bullock said, "One thing to takeaway is that there is a need to support healthy racial identity development in children and that pre-K educators play a significant role in that process. I hope that they see themselves in that process and feel compelled to learn more so that they can be intentional about how they show up on behalf of their children and families, and colleagues and their school community."

Thank you to Dr. Ronda Taylor Bullock, the conference attendees and the conference sponsors, Lakeshore® Learning Materials, Discount School Supply, Durham PreK and Reggio Emilia, for helping CCSA conduct an exemplary 2022 A.S.K. Conference. One attendee said, "The conference was very informative. I enjoyed the fact that we all had the opportunity to chime in to the conference sessions and to glean information from each other's experiences and expertise." Another guest said, "I really enjoyed the conference. I looked forward to each class and I really learned a lot. I'm looking forward to the next conference in 2023!" 🙌

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—Dr. Ronda Taylor Bullock



## NATIONAL NEWS

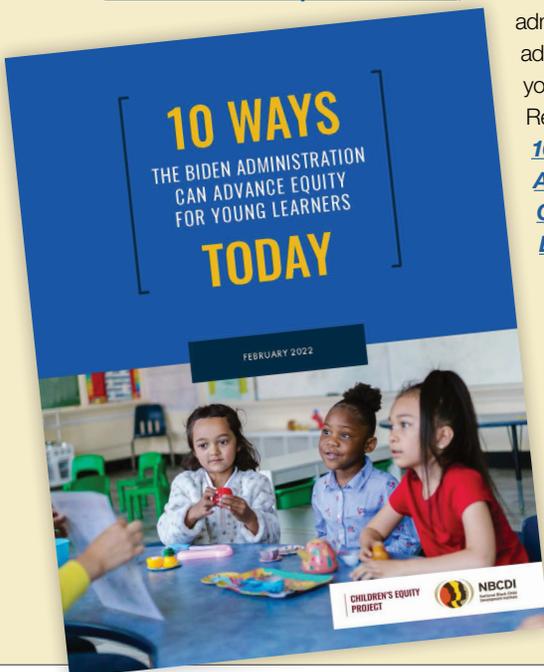
# The Economic Role of Paid Child Care in the U.S. Report Series

This report details who uses paid child care, what percent of household income is spent on child care for those families who pay for it and what characteristics are associated with families who pay for child care (e.g., maternal labor force participation, reported expenditures for child care, household income, level of education and age of children in paid care) across states.

See the Economic Role of Paid Child Care in the U.S. Report Series at <https://www.ced.org/paidchildcare>.

# 10 Ways the Biden Administration Can Advance Equity for Young Learners Today

The **Children's Equity Project**, in collaboration with the **National Black Child Development Institute**, outlined ways the Biden administration can advance equity for young learners. Released in February, **10 Ways the Biden Administration Can Advance Equity for Young Learners Today**, describes actions the executive branch can take to promote equity in early learning now, and prepare a foundation for "the possibility of a much improved, universally accessible system."



## NORTH CAROLINA NEWS

# Vice President Kamala Harris and U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh Visit Durham, N.C.

North Carolina Governor Cooper joined Vice President Kamala Harris and U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh to talk about jobs and the economy at Durham Technical Community College in N.C., in early March.



They spoke about the importance of apprenticeships, pathways to careers and economic mobility. It is why Child Care Services Association, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), ApprenticeshipNC and the NC Community College System are excited to be working together on a statewide Early Childhood Apprenticeship that will partner with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program and build the workforce pipeline.

Apprenticeships provide a unique opportunity to support skill development in the high demand field of early childhood education. Combining employment, on-the-job training, college coursework and individualized mentoring, an apprenticeship can be an opportunity to build a more stable early childhood workforce.



# Registration for the 2022 Smart Start Conference is now open!

The 2022 Smart Start Conference is once again going virtual. Save the date for the one and only Smart Start Conference held May 2-5, 2022. Learn more here: <https://na.eventscloud.com/website/31759/>



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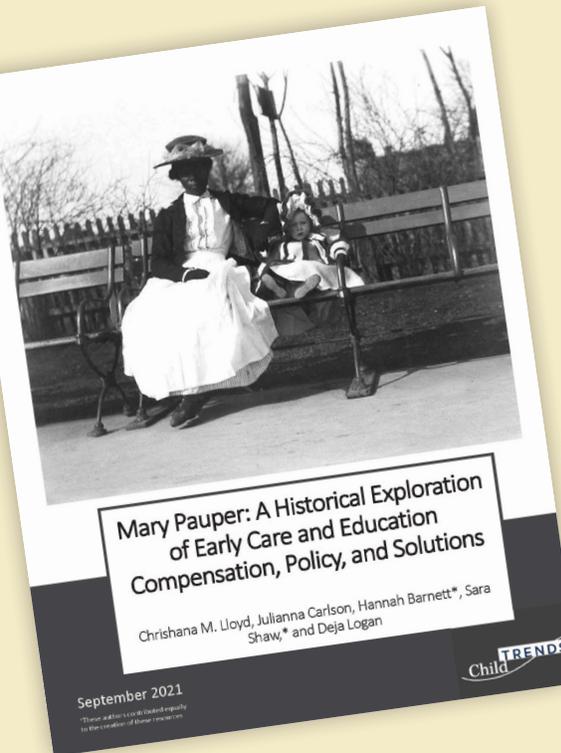


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## Mary Pauper: A Historical Exploration of Early Care and Education Compensation, Policy, and Solutions

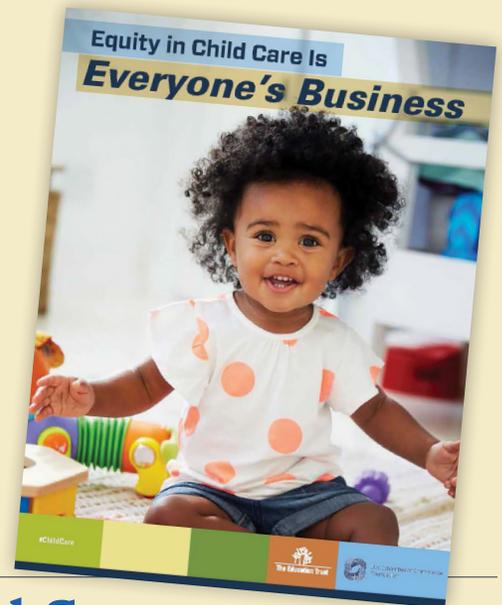
The report, *Mary Pauper: A Historical Exploration of Early Care and Education Compensation, Policy, and Solutions*, articulates a landscape analysis and a set of recommendations for policy, practice and future research to improve the professional status of early childhood educators. The intent of this work is to build a common understanding of the biggest equity issues impacting early childhood educators—historically and in the present day.

See the Child Trends report [here](#).



## Equity in Child Care is Everyone's Business

The Education Trust and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation have a new report, "[Equity in Child Care is Everyone's Business](#)," sharing insights from Black and Latina child care providers about how their work has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and how systemic racism and sexism factors into owning a child care business.



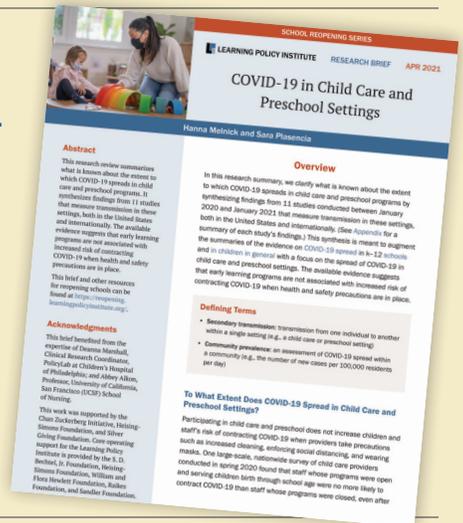
## Improving Child Care Compensation Background 2021

The purpose of this background is to provide states, communities and tribes the tactical information they need to better understand if and how they want to pursue policy levers to support early educator compensation.

Harriet Dichter and Ashley LiBetti, *Improving Child Care Compensation Background October 2021*, (The BUILD Initiative, 2021), available at <https://buildinitiative.org/resource-library/background-on-compensation-in-child-care/>

## COVID-19 in Child Care and Preschool Settings

This brief by The Learning Policy Institute examines transmission rates in child care and preschool programs, the different mitigation strategies used and how successful programs have been at limiting the spread of the disease. Researchers found that when appropriate health and safety precautions are in place, early learning programs are not associated with increased risk of contracting COVID-19.



The National Head Start Association (NHSA) mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education. [Learn more.](#)



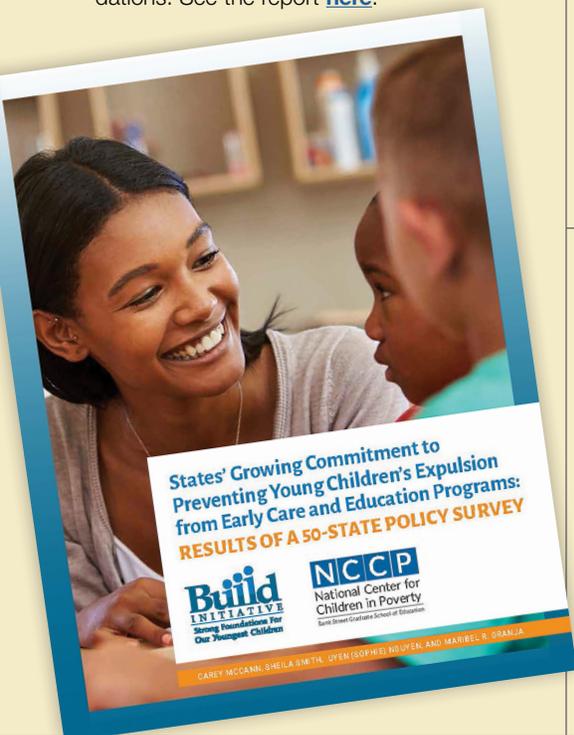
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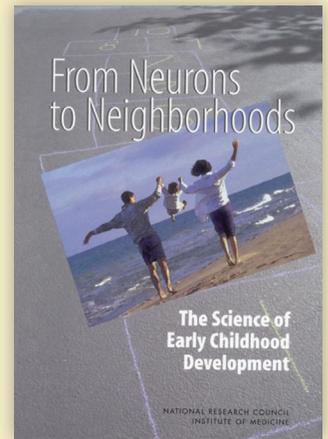
## States' Growing Commitment to Preventing Young Children's Expulsion from Early Care and Education Programs: RESULTS OF A 50-STATE POLICY SURVEY

An increasing number of states have established policies that aim to reduce or eliminate expulsion and suspension from early care and education (ECE) settings. This report features states' policies, key barriers to developing and implementing expulsion and suspension policy, provisions of supports to ECE programs to help promote children's social-emotional well-being and recommendations. See the report [here](#).

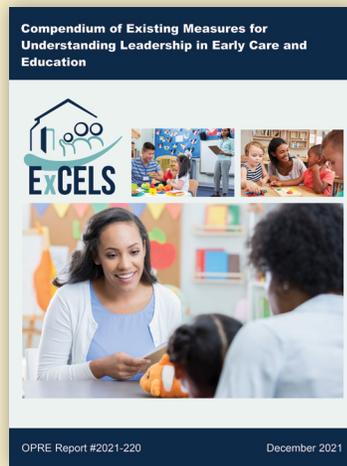


## Jack Shonkoff Calls For "ECD 2.0"

Jack Shonkoff, chair of the committee that wrote the groundbreaking report, [Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development in 2000](#), released a call to action to advance the way early childhood stakeholders engage with the world. Called "Re-Envisioning Early Childhood Policy and Practice in a World of Striking Inequality and Uncertainty," the overarching point of Shonkoff's statement is that the existing circumference of early childhood development is correct but drawn too narrowly. He offers a way to build on these foundations—[Early Childhood Development \(ECD\) 2.0](#). Shonkoff leads Harvard's Center on the Developing Child.



Source: <https://earlylearningnation.com/2022/01/beyond-the-brain-science-early-childhood-luminary-jack-shonkoff-calls-for-ecd-2-0/>



## Compendium of Existing Measures for Understanding Leadership in Early Care and Education

### OVERVIEW

Leadership is widely recognized as an essential driver of organizational performance and improvement, but little is known about its role in improving the quality of early care and education (ECE) settings, or outcomes for staff and children. Additionally, information on how to measure the key constructs associated with leadership and the activities that demonstrate leadership is lacking. The Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS) focuses on leadership within an ECE center-based setting, at the building or center level. The ExCELS project approaches leadership as a construct that defines the range of people who participate in leadership in ECE centers—who leaders are—as well as what they bring to leadership, and what they do as leaders. Leadership, defined in this way, is broader than one leader, even while a strong center leader can be an essential ingredient to effective leadership.

Download the [report here](#).

## GAO Report released February 24, 2022

House Committee Report 116-456 included a provision for GAO to review the Employer-Provided Child Care Credit.

### WHAT GAO FOUND

The Employer-Provided Child Care Credit can save employers with eligible expenses (see figure) more in taxes than using a deduction alone, and employees can exclude some child care benefits from their taxable wages. For employers, the credit can offset actual federal income tax liability. Employers may also deduct child care expenses. To avoid duplication, the total amount deductible must be reduced by amounts claimed for the credit. For employees, certain child care benefits can be excluded from their wages, up to \$5,000. If an employee's expenses exceed the exclusion limit, they may be eligible to claim the Child and Dependent Care Credit, but not for the same expenses.

[Learn more.](#)

# NC ITQEP Moving Forward with a Practice-Based Coaching Framework

**N**C Infant Toddler Quality Enhancement Project's (ITQEP) Infant Toddler Specialists (ITS) are in the process of moving their technical assistance for infant and toddler classrooms across the state to a Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) model. The PBC model will allow the team to support infant and toddler teachers and administrators more intensively and holistically.

PBC is a cyclical coaching process that is used to support education staff in using effective practices that lead to positive outcomes for children. PBC occurs within the context of a collaborative partnership between a coach (the ITS) and coachee (the teacher). The coach and coachee work closely together, both bringing unique knowledge, strengths and experiences to the coaching relationship. The components of the coaching process or cycle include:

- Planning goals and action steps for teachers to use in the classroom,
- Engaging in focused observation based on those goals and
- Reflecting on and sharing feedback about the development of these effective practices to inform the next set of action steps.

PBC builds a bridge between *learning about* practices and *using* those practices as an infant and toddler professional. When a coach

## NC Infant-Toddler Quality Enhancement Project

uses researched-based strategies to support infant and toddler

professionals, it helps those professionals use research-based practices in the child care environment. Using those research-based practices in their environment then helps infants and toddlers gain important skills that are foundational for the rest of their lives.

Since July 2021, a small pilot group of ITS have been building out a detailed protocol using resources from the [Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center](#) to outline how ITQEP will implement these PBC cycles. This protocol includes separate worksheets for goal planning, observing the classroom, sharing feedback and self-reflecting so that both the coach and coachee can discover the alignment of their



personal and professional values and hone their skills.

The core group of eight ITQEP ITS engaged in the PBC pilot— together with NC Babies First ITPS—are now in the process of building collaborative partnerships with infant and toddler teachers and administrators, and conducting pre-assessments using ITERS-R or Infant and Toddler CLASS® to get baseline data from which to gauge the PBC effort's effectiveness.

Perhaps most significantly, ITS are responding to the individual priorities, strengths and needs of infant and toddler teachers by having them complete reflective self-assessments based on ZERO TO THREE's *Critical Competencies for Infant and Toddler Educators*. These assessments ask teachers to identify which evidence-based skills and practices are most important in their work, and which they feel most confident they can achieve with the appropriate amount of ITS support.

In this way, ITS coaches are creating a structure for deep and meaningful discussions. These conversations allow ITS coaches to intentionally ground their PBC work in cultural humility, basing tailored technical assistance on what matters to their coachees, responding to their unique contexts and beliefs and examining infant and toddler teaching practices through a lens of inclusion and equity.

Learn more about NC ITQEP [here](#).

## SUPPORT CCSA

**W**hether 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

PO Box 901, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

(919) 967-3272

(919) 967-7683

[www.childcareservices.org](http://www.childcareservices.org)



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