



The foundation for future learning, health and well-being is built during early childhood. The NC Early Childhood Action Plan released on February 27, 2019 lays out a bold vision and roadmap for how the state can create better futures for our young children by 2025. Governor Cooper's budget makes critical investments toward achieving these goals to ensure North Carolina's children are healthy, safe and nurtured, and ready to succeed.

Child Care for Working Families

Child care assistance makes it possible for low-income working families to earn a living to support their children, but child care is one of the largest expenses families face. Governor Cooper's budget provides almost \$14.5 million in funding for approximately 2,300 additional child care subsidy slots.

Smart Start

Smart Start increases the quality of early care and education in every community across our state. Governor Cooper's budget increases investment in Smart Start by 10 percent, which will allow the program to expand evidence-based family strengthening and home visiting programs, as well as other early childhood initiatives.

NC Pre-K

Communities participating in the high-quality NC Pre-K early education program face barriers to expansion, including rising operating costs and stagnant reimbursement rates. The budget invests \$15.9 million in lottery receipts to help Pre-K programs build the capacity they need to serve more children while maintaining program quality.

Expanding Medicaid

As proposed in Governor Cooper's budget, expanding Medicaid will improve the health of young children because children's healthy development is tied to the health and well-being of their parents and caregivers. When parents have health insurance, children are more likely to have and keep health care coverage. Expanding access to Medicaid would also mean more healthy births across our state, thanks to better care leading up to and during pregnancy.

Child Welfare

Governor Cooper's budget provides \$4 million to improve child welfare services and add critical staffing and training to improve safety and outcomes for children experiencing abuse or neglect.

Preparing for the 2020 Census

Governor Cooper's budget provides \$1.5 million to prepare for the 2020 Census, which determines federal funding for programs across North Carolina, including Title I grants to low-income schools, the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Head Start, and the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant.