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milestones

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North Carolina Association
for the Education
of Young Children

SPECIAL
ADVOCACY/
PUBLIC POLICY
ISSUE

A woman with dark, wavy hair is looking towards the camera. She is holding a large chalkboard with both hands. The chalkboard has a handwritten message in white chalk.

We are not
Babysitters
We have never
once SAT on a
baby!

From the Executive Director

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We welcome comments and suggestions: generalinfo@ncaeyc.org. Through *Milestones*, NCAeYC provides a forum for discussion of issues and ideas in our field in hopes of provoking thought and promoting professional growth. *Milestones* articles represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of NCAeYC.

A special thank you to Kevin Donald for his assistance with editing this issue of *Milestones*.

COVER PHOTOGRAPHER:

Carolina Portrait Pros
www.carolinaportraitpros.com

This dynamic early childhood professional delivered her unique advocacy message in a very powerful way at NCAeYC's 60th Anniversary Conference at our wildly popular photo booth. The photo booth was a huge success because of the amazing efforts of the fabulously fun and terrifically talented photographer Patricia Dunmire of Carolina Portrait Pros! *Help us match this advocate's name to the list of over 400 individuals who signed permission forms for use of their photos!*



Lorie Barnes

NCAeYC works to achieve its mission of "being the voice of early childhood professionals in North Carolina who work with or on behalf of young children birth through age eight" in three primary ways:

We EDUCATE.
We ADVOCATE.
We MOTIVATE.

It is our hope that this special "Advocacy and Public Policy" edition of *Milestones* will do all three!

Thank you to our partner organizations that have submitted articles designed to help inform, empower and inspire you to get actively engaged in important advocacy opportunities during this 2014 "Short Session" of the NC Legislature and to prepare for the "Long Session" in 2015.

As an advocate, it is important to learn the structures and processes of our state's Legislature. The website of the NC General Assembly (www.ncleg.net) contains a wealth of information such as this excerpt:

Structure of the North Carolina General Assembly

Laws of North Carolina, known as statutes, are made by the General Assembly. The North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) is made of two bodies or houses; the Senate, which has 50 members; and the House of Representatives, which consists of 120 members. Each legislator represents either a Senatorial District or a House District.

The General Assembly meets in regular session beginning in January of each odd-numbered year, and adjourns to reconvene the following even-numbered year for a shorter session.

The Senate and the House of Representatives meet in their respective chambers on Monday evenings and during the day on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The members return to their homes to take care of their affairs and be available to their constituents during the weekend. During the week, committee meetings are held in the morning and late afternoon. A great deal of the legislative work is done in the committee meetings.

The House of Representatives is presided over by a Speaker, elected from its membership. The presiding officer of the Senate (called the President of the Senate) is the Lieutenant Governor of the State. She/he has no vote in the Senate except to break a tie. The Senate and House also elect other officers from their respective memberships including a President Pro Tempore in the Senate.

In addition to being informed about Legislative structure and processes, it is important to also work to ensure high quality early care and education across our state. NCaeyc thanks everyone that participated in Week of the Young Child events in April that helped highlight the importance of high quality early care and education. A special thank you to Governor McCrory for proclaiming April as the Month of the Young Child and April 6–12 as the Week of the Young Child. Check out our latest video that reflects the happiness and learning that occurred at our featured WOYC event video with Kim Hughes at Halifax Community College in Weldon. Over fifty early educators gathered to increase our knowledge and skills for applying principles and practices of Conscious Discipline. Events like this, as well as our Annual Conference help to impact practice and to inform, empower and inspire professionals to be knowledgeable, capable and articulate advocates on issues related to early care and education.

Check out NCaeyc's *"Top Ten Ways to Inform, Empower and Inspire Your Advocacy Efforts"* on page 15 which is full of tips, resources and links. Watch for ongoing "Call to Action Alerts" via NCaeyc's email distribution list and social media outlets that will keep you informed of up-to-the minute issues that matter to you. At the end of this "Short Session", NCaeyc will provide a summary to inform you of important legislative actions so you can be prepared for our collaborative advocacy work in the upcoming "Long Session" in January 2015.

Thank you for your ongoing support and engagement and please let us know when you have questions, comments, needs and suggestions related to advocacy and public policy work. You can connect with NCaeyc in a variety of ways:

1. Through email to our staff and/or Board of Directors at generalinfo@ncaeyc.org.
2. By phone at 919-510-5034.
3. By posting comments on our blog on our website at www.ncaeyc.org.
4. By posting comments on our [Facebook page](#).
5. By following, retweeting and replying to our [Tweets](#).

Together we can make an important difference in the lives of North Carolina's children, their families and the professionals that care for and educate them! Stay tuned and take action!



NC Child Care Coalition Early Education and the Legislative “Short Session”



It's that time of year again when the NC General Assembly returns to Raleigh for what is called the "Short Session" which began on May 14, 2014. The 'Short Session' is the second year of a two-year biennium budget cycle. It typically lasts only six weeks and is scheduled to conclude by June 30 if legislators finish their work.

During the Short Session, the focus is on tweaking the 2013–14 budget and making sure that the incoming revenues for 2014 are still adequate to support the budget passed in 2013. Legislators will address any major issues with budget impact, and Legislators can consider any bill that is still 'alive,' meaning it passed either the Senate or the House, but didn't make it all the way through both Chambers.

So what's likely to happen? Total available revenue is the biggest question mark and remains unknown. Legislators are also required to find a way to pay for Medicaid cost overrun (estimated at \$60–180 million), and are interested in providing some teacher pay raises. All of these issues will affect the budget and may drive cuts to other parts of the budget, including early care and education.

For the 'Short Session,' the NC Child Care Coalition is working hard to ensure that the early childhood education system and its key signature programs—Smart Start, NC PreK, and Child Care Subsidies—remain intact and fully funded. That's no small agenda item when you consider that early childhood education programs total over \$600 million in state and federal funds and collectively are the second largest budget item in the NC Department of Health and Human Services. Last session, legislators considered consolidating portions of Smart Start and NC PreK into the Child Care Subsidy program, and proposed limits to NC PreK eligibility. However, none of this happened thanks to the work of thousands of child care advocates across the state. These issues may pop up again, along with other unanticipated items.

The Child Care Coalition is also very concerned about child care subsidy market rates, and will be trying to make some headway on this issue. Adequate reimbursement rates are critically important to ensure a high quality early childhood education system with access and opportunity for low-income children and families. Adequate rates also assist child care programs by delivering quality services with well-paid teachers, sufficient classroom materials, and updated facilities. Yet, the reimbursement rates are woefully out of date, and there hasn't been a rate adjustment since 2007. Rates for infants and toddlers in 4 and 5-star centers are the most significantly depressed, with infant-toddler child care subsidy rates in 65% of the counties from \$100 to \$400 a month below the price charged in the county market. Child care programs are facing difficult decisions to limit services to low-income children, and are even eliminating classrooms or closing their doors as the costs keep rising but the rates stay the same.

"Adequate reimbursement rates are critically important to ensure a high quality early childhood education system with access and opportunity for low-income children and families."

You can be part of the team to make early childhood education successful this session. The most important action you can take is to contact your local legislators and thank them for their past support of the early childhood education system. Urge them to stay the course this session. Give your actions a personal touch, and share your own story or a photo about how early childhood education is making a difference in your community. If you need help finding out about your own legislators, visit www.ncleg.net and click on the 'Who Represents Me?' tab to search by address.

You can also sign up for the [Coalition's Action Center](#) where you can receive updates and alerts during the Short Session. You can send messages directly to policymakers. The Coalition's Action Center is free and open to the public.

So, let your voice be heard by joining with other early childhood education advocates around the state. There's a lot at stake and we all have to do our part to keep early childhood education working for North Carolina's children, families and communities. Take action today—the children are counting on you!

About the NC Child Care Coalition

Founded in 1990, The North Carolina Child Care Coalition is the only statewide advocacy coalition dedicated to promoting high quality, accessible, and affordable child care in North Carolina. Members include statewide organizations, regional and local child care agencies, child care providers and individuals committed to improving the quality of child care and early childhood education in North Carolina. Members receive the latest information on public policy resources in early care and education, get action alerts during legislative sessions, and support a statewide advocacy and lobbying network. To learn more and to become a member, visit the Coalition's website at www.NCChildCareCoalition.org.



CHILD ADVOCACY DAY 2013

Join us for **CHILD ADVOCACY DAY 2014**. See details below!

SAVE THE DATE! **June 10 is Child Advocacy Day**, an annual special advocacy event sponsored by NC Child and other child and family organizations, including the NC Child Care Coalition. The event will be held in Raleigh on the grassy lawn behind the Legislative Building. Please [register for this event today](#), and send out to your networks as well!

Two of the state's premiere child advocacy organizations, Action for Children North Carolina and the Covenant with North Carolina's Children, have merged to create a new group called [NC Child: The Voice for North Carolina's Children](#).



NC Child is a comprehensive, non-partisan child advocacy organization that develops and promotes public policy solutions grounded in rigorous research and data analysis. The merger, which became effective on January 1st, will combine the strengths of each organization—rigorous research and data analysis, a statewide advocacy network, and a strong voice with policy makers—to accomplish great things for North Carolina's children.

The decision to merge the two organizations was driven by one simple fact—North Carolina's future prosperity depends on our ability to raise healthy and educated children. If we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of responsible citizenship which will be passed on to future generations.

"Our future prosperity as a state depends on our ability to raise healthy and well-educated children. Unfortunately, North Carolina's ongoing economic troubles and continued budget cuts have threatened to jeopardize the healthy development of our state's children. These challenges demand the most effective advocacy organization possible, grounded in reliable research and strong data analysis—that's why we decided to merge and create NC Child," stated Michelle Hughes, Co-Chair of NC Child's board of directors.

"If we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of responsible citizenship which will be passed on to future generation."

Effective advocacy will be especially important during this year's legislative session, when legislators will consider revisions to the state budget and a handful of policy issues. Many factors will influence how this year's session unfolds, including budget availability, the U.S. Senate election, this fall's legislative elections, and uncertainty in state House leadership.

The combination of higher than projected Medicaid spending and lost revenue due to last year's tax cuts is likely to leave the state with a budget shortfall heading into the next fiscal year. Read more about the state budget [here](#). It remains unclear exactly what the shortfall will be, but the lack of budget availability will make it difficult to provide raises for teachers and could lead to additional budget cuts, most likely in the Health and Human Services portion of the budget.

In addition to budget availability, politics will play an increasingly important role in this year's session. The Speaker of the House, Rep. Thom Tillis, is on the ballot as a Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate election this fall. As such, he might step down as Speaker to pursue his campaign full-time, which would create a leadership vacuum in the NC House. Furthermore, since this race could determine which party controls the U.S. Senate, there will be millions of out-of-state dollars pouring in to influence the election, which will certainly impact the political environment of the General Assembly.

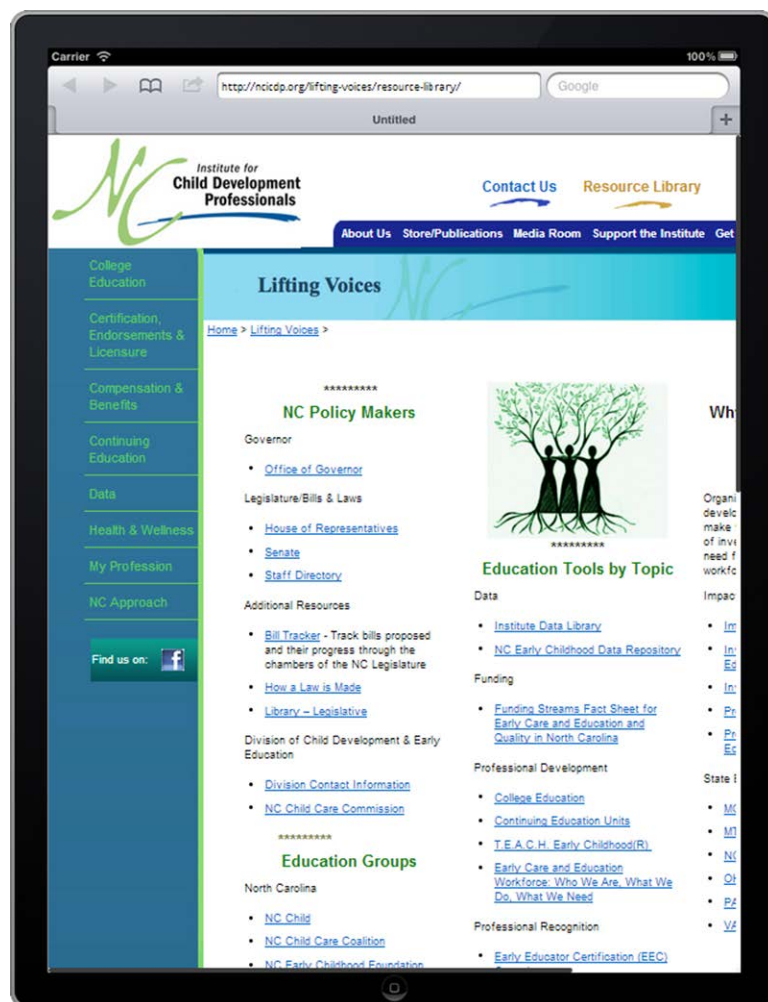
Lastly, all members of North Carolina's General Assembly are up for reelection in 2014, which means there will be a focus on wrapping up this short Legislative session in order to return to the campaign trail. It will be interesting to see how legislators reconcile the desire to move quickly with the complexities of this year's fiscal and political environment. As usual, it will be entertaining and perhaps a little bit messy. At NC Child, we will do our best to make sure children come out on top and to keep our members and partners informed with important updates and action items.

The [NC Institute for Child Development Professionals](http://ncicdp.org) is making available its online early childhood public policy resource library for member use.

The [Lifting Voices Resource Library](http://ncicdp.org/lifting-voices/resource-library/) provides easy access to tools you can use to educate others about why an educated, compensated early childhood workforce is important and the impact we make for thousands of children and families in North Carolina.

Click on the [Lifting Voices Resource Library link](http://ncicdp.org/lifting-voices/resource-library/) for resources you can use, share, post and pass on including:

- Contact information for policy makers to help you connect and share your needs and support investments in early childhood services!
- Links for groups working on early childhood needs and issues to connect to colleagues who are advocating for issues you are interested in!
- I Make a Difference for Young Children poster, notecards, sticker/button template, Facebook banner and one-pagers on how early educators make a difference for young children to print and use for free!
- First 2,000 Days materials to download and share!
- Research, data and statistics to help you make your case for investments!
- Video clips to view and post to your Facebook and Pinterest pages, and more!



[CHECK IT OUT!](http://ncicdp.org/lifting-voices/resource-library/)

Do you have it yet? The reduced fee for Early Educator Certification (EEC) is expected to end in June. If you work with or on behalf of children ages birth to five, now is a great time to apply for your initial EEC or renew your EEC.

Learn more about EEC and access the application on our website here:

<http://ncicdp.org/certification-licensure/eec-overview>

MomsRising Mobilizes Families

Few decisions feel more personal to a mother than the question of who will care for our children when we can't be with them. Will they be learning? Will they be cared for? Will they thrive?

Eighty one percent of American women are mothers by the time they are 44, and in today's economy, families often need two incomes just to make ends meet. In North Carolina, 77.4 percent of mothers with children under age 18 are in the labor force either out of necessity or by choice. This means that at some point in our lives the vast majority of women will have to make childcare decisions for our families.

Before our children are even born, many moms spend countless hours researching options, visiting childcare centers, and getting on waiting lists because we know that quality care matters. The brain develops faster between birth and age three than at any other point in life, and early experiences have long-term impacts. Research shows us that children who have high-quality early learning experiences are more likely to succeed in school, graduate from high school, gain stable employment, and are less likely to be arrested.



Parents know childcare matters, and so does MomsRising. MomsRising is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States. Established in 2006, MomsRising and our members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America's women and families. In addition to being a grassroots force, MomsRising also has a strong online presence with more than 1,000 bloggers. In 2013, Forbes.com named MomsRising's web site as one of the Top 100 Websites For Women for the fourth year in a row and Working Mother magazine included MomsRising on its "Best of the Net" list.

North Carolina is the first state chapter of MomsRising. With more than 28,000 North Carolina MomsRising members across all 100 counties, we are moms, dads, aunts, uncles, and grandparents who are coming together to make sure the needs and concerns

of North Carolina's children and families are heard in the decisions that impact our lives in very personal ways each and every day.

Access to quality, affordable childcare, preschool and early education support for all families who need it is one of our top policy priorities, both nationally and here in North Carolina.

While childcare is essential to families, creating affordable, high-quality early learning opportunities isn't just about helping out a few parents. Research by a Nobel Prize-winning economist shows that every dollar invested in quality early childhood development for disadvantaged children results in a 7-10% return on investment through greater productivity and reduced social spending. Yet, only 3 in 10 children have access to high-quality preschool opportunities, and full-time childcare for an infant or toddler costs more than public college tuition in many states. At the same time, North Carolina's nationally acclaimed early learning program, Smart Start, has experienced a series of budget cuts in recent years that have undermined our state's decades-long investments. Meanwhile, the waiting list for childcare subsidies for low-income families continues to grow.

"Access to quality, affordable childcare, preschool and early education support for all families who need it is one of our top policy priorities, both nationally and here in North Carolina."

We can help North Carolina and America grow stronger through early childhood education but only if our leaders aren't in the dark about how important high-quality preschool and childcare are to families across this country.

MomsRising works to mobilize parents and bring the voices and real world experiences of women and mothers straight to our local, state, and nation's leaders. We amplify women's voices and policy issues in the national dialogue and in the media across all platforms from print, to radio, to blogs, social media, and more. Through collecting and sharing the personal stories of our members, launching creative on-the-ground actions, and providing multiple avenues for parents to speak out, we remind decision makers that parents are paying attention.

In North Carolina, MomsRising has focused on protecting early learning programs and childcare subsidies in the state budget. Moms and kids have hand-delivered hundreds of personal stories and messages about the importance of investing in early

learning, from North Carolina parents to North Carolina lawmakers. MomsRising partnered with NCaeyc, the NC Partnership for Children, the NC Child Care Coalition, NC Child, and local providers across the state on creative actions designed to raise awareness about why public investments in early learning are good for our state. From displaying more than 400 life-size paper dolls made by NC children on the grounds of the General Assembly to building giant block towers urging our state's leaders to build a better future for NC's kids, we've found fun and engaging way for parents and children to make their voices heard in Raleigh. Last year we took the message on the road, visiting nine cities across the state with a 40-foot long Chutes & Ladders board highlighting the investments that move NC's children forward or set them back. The tour was so successful that it was replicated nationally, and North Carolina members traveled to DC to play a game on the lawn of the US Capitol with US Senators and Representatives. This year we are continuing to work closely with our partners to ensure that NC lawmakers hear from parents who support early learning.



Nationally, MomsRising is hard at work supporting the Strong Start for America's Children Act. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Representative George Miller (D-CA) and Richard Hanna (R-NY) introduced the Strong Start for America's Children Act. This bill is an exciting bipartisan step forward in expanding access to affordable, high-quality preschool and investing in high-quality early learning programs for infants and toddlers. It creates new partnerships between states and the federal government to help states and communities improve and expand high-quality, full-day preschool programs for four-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families. It would also provide new funding for high-quality early learning programs for infants and toddlers. This plan has broad public support. Seventy percent of American voters—including large majorities of Republicans, Independents and Democrats—support a federal plan to help states and local communities provide better early childhood education. We're also actively encouraging Congress to fund the early learning proposals President Obama included in his budget. These early learning proposals would expand access to high-quality preschool, early learning for babies and toddlers, and child care while increasing access to evidence-based, voluntary home visiting.

Parents know that raising children is something that today's families do in partnership with early learning and childcare providers they trust. In the same way, **MomsRising is proud to partner with NCaeyc and other providers across the state to ensure that our children have the best possible start in life.**

To find out more about the work of MomsRising, visit us on the web at www.momsrising.org or contact our NC Campaign Director, Beth Messersmith at Beth@momsrising.org.

CHILD CARE IS EXPENSIVE

The annual cost of child care is **more than the cost** of annual tuition at public universities

Access to high-quality child care matters:
"Today, fewer than three in 10 four-year olds are enrolled in a high-quality preschool program. For poor kids who need help the most, this lack of access to preschool education can shadow them for the rest of their lives."
— President Obama

Low-income families are hit even harder

Families below the federal poverty line spend 30% of their income on child care

HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE
=
More likely to succeed in school
More likely to graduate from high school
More likely to gain stable employment
Less likely to be arrested

See if you qualify for Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit:
http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/press/quickfacts_cdctc.cfm

CONGRESS CAN HELP STRUGGLING FAMILIES PAY FOR CHILD CARE BY PASSING THE CHILD CARE ACT

MomsRising.org

Wake Tech Community College: Raising Awareness during Week of the Young Child

An important part of advocacy includes creating opportunities to focus on the importance of high quality early childhood experiences.

The [Wake Tech Early Childhood Education Department](#) celebrated the Week of the Young Child by hosting three events at the college's Main Campus in Raleigh on April 12. Early Childhood professionals, local organizations and agencies which focus on children and families, along with faculty, staff, and students from Wake Tech joined together for a day of fun and learning to raise awareness of the needs of children.

Sponsored through a grant from PNC, children and families in Wake County were invited to a Creative Arts Event highlighting the importance of the arts and creativity in children's lives. Planned by the Early Childhood department to showcase the use of household, low-cost, recycled, and natural materials in creating art, children participated in a wide range of activities including painting on wallboards and homemade easels, drawing with chalk, making hats out of newspapers, exploring watercolors using coffee filters, having faces painted, blowing bubbles, playing a violin (facilitated by [CampMusArt](#)), constructing with cardboard boxes, and playing in water.

Recycled materials were brought by [The Scrap Exchange from Durham](#) for children to create from a "Truck Load of Junk" and to make instruments to play in a drumming circle. Held in a wooded area, the "Let's Build ... a Fort" activity provided children with opportunities to construct play spaces using collections of natural materials supplemented with supplies such as fabrics, ropes, and tape. Children and adults were observed participating in activities, designed by Mary Jo Deck of Staurolite Resource Group of Brasstown, as they built and used a campfire, gathered food for a "restaurant," and relaxed in a bamboo forest and hammock hung between two trees. One child reported that "he was going on an adventure."

In a reflection about this event, a recent graduate, Robin Sheffield, wrote that she talked to parents about "simple materials (that could be) used in different activities and how many of the projects (demonstrated activities that) could be done at home." She encouraged parents to see the possibilities of engaging children with the "simplest of materials" and enjoying them at home as a family. Another student volunteer, Kaitlyn Wheeler, wrote that "exposure to the creative arts helps young children to develop an early understanding of the arts, to become more observant, and to feel good about themselves."

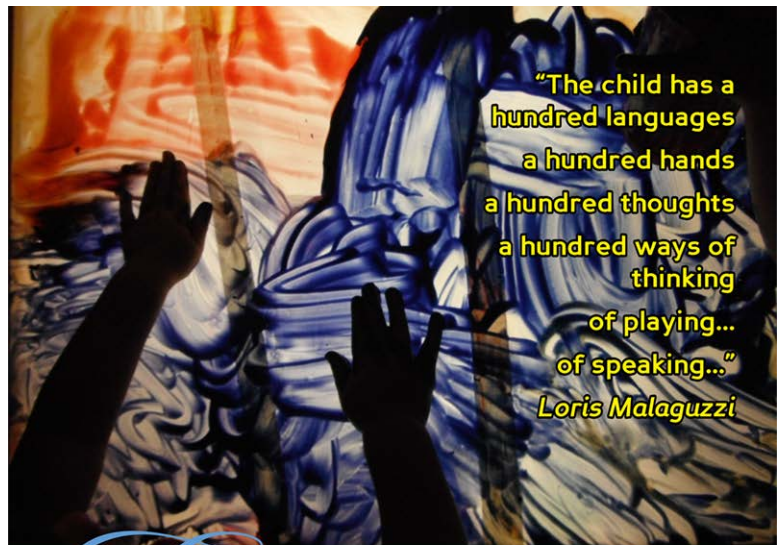




On the same day, April 12, a second event, a Professional Development Day, was presented by [WakeAEYC](#). Through the collaborative efforts of [WakeAEYC](#), [Child Care Services Association](#), [Wake County Smart Start](#), [Telamon Corporation](#) and Wake Tech, this event provided opportunities for 100 Early Childhood Educators to network and to learn about topics such as brain development, learning styles, the use of observation, and learning through play. A keynote address was delivered by Tanya Dennis, the State Education Specialist at Telamon Corporation.

During the period of time that the Creative Arts Event and the Professional Development Day were taking place, an exhibit of panels were shared with the Early Childhood department by Martha Rockaway of [Sounds and Colors](#), a Spanish Immersion, Reggio-inspired Child Development Center in Hillsborough. These panels were hung in the lobby of the EC/PE building. The exhibit consisting of ten panels entitled, "Encuentros," represented the way children construct their knowledge. According to Mrs. Rockaway, "Our children express themselves in many different languages as they reach developmental milestones. Let the exhibit be the documentation that makes our children's learning visible!"

Through this community learning event, the goal of focusing public attention on the interests and needs of children through Week of the Young Child was realized. By using multiple strategies and venues, the Wake Tech Early Childhood department is building a tradition of connections within the community and making the importance of children's needs known through a fun, participatory, authentic approach.



encuentros Making Learning Visible

"We like to say that the child is competent, but it is not enough just to declare this. If we really want the child to be competent, we have to change time, space, roles, and rules to permit this competent child to exist."

Carla Rinaldi, President of the Fondazione Reggio Children - Centro Loris Malaguzzi.

"...laughing in a hundred languages" www.soundsandcolors.net

Three Basic Rules of Effective Messaging

***I protect national security.
I help prevent crime.
I build our economy.***

The next time someone asks you what you do, answer with one these of statements. The conversation that follows will be very different than the conversation that usually does.

It's time to change the conversation.

Your passion for children drives you; but it is not what drives policy. Advocates on a host of issues inundate elected officials. Each advocate has a reason as to why his or her issue is urgent and vital to the state. Policymakers have to weigh many competing demands and ultimately make decisions that get them re-elected.

So how do you get their attention?

It comes down to three basic rules of effective messaging.

RULE ONE: LISTEN

Effective messaging is about understanding what is important to your audience. That's why listening is so important. You need to share your message in a manner that the person you are talking to will hear it. What issues does this person care about? What is important to them?

RULE TWO: YOU ARE NOT THE AUDIENCE

This is a hard one. Your message is not about you. It is not about what moves you. It is about what moves the person you are talking to.

Too often, we tell people that they should support early childhood investments because it is the right thing to do. Unfortunately, that can be a conversation killer for some people. As mentioned above, there are many things that are the "right" thing to do and policymakers have to weigh them against one another.

More importantly, this approach sets someone up to be the bad buy. If it is the "right thing to do," and I am not doing it, you are judging me. Nobody wants to be the bad guy. Nobody likes to feel attacked. This statement rarely changes someone's mind. More often, it causes people to become defensive and further entrenched in their positions.

If you follow the first rule—listening—you will know how to talk about your work in a manner that resonates with your audience.

RULE THREE: THE MESSENGER MATTERS

People expect early childhood professionals to be strong advocates. Sometimes, we are not the best messengers. Outsider voices can give our positions added credibility and prominence.

Take the "I'm the Guy You Pay Later" campaign by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Police chiefs, sheriffs and other law enforcement professionals are telling policymakers that if they do not invest more in early childhood, those policymakers will be paying considerably more in corrections when those children grow into adults.

The police chief is more credible delivering this message than those in the field.



William Anderson,
Asheville Chief of Police

"I challenge anyone that looks around our communities, our country and our world to say that other things are more important than the children that will become the next generation of leaders."



Reverend Tommy James, First
Baptist Church, Burnsville, NC

"My faith calls me to ensure that each child in every community has the opportunity to become the very best person God has created him or her to be."

First 2,000 Days

These three rules are the foundation behind the First 2,000 Days messaging. The campaign is designed so that every North Carolina citizen understands that they have a stake in what happens to young children. The name comes from the fact that there are approximately 2,000 days between the time a child is born and when that child will begin kindergarten. It is also when children experience 90 percent of critical brain growth.

The campaign uses research to support the following statements:

- The foundation for all future learning is built during early childhood.
- These years are so important that military leaders, business executives and law enforcement call early care and learning paramount to our national security, our global competitive edge and our safety.
- High quality early learning programs produce results, including:
 - Closing the achievement gap
 - Higher third grade reading and math scores
 - Higher graduation rates
 - Savings in corrections
 - Higher earnings for participants who are more likely to pay more taxes and less likely to rely on government assistance



Kelly J. Stewart
Assistant VP, Bank of Richmond

"The First 2000 Days is the window we are given to make a lifelong difference in our children—their health, their intellectual and social development, everything critical for future success. It is our responsibility, our moral imperative, to open that window as wide as possible and pour every resource in that we can muster."

Let's try it!

Wondering how to do this? Take a look at the imaginary conversation below and give it a try in your community. Then let us know what happens! Email us at ncecf@buildthefoundation.org.

"What do you do for a living?"

"I protect our national security."

"Really?"

"Yes. In fact retired national military generals formed an organization called Mission Readiness just to call for more support for the work that I do."

"What do you do?"

"I build brains. The experiences I engage in with young children actually form the wiring in their brains. Did you know that 90 percent of a child's brain development happens in the first five years of life and is dependent on the relationships and environments in the child's life? If I do a good job, their brains are built in a manner that provides a strong foundation for all of their future learning and health."

"Why does the military care?"

"75 percent of Americans 17 to 24 years old cannot meet the military's eligibility requirements. Military leaders know that the most cost efficient and effective way to overcome that challenge is to start from birth. And they are not the only ones. Law enforcement professionals are doing this too. They also have a national organization for this purpose—Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. They call early childhood investments the most effective crime prevention strategy at their disposal. And I'm sure you've heard business people speaking about this."

"Wow! So what do you need to do a good job, and how can I help?"

The mission of the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF) is to marshal North Carolina's great people, ideas and achievements to build a foundation of opportunity and success for every child by the end of third grade.

NCECF's work to build public will, accelerate what works and ignite action that closes the achievement gap and raises outcomes for all young children. Learn more at www.buildthefoundation.org.



Growing Our Own: Developing and Sustaining North Carolina's Leadership in Early Childhood Education, Public Policy, and Advocacy

In its recent call to action, NAEYC stated that, "our nation is at a crossroads in terms of preparing young children." They note, "[o]ur nation can and must do better to create opportunities that help all children and families succeed. The time for action is now" (NAEYC, 2014). It is clear that public policy and leadership must converge to create the best opportunities for young children and their families. The call to action is clear, "[w]e must develop an integrated system of early childhood care and education that includes comprehensive approaches that directly involve families and communities in program design, implementation, and evaluation" (NAEYC, 2014). North Carolina, a national leader in the development of early care and education programs and processes, is poised to develop new leaders to continue this important work. **It is incumbent upon us to develop the next generation of new early childhood education leaders with skills in public policy and organizational development, so that they are better equipped to serve diverse families and communities, and provide leadership in the field.**

In an effort to meet this need, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington has developed a unique online master's program (M.Ed.) that includes a specialization in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Advocacy in Early Childhood. This specialization is an interdisciplinary program designed for people who work or wish to work as a leader in the field of family and child advocacy. The program is designed to prepare professionals with an interest in the early childhood field to take leadership roles in organizations that focus on improving the lives of families and children through the collaboration of public policy, community action, and educational support.



Information in this degree serves as a foundation in the development of leadership skills to serve in positions within community, state, and national agencies, in both the public and private sector that focus on supporting the healthy development, growth, and education of families and children. This specialization provides a foundation in social, historical, philosophical, developmental, educational, and international perspectives of family and child advocacy.

Because the field of early childhood education demands a coordinated and comprehensive approach, the M.Ed. in Leadership, Policy, and Advocacy in Early Childhood represents a joint effort across three departments, drawing upon the best research and coursework from each. Students in the program have opportunities to explore coursework in early childhood, leadership, public policy and administration, health and human services, diversity, and social work. Using an online format allows access for a diverse range of prospective students from across and beyond North Carolina who will engage with UNCW faculty leaders as well as experts in the field.

The program is currently accepting applications for its first group to enter in Fall 2014. The application deadline is July 1, 2014. Detailed information on program and admissions requirements can be found at <http://www.uncw.edu/ed/el/ec/>. Scholarship opportunities are also available through the Race to the Top early learning grant and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship program (www.childcareservices.org).

References

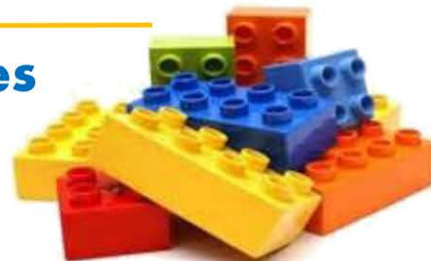
National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2014). A Call for Excellence in Early Childhood Education. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/policy/excellence>.

About the Authors

Susan Catapano is Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership. She has worked in the early childhood field for the past 25 years, in a variety of positions, including owner/director of early childhood programs and faculty in early childhood education. Candace Thompson is an assistant professor in the Department of Instructional Technology, Foundations and Secondary Education. She currently serves as co-coordinator of the M.Ed. in Leadership, Policy, and Advocacy in Early childhood program. Her research interests include developing cultural competency and critical consciousness in pre- and in-service teachers through school and community-based projects.

Lean In & Learn

Webinar Series



The State of the Early Childhood Workforce:

Who We Are, What Our Earnings Mean & How We Can Lead in North Carolina

A high-quality virtual seminar brought to you by the North Carolina Institute for
Child Development Professionals & University of North Carolina Wilmington

June 5, 2014 @ 1pm – 4pm



Lean in and learn about ...

- Just released workforce data & research
- Cutting edge technology strategies & trends
- New professional development tools & connections

Presented by

Dr. Susan Catapano
UNC Wilmington

Sue Russell
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center

Anna Carter
Child Care Services Association

Dr. Deb Cassidy
UNC Greensboro

Dr. Chip Donohue
Erikson Institute

Debra Torrence
NC Institute for Child Development Professionals

Registration

Register online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/M6H7PWC> or send payment to NC Institute for Child Development Professionals/ PO Box 959/ Chapel Hill, NC 27514 by May 30, 2014. Cost: \$50 per participant or \$75 for a .5 CEU. Visit www.ncicdp.org for more details.

CEU Requirements

To earn a .5 CEU, the fee is \$75. CEUs will be issued within one month of completion. CEU participants are required to complete the following requirements: Pre-survey, 2 readings, Participate in the webinar series by asking a minimum of 2 questions, and complete the post-survey.



Questions? Contact Debra Torrence at: dtorrence@ncicdp.org



NCaeyc's Top Ten Ways to Be an Effective Early Childhood Advocate

Here are NCAeyc's top ten ways to **INFORM, EMPOWER and INSPIRE** your advocacy efforts!

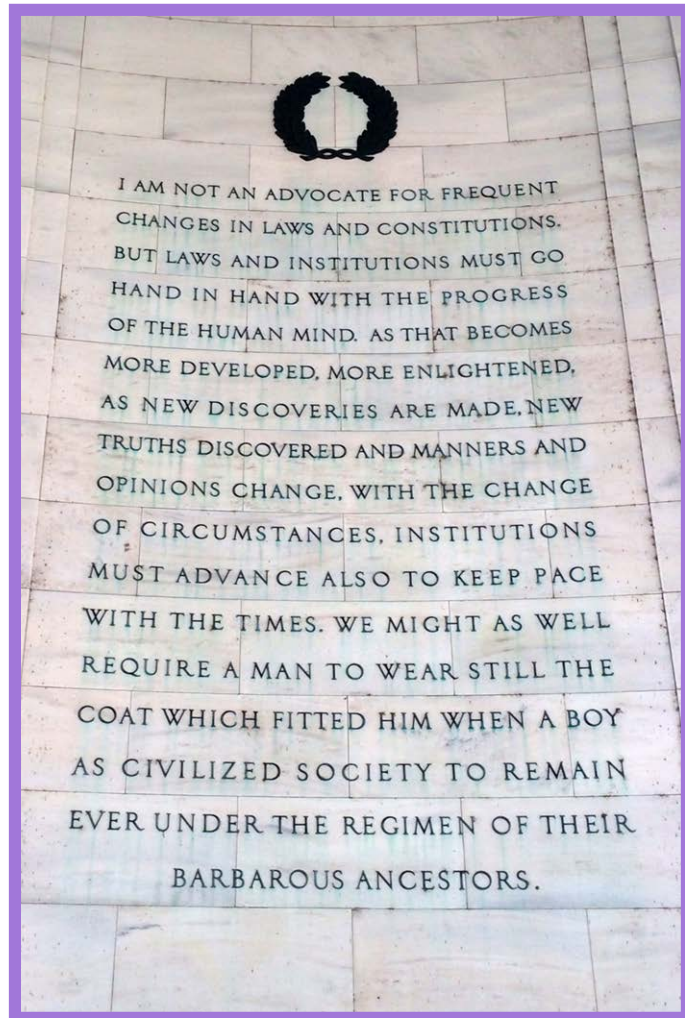
1. Join us! Please join us in membership and invite "not yet" members to [join](#) as well. When you join one, you join them all! Membership and engagement in your professional association not only reflects a personal commitment to excellence but also provides the resources to help you continue your work in achieving excellence in the early care and education of young children in North Carolina. Check out our "[Gift Membership](#)" that helps you invite families and local leaders in supporting the professional growth and development of the early childhood educators that make a difference in their lives and communities.

2. Get social! If you have not already "liked" [NCAeyc's Facebook page](#) and "followed" us on [Twitter](#), please do! When you get engaged it helps us get connected and leverage the power and immediacy of these social media tools for advocacy and policy work.

3. Be a "Champion for Children!" [Sign up](#) for timely, in-depth updates on Federal initiatives from our colleagues at NAEYC and check out Public Policy resources on [NAEYC's website](#).

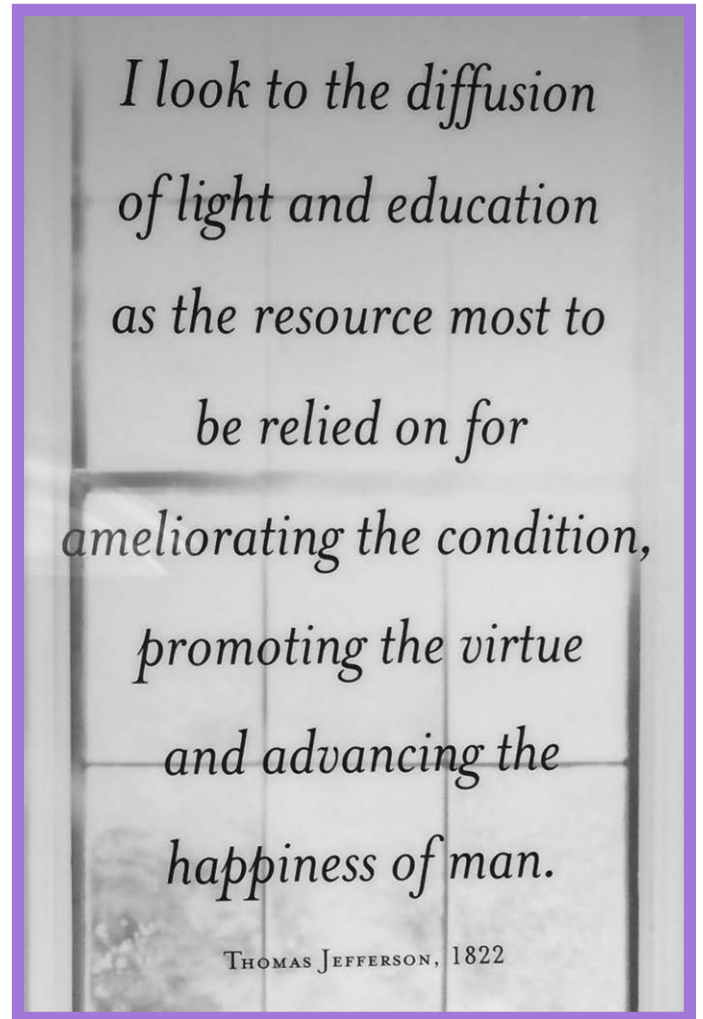
4. Be friends with our friends! Check out articles in this issue of Milestones by our partner organizations then support and follow the work of the [NC Child Care Coalition](#), [NC Child](#), and the newly formed [NC Early Childhood Foundation](#).

5. Stay informed! Bookmark and frequently access the [NC General Assembly webpage](#) and download the [mobile app](#) for up-to-date information about meetings, bills and activity at the NC General Assembly. Another great new website with an accompanying mobile app is [iCitizen](#). You can customize your preferences to receive alerts and participate in polls on issues that matter to you. You can search for and directly connect with your Legislators and Senators through embedded contact information. Another way to stay informed is to be aware of the work of the [NC Child Care Commission](#). This legislatively appointed body of dedicated, diverse individuals embraces the responsibilities and challenges of overseeing the rules and regulations that govern licensed child care programs in our state. While these public meetings are open to anyone, keep in mind that as a guest you are part of the "gallery" and that you may listen and observe but not interject comments or ask questions except during the designated Public Hearing and Public Comment times during each meeting.



From the Jefferson Memorial

- 6. Make the “First 2000 Days” count!** Become immersed in and use the amazing resources in the [“First 2000 Days” Campaign](#) developed right here in NC. The developers of these resources desire to see them used far and wide to help change the landscape and conversations we are having about early care and education with business leaders, faith leaders, the general public and policymakers.
- 7. Be intentional and state the facts!** [Frameworks Institute](#) and the [Harvard Center for the Developing Child](#) provide resources that enable you to share research and evidence-based resources that put facts and figures at your fingertips to help inform legislative policy decisions. Be ready in a snap to show brief, powerful videos like this one on [“Building Adult Capabilities to Improve Child Outcomes”](#) on your mobile and tablet devices for that planned or chance encounter with a Legislator.
- 8. Include families!** As early childhood professionals, it is both our privilege and responsibility to help inform, engage and educate families on issues that impact their children. Utilize your expertise, objectivity and professionalism to inspire families to be aware of and take action on important legislative happenings. Check out NAEYC’s [“For Families” website](#) which is full of excellent resources and information designed especially for families.
- 9. Embrace the paradox!** Be bold in your convictions AND strive to be nonpartisan in your work. It is not always easy, but one of the things heard most often is the importance of approaching every legislator, regardless of their party affiliation, with the positive intent that each one cares about our state’s children. Through respect and rapport building, we can better educate them on evidence-based and evidence-informed research to inform policy decisions that will help North Carolina prosper through honoring and advancing our state’s proud legacy of innovation!
- 10. Find Inspiration!** Advocacy work requires persistence, patience and perseverance. Surround yourself with others whose passions and dedication help uplift and motivate you and then strive to be an inspiration to others. Look for encouragement in the words, sacrifices and accomplishments of both historical and current leaders. The thought-provoking and motivating quotes in the images included in this article were captured at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC. Find what inspires you and create intentional opportunities to connect with and reflect upon the importance of our advocacy work.



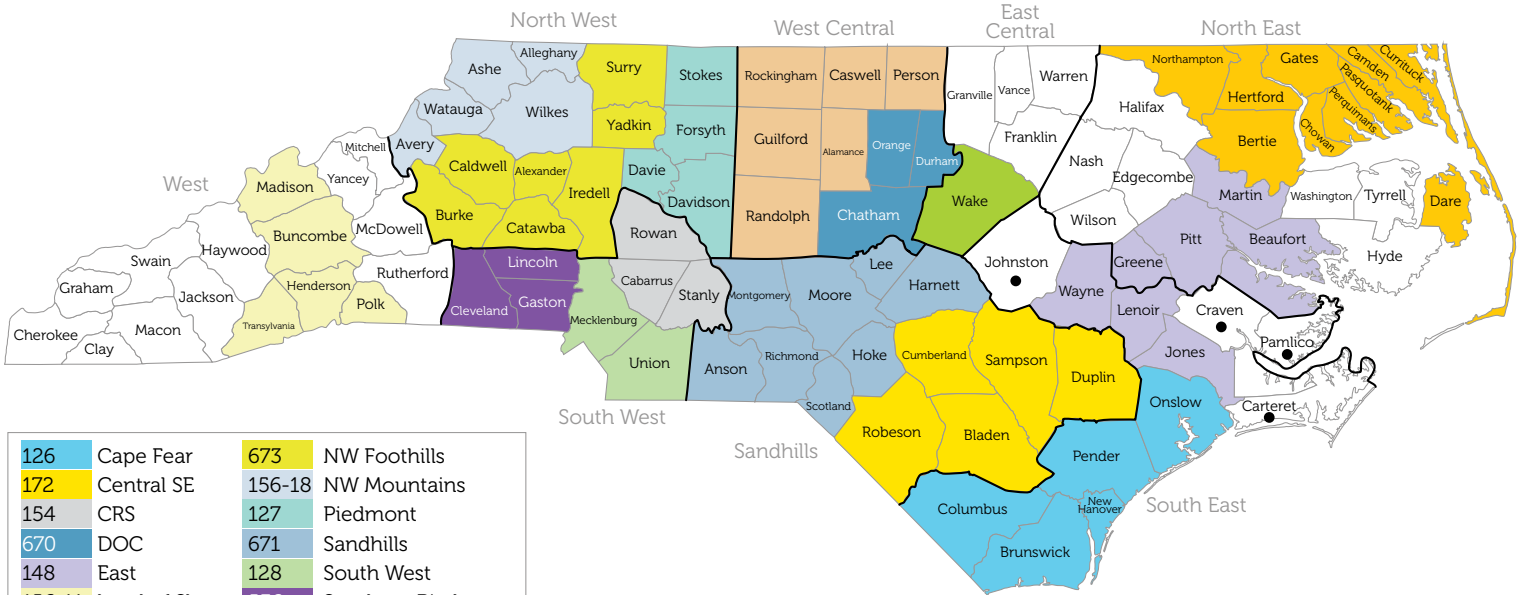
From the Jefferson Memorial Visitor Center

Follow these “Top Ten Ways” and you will be well on your way to becoming a more informed, empowered and inspired early childhood advocate!

North Carolina's Chapters and Local Affiliates

NCAEYC LOCAL AFFILIATE MAP

(NCAeYC Regions noted w/black outline)
as of March 1, 2014



126	Cape Fear	673	NW Foothills
172	Central SE	156-18	NW Mountains
154	CRS	127	Piedmont
670	DOC	671	Sandhills
148	East	128	South West
156-11	Land of Sky	536	Southern Piedmont
537	NC²	186	Wake
156-22	North East		

- Emerging AEYC Chapters are beginning in the following counties: Johnston, Craven, Pamlico, Carteret

Local Affiliate Counties

Cape Fear: Brunswick/Columbus/New Hanover/Pender/Onslow
Central South East: Cumberland/Robeson/Sampson/Bladen/Duplin
CRS: Cabarrus/Rowan/Stanly
DOC: Orange/Durham/Chatham
East: Beaufort/Martin/Pitt/Lenoir/Greene/Wayne/Jones
Land of Sky: Buncombe/Henderson/Transylvania/Polk/Madison
NC²: Rockingham/Guilford/Randolph/Alamance/Caswell/Person
North East: Northampton/Hertford/Bertie/Chowan/Perquimans/Pasquotank/Dare/Camden/Currituck/Gates

Northwest Foothills: Iredell/Alexander/Catawba/Surry/Yadkin/Burke/Caldwell
North West Mountains: Watauga/Avery/Ashe/Wilkes/Alleghany
Piedmont: Forsyth/Stokes/Davie/Davidson
Sandhills: Moore/Lee/Montgomery/Richmond/Scotland/Hoke/Harnett/Anson
Southern Piedmont: Gaston/Lincoln/Cleveland
Southwest: Mecklenburg/Union
Wake: Wake

Learn how to get involved in chapter or local affiliate activities! Contact Lorie Barnes at lbarnes@ncaeyc.org.

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Debbi Kennerson-Webb

NCaeyc Board of Directors elections will be conducted this summer via electronic voting. Watch for more details coming your way soon!

To contact any NCaeyc Board member, please send an email to: generalinfo@ncaeyc.org.



Ncaeyc

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