

S.C. Early Childhood Common Agenda

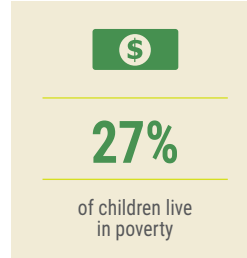
United in support of young children (ages 0-5) and their families, advocates of the Early Childhood Common Agenda propose the following policies for building a smart, comprehensive early childhood system for South Carolina.

Strong Families

Children's prospects of success are largely rooted in the social and economic well-being of their families and communities. In South Carolina, however, 289,000 children live in poverty, limiting their access to environments and opportunities that support optimal development.¹ For children and families of color, the challenges of poverty are often compounded by policies that enforce inequity in school systems, employment opportunities, and community resources.² Effective, equity-informed policy can counter adverse circumstances through a two-generation approach, equipping both parents and children with the tools they need to thrive.

Recommendations:

- Endorse state tax credits that empower working families.
- Promote the use of [racial equity impact assessments](#) to determine the equity impact of early childhood legislation considered by the General Assembly.
- Expand existing successful voluntary home visiting programs that support families with children from prenatal to age five.
- Promote the use of the [Self-Sufficiency Standard for South Carolina](#) to assess the human impact of economic legislation considered by the General Assembly.

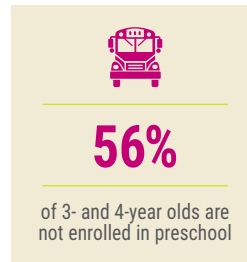


Increased Opportunity

Children who experience high-quality preschool are more likely to enter school prepared for success in academics and throughout their lives.³ Unfortunately, 70,000 South Carolina 3- and 4-year-olds are not enrolled in any preschool program.¹ Many families struggle to afford early care and education, with an average child care cost of \$1,181 per month.⁴ This problem is exacerbated for low-income families, who are often forced by limited resources to choose care based on affordability and/or convenience rather than quality.⁵ In South Carolina, 15 percent of these parents report their employment is affected by child care issues.⁴

Recommendations:

- Strengthen capacity and incentives for child care providers to participate in the state's child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
- Align early childhood services to increase accountability, quality, and impact statewide.
- Allocate funds for additional training and technical assistance to support quality improvement in Family Child Care Homes.
- Support and incentivize the inclusion of children with disabilities in high quality early childhood programs.
- Promote training in pre-suspension and pre-expulsion positive discipline techniques in early childhood programs.



Successes To-Date

- Legislation increasing mandatory training for Family Child Care Home providers from 2 to 10 hours;
- Expansion of the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEP) to serve children in school districts with a poverty index of 70 percent or more;
- South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) policy changes to provide second year funding to all S.C. voucher child care subsidy recipients and develop incentive measures to increase provider participation in the QRIS;
- Production of the first study in the state examining quality child care access and provider motivations to join South Carolina's voluntary child care QRIS; and
- Production of the first Self-Sufficiency Standard for South Carolina.

Supporting Organizations

Three founding organizations - Children's Trust of South Carolina, the Institute for Child Success, and United Way Association of South Carolina - along with statewide partners have committed their support for the 2017 Early Childhood Common Agenda. For the most recent list of supporters, please visit scChildren.org/CommonAgenda.

1. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>
 2. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014). Race for Results: Building a Path to Opportunity for All Children. Baltimore, MD. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-RaceforResults-2014.pdf>
 3. Espinosa, L.M. (2002). High-quality preschool: Why we need it and what it looks like. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/1.pdf>; Heckman, J. J. (2011). The economics of inequality; The value of early childhood education. American Educator, 35(1), 31. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ920516.pdf>
 4. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014). Creating Opportunities for Families: A Two-Generation Approach. Baltimore, MD. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-CreatingOpportunityforFamilies-2014.pdf>
 5. Washington Kids Count. (2009). The State of Washington's Children: Poverty and the Future of Children and Families in Washington State. Seattle, WA. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/downloads/SWC08_FINALCOPY.pdf

Funding for this project was provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). We thank AECF for its support, and we acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the foundation.