

Caring for Our Children: What North Carolina Thinks

The North Carolina Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

About the Institute

The North Carolina Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development was established in 1993 by the Division of Child Development.

Members of the Institute serve as an advisory group to the Division in matters related to developing an educated workforce to care for children who are in group care.

Institute members represent stakeholders from across the state with different areas of interest in the child care industry.

The Institute has been instrumental in raising quality of child care through professional development of the child care workforce through such actions as:

- accessible teacher education
- leadership and professional development opportunities
- strengthening articulation agreements between institutions of higher education
- initiating a professional development awards program
- supporting and monitoring the progress of the rated license program
- reviewing policies pertaining to professional development

Number of completed surveys from Orange County: 59

Total number of surveys completed statewide: 939

Over 900 parents, child care providers, community educators and employers responded to an online survey asking the citizens of North Carolina how quality child care impacts their lives. The results emphasize the importance of the strides North Carolina is making in raising the quality of child care through teacher education and professional development opportunities.

Some of the key findings include the following:

- Parents say that child care helps their children learn new skills but without dependable child care, they would have to quit work or school or leave their child home alone.
- Ninety-seven percent of the responding parents and 94% of responding teachers said children are better prepared to be successful in Kindergarten because of high quality child care experiences.
- Smart Start child care projects top the list as the most helpful to building quality child care followed closely by higher child care teacher education requirements and better child care licensing rules or star ratings.
- Employers say that without dependable child care employees are absent more and have difficulty concentrating when their children are not well cared for.
- Employers are concerned with the lack of child care for sick children and no back-up plans for loss of child care.
- Teachers listed Smart Start Programs, T.E.A.C.H., Wage\$, and salary bonuses as playing an important role increasing their formal educational and child development knowledge.

Comments from Orange County Residents:

“Children in high quality, developmentally appropriate child care learn the emergent literacy, numeracy, and social skills necessary for success in school.”
-Community Partner

“The nation is raising children in organized care, social/academic/emotional development expectations are higher. Children that do not have an opportunity to participate in early childhood group experiences can lack some of the skills necessary to be successful.”
-Community Educator

“Because children are already used to deal with a group of peers that they live with for 8h a day. They know they can rely on each other for support when they get to know each other. There are set expectations in a classroom that are not experienced at home.”
- Parent

“If children are given access to accessible, affordable, high quality child care, they are much more likely to have success in Kindergarten. I feel that my child's experience in child care has already made him more well rounded.”
-Parent