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TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026

# North Carolina Task Force on Child Care and Early Education Advances Efforts to Increase Access to Affordable, High-Quality Child Care

RALEIGH

[View the Task Force's 2025 Year-End Report Here \(https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick-1346310.icptrack.com%2Ficp%2Frelay.php%3Fr%3D42185105%26msgid%3D527809%26act%2Fnc-task-force-child-care-early-education-december-2025%252Fopen%26cf%3D13425%26v%3D6daccfec25972dbc12262d4f38cbbe336cf32e4d275](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick-1346310.icptrack.com%2Ficp%2Frelay.php%3Fr%3D42185105%26msgid%3D527809%26act%2Fnc-task-force-child-care-early-education-december-2025%252Fopen%26cf%3D13425%26v%3D6daccfec25972dbc12262d4f38cbbe336cf32e4d275)

Today Governor Josh Stein announced the release of the North Carolina Task Force on Child Care and Early Education's 2025 year-end report. Led by bipartisan co-chairs Lieutenant Governor Rachel Hunt and Senator Jim Burgin (NC-12), the Task Force has developed six recommendations to make child care accessible and affordable across North Carolina and has identified opportunities to implement the recommendations.

“Too many families in our state can’t afford to work because child care is expensive and in short supply,” **said Governor Stein**. “I look forward to working with leaders in government and the private sector to turn these recommendations into results. Doing so represents a win-win-win: It gets parents the freedom to work, kids the safe start they need, and employers the workforce necessary to keep North Carolina’s economy thriving.”

“Right now, everything feels more expensive for families, and child care is one of the biggest costs they’re trying to manage,” **said Lieutenant Governor Rachel Hunt**. “Over the past year, the Task Force on Child Care and Early Education has focused on real, practical ways to make child care more affordable and accessible in all 100 counties. In the year ahead, we’ll keep pushing that work forward and urging leaders in the General Assembly to treat child care like the essential support for working families that it is.”

“Employers bringing well-paying jobs to North Carolina want to know our workforce is ready and able to fill them,” **said Commerce Secretary Lee Lilley**. “Child care access is critical to ensuring skilled, talented North Carolinians can work, and it’s key to helping employers achieve their goals.”

“North Carolina’s children and families are counting on investment in child care and early education,” **said Senator Jim Burgin**. “In 2026, the task force will remain steadfast in our commitment to improving education opportunities for young children and child care access for working families.”

Governor Josh Stein established the North Carolina Task Force on Child Care and Early Education through [Executive Order No. 10](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?) (<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?>

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in March 2025. The task force's [2025 meetings](https://www.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2026/01/13/north-carolina-task-force-on-child-care-and-early-education-advance-report) ([https://](https://www.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2026/01/13/north-carolina-task-force-on-child-care-and-early-education-advance-report)

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welcomed dozens of guest experts from across the state and explored issues like child care finance and funding, compensation and supports for the child care workforce, child care for public sector workers, child care access in communities recovering from natural disasters, child care needs of military communities, and emerging trends in child care supply. Task force meetings also shed light on successful local innovations expanding child care access in North Carolina communities.

In June 2025, the Task Force issued a [preliminary report](https://www.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2026/01/13/north-carolina-task-force-on-child-care-and-early-education-advance-report) ([https://](https://www.nc.gov/news/press-releases/2026/01/13/north-carolina-task-force-on-child-care-and-early-education-advance-report)

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with six recommendations to help expand child care access and affordability across North Carolina. The 2025 year-end report updates those recommendations with opportunities for action to move the recommendations forward. The Task Force's six focus areas include:

1. Set a statewide child care subsidy reimbursement rate floor
2. Develop approaches to offer non-salary benefits for child care

professionals

3. Explore partnerships with the UNC System, community colleges, and K-12 schools to increase access to child care for public employees and students at public institutions
4. Explore subsidized or free child care for child care teachers
5. Link existing workforce compensation and support programs for early childhood professionals
6. Explore the creation of a child care endowment

This year, the task force's work groups will continue developing action plans for each of the task force's six initial recommendations. Upcoming task force meetings will continue to explore issues related to the supply and cost of child care and early education in North Carolina, including ways to leverage existing funding to support child care and early education, successful child care solutions led by private-sector employers and local public-private partnerships, and the North Carolina Tri-Share Child Care Pilot Program. The task force will also encourage leaders in the North Carolina General Assembly to make meaningful investments in child care and early education as they return to Raleigh for legislative session this year.

Members of the North Carolina Task Force on Child Care and Early Education include:

- Lieutenant Governor Rachel Hunt, State of North Carolina, Co-Chair
- Senator Jim Burgin, NC General Assembly, Co-Chair
- Jennifer Akin, Vice President of Strategic Alliances and the White Oak Collaborative, Blue Star Families
- Senator Jay Chaudhuri, NC General Assembly

- Ashton Clemmons, Associate Vice President of P12 Strategy & Policy, University of North Carolina System
- Representative Sarah Crawford, NC General Assembly
- Amy Cubbage, President, NC Partnership for Children
- Senator Ralph Hise, NC General Assembly
- Lori Jones-Ruff, Regional Programs Manager, Southwestern Child Development Commission, Inc.
- Amar Majmundar, Policy Director, NC Office of State Human Resources
- Beth Messersmith, NC Senior Director, Moms Rising  
Dr. Mary Olvera, State Director of Teacher Education, Public Services, and Perkins Special Populations, NC Community College System
- Ellen Pancoast, Vice President of People Operations, Cone Health  
Susan Gale Perry, Chief Executive Officer, Child Care Aware of America
- Rhonda Rivers, Chair, NC Child Care Commission  
Dan Rockaway, President, NC Licensed Child Care Association  
Theresa Roedersheimer, Executive Director, NC Early Childhood Foundation
- Gary Salamido, President & CEO, NC Chamber  
Meka Sales, Director of Special Initiatives, The Duke Endowment  
Erica Palmer Smith, Executive Director, NC Child
- Noelle Talley, Deputy Secretary for Advocacy, NC Department of Administration
- Dan Tetreault, Assistant Director of Early Learning, NC Department of Public Instruction
- Representative David Willis, NC General Assembly  
Mary Elizabeth Wilson, Chief of Staff & General Counsel, NC

Department of Commerce

- Candace Witherspoon, Director, Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC Department of Health and Human Services

The Task Force's full December 2025 report is available [here](#).

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Meetings of the North Carolina Task Force on Child Care and Early Education are open to the public and can be streamed through the

[North Carolina Department of Commerce YouTube channel](#) ([https://](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick-1346310.icptrack.com%2Ficp%2Frelay.php%3Fr%3D42185105%26msgid%3D527809%26act%26cf%3D13425%26v%3D6daccfec25972dbc12262d4f38cbbe336cf32e4d275)

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Read Governor Stein's Executive Order No. 10 [here](#) ([https://](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick-1346310.icptrack.com%2Ficp%2Frelay.php%3Fr%3D42185105%26msgid%3D527809%26act%26cf%3D13425%26v%3D33ddc841b047354f5e3dffc9670deff6de3b4990fb3ab2ec5b3b01b8)

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and learn more about the North Carolina Task Force on Child Care

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