Partnership FOR CHILDREN
OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY
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President's Report
Executive Committee (Acting on Behalf of Board)
Hybrid Meeting - Charles Morris Conference Room
Thursday, September 24, 2026

A. NCPC/DCDEE Updates / Legislative Updates

1. NCPC

- This month's special stories focus: **2026 Kindness Awards Recipients.**
- September is Smart Start Month.
- NCPC is hosting **Coffee for Dolly Day** as part of their **September 25 Give Like Dolly Day Campaign**.
- Legislative information from Marta Hester at NCPC is attached.

2. DCDEE

- New market rates were posted September 9, 2026 and are effective October 1, 2026. FAQs attached. The link to the Market Rate Table is in the FAQ document.
- **Child Care Resource and Referral Services for the South-Central Region**
  - Contracting is still in process.
  - Julanda Jett and the Programs Team have started visits with staff in the counties in our territories.
- **NC Pre-K**
  - Most providers are in contract and August reimbursement is being processed.
  - **NC Pre-K Let's Get Enrolled – Applications for the 2026-2027 school year continue to be processed.** Please share the URL: **LetsGetEnrolled.com**. Contact Ar-Nita Davis (adavis@ccpfc.org) with any questions.
  - The Site Selection Committee has convened and is making visits to programs. Recommendations for new sites will be reviewed at the October NC Pre-K Planning Committee. for the next 3-year cycle.

3. State and Federal Level – Many lawmakers in Washington and Raleigh are campaigning due to the impending November elections.

- Congress is expected to remain out of session until mid-November after midterm elections.
- Supporting Early-Childhood Educators' Deductions (SEED) Act extending tax credit to early childhood providers passes Congress. Announcement attached.
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for Head Start. The NPRM is open for public comment for 60 days and the comment period ends on October 6, 2026. More information about the proposed rule can be found here.
- For additional updates, refer to the NC Center for Nonprofits' September 18 Public Policy update.

4. Local Level

- United Way has coordinated a **9/25** event celebrating Dolly Parton and her legacy. The theme is "Let's Paint Cumberland County Pink & Blue!" Similar events are being hosted across NC and nationwide.
- The City of Fayetteville is launching Stronger Partners Initiative. This initiative was created to bring established nonprofit leaders together to think intentionally about where their organizations are going, learn from community experts and one another, and build relationships that can help move their vision forward. More information and opportunities to come.

B. Grant Opportunities/Updates/RFPs

- PFC requested adjustments to the remaining funding from the City of Fayetteville's Revenue Replacement Grant in order to fully expend the funds (**Family Connects and Workforce Development Program)**. The

City approved the requested adjustment. The City has requested that all funding be expended by October 31, 2026.

C. Building Sustainability and Organizational Sustainability & Succession Planning

- The **Building Sustainability Work Group met on September 21** to continue reviewing options. The group will not meet again until further discussions are had with DHHS.
- **Organizational Sustainability & Succession Planning:** The RFP for firms with experience providing nonprofit legal consultation and merger facilitation services is being released October 1 with a deadline for proposals of October 16.

D. Staff Updates

- Congratulations to **Johanna Betancourt** who was selected as **our new Early Literacy & Play Coordinator**. Johanna joined the Partnership in April 2026 as an Early Care & Education Coach. Her expertise and creativity make her a great fit to lead library and Kaleidoscope Play & Learn operations.
- Currently Hiring for 3 full-time positions: IT Technician, Early Care & Education Coach, and NC Pre-K Data & Eligibility Specialist. For more information about these positions and to apply, visit our careers page at ccpfc.org/hr/careers.

E. Events/Recognitions

- **Chuy's Friends and Family Days will be September 26-27.** We have been chosen as the proceeds recipient for the launch of their restaurant which is at the site of the former Bahama Breeze location. The event is by invitation. Meals are complimentary along with non-alcoholic beverages. Proceeds coming to the Partnership will be from each Margarita sold.
- **Boo-Levard Office Trick or Treat October 29 from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm.** Hotdog plate sale 11:30 am – 1:30 pm and 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Things you can do: Donate bags of candy or prepackaged snacks, purchase a plate for lunch, and/or join us with the families. We 175 children registered to come!
- **Professional Development Day at Methodist University on October 10th** ($15 per person). The keynote speaker will be **Dr. Nefertiti Poyner** (***Joy Belongs Where You Are: Reset for Purpose, Energy, and Alignment***). Breakout Sessions (Choose from three trainings): ***Inclusion Essentials: Modifying Classrooms for Children with Special Needs; Use your Words: How our Words Impact Children; Strengthening Team Collaboration*** (Directors only)
- Students in the **Parents for Higher Education (PFHE) at FTCC will host a book drive** on campus during National Book Month in October to collect new and gently used children's books for PFC. Dates for the book drive are **October 1-31. To donate a book to the cause, you use the QR code below.**
- **Grilled Cheese Festival** – **Save the date for Saturday, November 7, 2026.** Contact dmalvesti@ccpfc.org. **Presale tickets are on sale at https://ccpfc.org/cheesy/. Presale tickets will end October 30th. Only day of the event ticket option is four tokens for $25. * All five food trucks have been secured and we would appreciate board support in ticket sales, purchasing tickets, invite a friend, purchasing a table, connecting us to a table sponsor, and sharing event and ticket links with your networks.**
- **Giving Tuesday – Giving Tuesday Campaign will open for donations, November 23, 2026 at 9:00 am and will close at 11:59 pm on December 1, 2026.**
- **Barnes & Noble Book Drive** – We are the named recipient. Dates have not been finalized.
- **Kindness Awards are underway all September 21** – 25 with one recipient being honored the First Sunday in October at Festival Park due to scheduling needs. Follow our social media posts of each presentation. We will also celebrate the recipients at Executive Committee today or at the October Board Meeting.
- **Little Land 2027 – Save the date for Saturday, March 13, 2027, 10:00 am-2:00 pm, Crown Expo Center.**

Children's Book Drive

SCAN TO DONATE











2026

KINDNESS AWARDS

Celebrating Their Impact

HONOREES

Saneequa Barlow

Nekya Brown

Felisha Williams-Brown

Wendy McAdams-Flores

Carl Pringle

Tashonda McCormick

Sonia Roldan-Jackson

Christopher Baumann

The Kinsey House

Partnership FOR CHILDREN
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2026
KINDNESS AWARDS
Celebrating Your Impact

Sonia Roldan-Jackson

Nominated by: Major Lori Holloway, Fayetteville Police

In October 2025, Civilian Investigative Assistant Sonia Roldan-Jackson recognized a need that can easily go unnoticed: children in the community needed warm coats for the approaching winter. Through her daily interactions with children, both personally and professionally, she saw the challenges many families face and chose to respond with compassion and purpose.

Sonia organized a community children's coat drive that quickly grew into a tremendous success. Her passion inspired friends, colleagues, community members, and local partners to join the effort, resulting in the donation of more than 300 coats for children in need. Because of her leadership, hundreds of young people entered the winter months with warmth, comfort, and a tangible reminder that their community cared for them.

The significance of Sonia's kindness reaches beyond the coats themselves. She identified a specific need, invited others into the solution, and transformed concern into collective action. In doing so, she helped families meet an essential need while also strengthening a spirit of generosity throughout the community.

Sonia's selfless character is evident in every aspect of her work and service. She consistently advocates for victims and works to improve the lives of those she serves. Her ability to notice people who might otherwise be overlooked, mobilize support, and act with empathy reflects the true spirit of kindness and makes Fayetteville a more caring place for children and families.

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and the difference you continue to make in our community.

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2026
KINDNESS AWARDS
Celebrating Your Impact

Christopher Baumann

Nominated by: Sgt. Malachy Quillen, Fayetteville Police Department

Detective Christopher Baumann embodies the spirit of kindness by going above and beyond in service to the community, especially its youngest and most vulnerable members. For several years, he has served as the Fayetteville Police Department's beloved mascot, "Buster," dedicating countless hours of his personal time to community events, school programs, and outreach activities.

Through this role, Detective Baumann creates positive and meaningful interactions with children and families. His ability to connect with young people helps build trust, comfort, and stronger relationships between law enforcement and the community. Each interaction offers children an experience of safety, encouragement, and connection that can shape how they view the people who serve their community.

His compassion is equally evident in the difficult aspects of his work. Throughout his career, he has investigated numerous domestic violence cases and circumstances that can deeply affect children. In these moments, he takes extra time to ensure that young victims are not overlooked and that they receive reassurance, attention, and protection.

Detective Baumann's impact comes from his willingness to care in both visible and quiet ways. Whether he is bringing joy as Buster or helping a child through a frightening experience, he gives his time and attention with genuine compassion. His actions demonstrate that kindness can build trust, restore a sense of safety, and make a lasting difference for families throughout the community.

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2026
KINDNESS AWARDS
Celebrating Your Impact

Spring Lake Family Support Services Center at The Kinsey House

Some acts of kindness create ripples that transform an entire community. The story of The Kinsey House is one such example.

What began as a chance meeting between Richard Alan Kinsey and Debora Hudson in 2015 grew into a shared vision rooted in faith, compassion, and a deep love for the Spring Lake community. Their friendship helped inspire the creation of Spring Lake Family Support Services in 2019. In 2020, Alan donated his family home to the organization because he trusted Debora Hudson's vision, asking only that it be named The Kinsey House in honor of his mother, Nell, whose love for the community continues to inspire its work.

The Partnership for Children had the pleasure of connecting with The Kinsey House in May 2026 through its Butterfly Kisses, Baby Wishes community baby shower. What impressed us most was not simply the event itself, but the extraordinary heart behind it.

In a community where many families face significant challenges, The Kinsey House demonstrates what meaningful outreach looks like: meeting families where they are, recognizing their dignity, building relationships, and bringing people together to provide tangible support. Their commitment reminds us that kindness is more than a single generous act. It is a sustained investment in people, grounded in the belief that every family deserves to feel valued, supported, and connected.

The Partnership for Children is delighted to present the Kindness Award to Spring Lake Family Support Services Center – The Kinsey House, honoring its compassionate leadership, unwavering community commitment, and the lasting legacy of kindness it continues to build.

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Saneequa Barlow

Nominated By: Dominque Womack

Saneequa Barlow, founder of The Jr. Artist Program, demonstrates kindness by creating a place where young girls can feel seen, supported, and encouraged to become confident leaders. Her nonprofit empowers girls of all ethnicities through community engagement, leadership development, and fellowship. For the past six years, she has led a summer camp serving more than 20 girls across Cumberland and Hoke Counties, offering education in life skills, mental health awareness, body positivity, self-defense, and other areas that strengthen the whole child.

What makes Saneequa's service especially meaningful is the care behind it. She has built a safe, nurturing environment where girls can ask questions, discover their strengths, develop resilience, and form positive relationships. Her work reminds each participant that she matters and that her voice, future, and well-being are worth investing in.

Saneequa has often funded this work herself, reflecting a deep personal commitment to the young people she serves. Now officially recognized as a 501(c)(3), The Jr. Artist Program is positioned to pursue grant support, expand its reach, and deepen its impact. Her compassion has already created opportunities for girls to grow, and her continued leadership will help even more young people feel empowered, prepared, and connected.

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Tashonda McCormick

Nominated By: Elaine Johnson

Tashonda McCormick is a beacon of hope whose kindness is expressed through education, literacy, mentorship, and faithful community service. As a dedicated special education teacher, she is deeply committed to supporting her students and families throughout the area. Over the past four years, she has actively participated in children's reading programs and has earned multiple awards for exceptional community partnerships that promote literacy.

As a children's book author, Tashonda generously provides free books to families, helping parents and children create meaningful moments together through reading. Her efforts do more than place books into children's hands. They encourage curiosity, strengthen family bonds, and help young readers see learning as something joyful and accessible.

Tashonda also serves her church as a mentor in its special needs' ministry, offering guidance, encouragement, and support to individuals and families. She regularly hosts educational events across the community, including Shon's Stories reading sessions and pop-up literacy events. Through these opportunities, she creates welcoming spaces where children can build confidence, and families can connect with learning resources.

An active member of the local North Carolina Association of Educators and a proud graduate of Fayetteville State University, Tashonda leads by example. Her willingness to help, share advice, and create opportunities for others makes her an inspiring role model. Her kindness leaves a lasting impact because it equips children and families with encouragement, knowledge, and a stronger belief in what is possible.

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Wendy McAdams-Flores

Nominated By: Gloria Young & Ebony Pulley

Wendy McAdams-Flores consistently turns kindness into action. She adopted Montclair Park in honor of her brother, Detective Brian McAdams, carrying his legacy forward by bringing family, friends, and local youth together to clean the park. Through this effort, she not only improves a shared community space but also teaches young people that caring for their community is a meaningful way to honor others and create lasting change.

Her generosity reaches children, families, schools, and neighbors experiencing hardship. Each year, Wendy helps distribute backpacks and school supplies, and through her LLC, Brian's Love, she adopted Sunnyside Elementary School and partnered with Delta Sigma Theta to support students and staff. She also regularly feeds individuals experiencing homelessness near the Headquarters Library and remains active in the Fayetteville Alumni Chapter. Her kindness is consistent, practical, and offered with a heartfelt smile.

Wendy's long-term impact is equally remarkable. Before moving to North Carolina in 2011, she was a founding member of Spark Academy Elementary School, part of the KIPP program, in Newark, New Jersey. She began supporting kindergarten students and remained connected to many of them from 2009 through 2026, motivating, mentoring, and nurturing them as they pursued their goals. Many of those students graduated from college this year, demonstrating the lasting power of steady encouragement and belief in a child's potential.

In May 2026, Wendy received the "Be the Change" award for her dedication to Spark Academy. Her continued impact also led to an Honorary Doctorate Degree from OWNit. These recognitions reflect what her community has experienced firsthand: Wendy's kindness is not a single gesture, but a lifelong commitment to showing up, lifting others, and helping people thrive.

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Nekya Brown

Nominated By: LeTyssa Stokes

Nekya Brown is a warm and compassionate leader whose kindness is rooted in a genuine heart for children and a willingness to serve wherever she is needed. At Evans Metropolitan AME Zion Church, she faithfully volunteers her creative talents by designing flyers and promotional materials that strengthen church events and outreach. As Youth Director, she invests her time in guiding young people and volunteered to teach during Vacation Bible School.

Nekya's impact extends beyond the tasks she completes. Through her consistent presence, encouragement, and example, she helps young people feel welcomed, valued, and supported. Her service creates opportunities for children and families to connect, participate, and grow within a caring community.

As a committed mental health advocate and an active member of both the NCNW and the NAACP, Nekya continues to use her voice and energy in service to others. She is known for stepping forward to help and for treating people with compassion. Her everyday acts of kindness build trust, strengthen community connections, and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around her.

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Felisha Williams-Brown

Nominated By: LeTyssa Stokes

Felisha Williams-Brown embodies kindness through a life devoted to serving others. Selfless, compassionate, and driven by purpose, she does more than recognize the needs around her. She responds with her time, leadership, and a genuine desire to ensure that others feel supported, encouraged, and valued.

As Chair of the Connectional Lay Council of the AME Zion Church, Fayetteville District, at Evans Metropolitan AME Zion Church, Felisha leads with both her heart and her hands. Through initiatives such as the Back-to-School event, she brings local organizations together to provide students and families with backpacks filled with school supplies, valuable community resources, and access to a health fair. Her leadership transforms generosity into meaningful action, helping children begin the school year feeling prepared, confident, and cared for.

Felisha's kindness also shines through her work in Medicaid at Cumberland County DSS, where she makes a meaningful difference in the lives of the families she serves. Her dedication to the community extends even further through her active involvement with the NAACP and the NCNW.

Across every role, Felisha leads with a heart of gold, unwavering determination, and a deep commitment to helping others access support, encouragement, and opportunity. Her kindness strengthens the community, uplifts families, and inspires others to serve with the same compassion and purpose.

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2026

KINDNESS AWARDS

Celebrating Your Impact

Carl Pringle

Nominated By: Dominique Womack

Carl Pringle is lovingly known throughout the community as "Uncle Carl," a name that reflects the dependable care and protection he offers to children and families. Whether he is hosting monthly community feedings or volunteering in elementary schools, he shows up with children's safety, well-being, and confidence at the forefront. He has invested years of heart and hard work in making sure young people feel protected, nourished, and reminded that they have someone they can depend on.

As a dedicated supporter and volunteer with the Angel Program at Ponderosa Elementary School, Uncle Carl continued serving even after his grandchildren moved to different schools. His decision to stay involved speaks to the depth of his kindness. He was not serving only because of a personal connection; he remained because he wanted every child to know they were not alone and should not have to face bullying without support.

Through his nonprofit, Uncle Carl's Safe Space, he raises funds each year to send a group of children to summer camp for a full week. The organization also assists people facing difficult times by providing food, clothing, and essential resources. His "Lunch on Us" initiative, held on the first Sunday at Festival Park, offers a meal to anyone who needs one. His mission is simple and inclusive: feed people and help ensure that no one in the community goes hungry.

Uncle Carl's impact comes from the dignity, consistency, and compassion he brings to every act of service. By creating safe spaces, meeting immediate needs, and standing beside children and families, he strengthens the community, one relationship at a time.

In recognition of the kindness you have shown
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in our community.

From: Marta Hester <mhester@smartstart.org>
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2026 1:38 PM
Subject: Smart Start Network Update for Week of September 7 - 11, 2026

Good afternoon,

Smart Start Network Public Policy Meeting on Friday, October 2, 2026, to afford an opportunity to provide feedback that will help inform various items and sections in the upcoming 2028-2030 CCDF Plan. As noted in the attached infographic on *Child Care and Development Fund Plan Development PHASES AND STAGES*, one of the first steps in CCDF Plan development involves reflecting on the current plan by becoming familiar with its content. This step will help in identifying both strengths and areas that may benefit from further development. To prepare, please begin reviewing the current CCDF plan and consider any items, sections or topics in which you would like to provide feedback. Your insights in these areas are invaluable, and your participation will help guide this work. There will also be a subsidy services consultant at the October 2, 2026, meeting to help respond to any subsidy services-related questions within the plan.

Friday, October 2, 2026, 10:00am to 11:00am
Preparation on 2028-2030 CCDF Plan to include guidance on how to submit comments
Presenters:
Laura Hewitt, CCDF Plan Coordinator, NC DCDEE
Andrew Moser, Lead Policy, NC DCDEE

STATE UPDATE

New NC Child Care Market Rates
NC Division of Child Development and Early Education posted the new market rates on Tuesday, September 9, 2026. The webpage includes changes to the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Market Rates effective October 1, 2026.

- **Market Rates - Market Rates**

Midterm Elections
NC County Boards of Elections began sending absentee ballots last Friday, September 4, 2026, making North Carolina the first state in the country to begin voting in the 2026 midterm election. The 2026 ballot includes one U.S. Senate seat, all 14 of North Carolina's U.S. House seats, all 170 seats in the N.C. General Assembly, one N.C. Supreme Court seat, three N.C. Court of Appeals seats, statewide referenda, and numerous local races. See your sample ballot here.

North Carolina voters will be asked to show a photo ID when voting in person. Voters casting an absentee ballot by mail must include a photocopy of an acceptable ID or complete an ID Exception Form.

2026 NCGA Candidate Information

- House: Unofficial General Election Candidates for 2027
- Senate: Unofficial General Election Candidates for 2027
- General Election: November 3, 2026
  Go to www.ncsbe.gov for additional information.

Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education
Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Education met on Monday, August 31, 2026. While the Commission is not focused on early care and education per se, many have expressed interest. The commission's first charge calls for stronger early literacy instruction and a deeper teacher pipeline to include a literacy coach in every low-

performing elementary school and streamlined teacher licensure. If interested, please see agenda items from August 31st meeting below.

- Date: Monday, August 31 at 10 a.m.
- Location: Friday Institute for Educational Innovation
    - CHARGE 1: Teacher Training and Student Advancement
    - Education Briefs
    - Agenda
    - Members
    - YouTube Video Link

FEDERAL UPDATE

Congressional Update

Congress is expected to leave Washington after September 17, 2026, and remain out of session until mid-November after the upcoming midterm elections.

Stay-at-Home Parent Child Care Subsidy Proposal

The Trump administration is drafting a proposal that could reshape federal child care policy by allowing married couples to receive funding from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) for taking care of their own children at home if they meet certain income requirements. The proposal would create a new category of care within CCDF referred to as "parent-based childcare." Media outlets are sharing that the proposal may include an estimated $9,000 per child annually to reflect the average value of assistance provided through CCDF. Families would need to meet several requirements as outlined below:

- Be a married couple.
- Have one spouse working at least 35 hours per week.
- Have the other spouse stay home to care for the child.
- Meet state income eligibility requirements.

The Trump Administration's draft proposal excludes unmarried couples with a stay-at-home parent and single parents who do not work.

- Why the Trump Admin's Stay-at-Home Parent $9,000 Tax Credit is Dividing Republicans - Newsweek
- Trump proposal would pay stay-at-home parents through child care program
- White House looks to implement plan that pays parents to stay home

Head Start Funding to Improve Head Start Nutrition, Facilities and Services

On September 8, 2026, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), announced over $225 million in Head Start supplemental awards to strengthen nutrition services, improve facilities, and help programs address critical one-time needs to better serve children and families across the nation. For a listing of the NC Head Start Programs receiving a portion of 2026 Supplemental Funds for Head Start Nutrition Programming, go to 2026 Supplemental Funds for Head Start Nutrition Programming | HeadStart.gov.

- HHS Awards Over $225 Million to Improve Head Start Nutrition, Facilities and Services | HHS.gov

RESOURCES

NC Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF) Report

According to a press release published by the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF), there is a disconnect between when parents are expected to work and when childcare is available. The full report examines several interconnected challenges facing North Carolina:

- Access to affordable childcare
- Workforce participation
- Employee recruitment and retention
- Economic stability for working families

- New report examines if childcare meets working parents' needs - EdNC New report examines if childcare meets working parents' needs - EdNC

National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
NIEER's research reveals that parents reading to preschool-age children was 85% pre-pandemic and declined to below 75% during and after the pandemic.

- Parent-Child Shared Book Reading With Preschoolers During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic | National Institute for Early Education Research

Congratulations to the state of Illinois for recently establishing a new Department of Early Childhood to make it easier for families to find the services they need under one agency.

Finally, look for a meeting link later today to be disseminated to the upcoming Smart Start Network Public Policy Meetings, with regularly scheduled meetings resuming shortly thereafter.

Thank you,

Marta

smart start
Each Child. Every Community.
www.smartstart.org

Marta T. Hester, M.A.
Director of Public Policy and Advocacy
984.221.1221

The North Carolina Partnership for Children
1100 Wake Forest Rd, Raleigh, NC 27604

NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Child Development and Early Education

JOSH STEIN • Governor
DEVDUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary
CANDACE WITHERSPOON • Director

Implementation of 2026 Market Rates FAQ

This FAQ is an attachment to Change Notice Letter #26-05. Please refer to the Change Notice Letter for full policy and procedures.

1. **When are the new Market Rates effective?**
   Response: The new Market Rates are effective October 01,2026.

2. **What is the Statewide Floor rate?**
   Response: The statewide floor rate is a benchmark—based on provider-reported data—used to set fair, market-aligned subsidy rates that support equitable access to care for families using Subsidy Child Care. The statewide floor rate was part of a critical investment that helped raise the rural child care reimbursement rates to a state average to help keep child care open and available in those communities.

3. **What does the color coding mean on the Market rate Charts**?

   Response: The 2021 Statewide Floor Rates are highlighted in ORANGE, the 2023 Market Rates are highlighted in GREEN, and the current Market Rates – Hold Harmless Rates are in WHITE

4. **What does Hold Harmless mean?**

   Response: Hold Harmless means that if a provider's Current Market Rate is higher than the recommended rates from the 2021 statewide floor or the 2023 county market rate, DCDEE will not lower the provider's rate. The provider is 'held harmless' from any rate decrease.

5. **What is the 75th Percentile?**

   Response: The term "75th percentile" is used to describe the subsidy reimbursement level that enables a parent to afford 75 percent of the privately purchased care of a certain type in an area. To determine the 75th percentile, the private pay rates for all children served within a category of care are ranked by child from lowest to highest. Counting from the bottom (lowest rate), rates are counted three-quarters of the way up to identify the rate that represents the 75th percentile. Increasing reimbursement rates to the 75th percentile of the 2023 Market Rate Study is critically important to be compliant with the CCDF Federal rules.

6. **How will a provider know the market rate being paid to them?**

   Response: Providers can review the Market Rate table on the Division's website at https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/DCDEE-Sections/Subsidy-Services/Market-Rates to identify the rates for the county where their facility is located.

Examples (non-specified county)

5 Star Child Care Center - **Infants**		5 Star Family Child Care Home - **Infants**	
2023 Market Rate	***$ 1622.00***	*2023 Market Rate*	*$ 758.00*
2021 Statewide Floor rate	$ 1400.00	**2021 Statewide Floor rate**	**$ 884.00**
Child Care Center is reimbursed at the 2023 Market Rate		Family Child Care Home is reimbursed at the 2021 Statewide Floor Rate	

If you have additional questions about the information in this FAQ, please contact DCDEE or your Local Purchasing Agency / Local Department of Social Services.

Bill Extending Educator Tax Deduction to Early Childhood Educators for the First Time

The bipartisan Supporting Early-Childhood Educators' Deductions (SEED) Act is set to become law, marking a key bipartisan victory for early childhood educators and an important step forward for federal child care policy.

The SEED Act will, for the first time, allow early childhood educators to claim the same federal tax deduction for out-of-pocket classroom expenses currently available to K-12 teachers. The legislation was led by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), David Valadao (R-CA) and Maggie Goodlander (D-NH).

Update: The President signed the bill into law on September 18th.

The following is a statement from First Five Years Fund (FFYF) Executive Director Sarah Rittling:

"The SEED Act becoming law is a bipartisan recognition of the early educators who make child care possible for millions of families and help power our economy every day. This is also an example of what Congress can accomplish when lawmakers work together. At a time when families, educators, and providers continue to face enormous challenges, this progress shows that bipartisan action on child care is both possible and achievable.

"Early educators play an essential role in giving young children a strong start and building the foundation for their future success. But for too long, they have been left out of a tax benefit available to their K-12 peers, even as they spend their own hard-earned money on books, supplies, and materials for the children in their classrooms.

"We are deeply grateful to Senators Collins and Bennet, and Representatives Fitzpatrick, Panetta, Valadao and Goodlander, and the bipartisan lawmakers in both chambers who championed the SEED Act and helped get it across the finish line. We look forward to building on this momentum and continuing to advance bipartisan solutions that strengthen child care for families, educators, and communities across the country."