



EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-AGE CARE

ND STATE AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

Early childhood and school-age care programs (serving children birth through age 12) keep kids safe, engage young people in enriching activities, and help working parents keep their jobs. These programs are proven to help children reach their full potential and are a lifeline for families across ND. Yet, the early childhood and school-age care industry has become one of North Dakota's largest workforce issues.

With an expected budget surplus, the unique opportunity exists to strengthen and support the state's early childhood and school-age care industry by ensuring care is **available, affordable, and high-quality**. North Dakota is in dire need of solutions that consider the cost of care for parents while providing adequate funding for childcare and school-age care businesses.



Invest in defining and supporting clear career pathways for early childhood and school-age workers.

- Include early childhood credential through partnership with Career and Technical Education;
- stipend or incentives for achieving Child Development Associate; and/or
- higher placement on Career Pathways so employee investment in credentials and education has an impact on salary.



Streamline fingerprinting processes for criminal history checks to ensure there is not a delay in onboarding childcare staff.

- Background checks are averaging 6-12 weeks to process in ND.
- Ensure all human service zones have dedicated staff who can provide consistent daily fingerprint appointments to decrease wait times.



Extend the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to early childhood mixed-delivery systems.

- Including Department of Public Instruction-approved 4-year-old programs.



Improve Growing Futures Registry.

- Create consistency among trainer requirements.
- Improve customer assistance response times.
- Streamline course approval process to create efficiencies while maintaining high-quality professional learning to support the field.



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