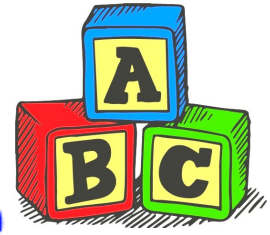




Building Blocks



Short Session Budget Process

Many in Head Start are going to read [Governor Cooper's budget proposal](#) and start celebrating investments in early childhood education.

Not so fast, says NC Head Start Association lobbyist Christy Jones.

"This is just the first step in a long journey this summer," said Jones. "The Governor's budget proposal is just that – a proposal. It's now on the General Assembly to take what they like from Governor Cooper's budget and discard what they don't like."

Jones said the Republican General Assembly and the Democratic Governor don't see eye-to-eye on most issues.

"However, there may be some common ground on early childhood education," Jones said. "House Majority Leader John Bell and the House budget writer Jason Saine made media statements in the last couple weeks that they would like to invest more in early childhood education as a workforce development issue."

It was announced that the General Assembly will begin budget writing on Tuesday, May 7. Legislators are expected to have a budget by July 1, 2024.

Governor Cooper's Budget Released

The following article was excerpted from a [press release](#) accompanying Governor Roy Cooper's public unveiling of his budget proposal on April 24. [Click to read the press release and review his budget proposal.](#)

Governor Roy Cooper released his recommended budget for FY 2024-2025, [Securing North Carolina's Future](#).

The Governor's plan would invest over \$1 billion in public schools across North Carolina builds on the state's success as the top state to do business in the country for two years in a row and responsibly invests North Carolina's strong surplus to provide tax relief to small businesses and working families coupled with investments that benefit everyday people, including quality child care, job training, and clean drinking water.

"This budget is an opportunity to build on our state's momentum and make up ground in areas like public education, quality child care and clean drinking water, where legislators have fallen short," said Governor Roy Cooper. "As the number one state to do business in the country for two years in a row, we have the formula for success in our high-quality public schools, talented workforce and thriving economy. We must make targeted investments strengthening public education, boosting economic development, and protecting our natural resources to secure a bright future for North Carolina."

The Governor's budget recognizes the need for child care and early education in sustaining our economy with a multifaceted \$745 million investment.

It mitigates the fiscal cliff in child care funding and keeps child care centers open with \$200 million for Child Care Stabilization Grants and \$128.5 million for child care subsidies that will increase reimbursement rates for providers in rural and low-wealth communities.

Our nationally recognized NC Pre-K program is at risk because of persistent underfunding by the General Assembly.

The Governor's budget shores up NC Pre-K by investing \$197 million to cover the full cost of care for NC Pre-K students and \$24.4 million to provide summer programs for students once they complete NC Pre-K and before they enter kindergarten.

The budget also further reduces child care costs for North Carolina families by providing a refundable child and dependent care tax credit.

April 29-May 3, 2024