

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 389

Short Title: Child Care Workforce Pilot Program/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Arp, Lambeth, Bell, and Strickland (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

March 13, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE ACADEMY PILOT
PROGRAM AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., in collaboration with the North Carolina Community Colleges System Office, shall develop and implement a two-year pilot program that expands the child care workforce academies currently operating in Johnston and Wayne Counties. The pilot program shall establish child care workforce academies across the State designed to provide free, comprehensive training and support to individuals, with no experience or education in child care, who are interested in pursuing a career in child care.

SECTION 2. Local partnerships in the following counties shall participate in the pilot program described under this act: Johnston and Wayne. The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC), in collaboration with the Community Colleges System Office, shall select 10 additional local partnerships to participate in the pilot program from the four local partnership regions of the statewide NCPC network, which regions are the West, Mid-West, Mid-East, and East.

SECTION 3. The Community Colleges System Office and local community colleges shall coordinate to ensure that graduates of the child care workforce academies meet all requirements to be credentialed with the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential as lead teachers in child care in this State.

SECTION 4. Each child care workforce academy (academy) shall seek to enroll no less than 10 students, with a goal of enrolling 15 students in each course. The academy shall operate up to eight hours per day over a two- to three-week period. A participating community college shall strive to offer an academy up to three times per year, with at least one of the three academies occurring at the end of the traditional public school calendar year to allow participation by interested high school and college students. The academy shall be offered free-of-charge to applicants. Students participating in the academy shall receive the knowledge, skills, and training, including the necessary health screenings, background checks, and fingerprinting, required for employment as a lead teacher in a licensed child care program in this State. Upon successful completion of the academy, each student shall receive a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential that will enable the student to begin teaching in a licensed child care program immediately upon graduation. A local partnership may provide each graduate with a one-time stipend. If a one-time stipend for completing the course is provided, the amount shall be at the discretion of the local partnership but shall not be less than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00). Students shall be eligible to receive an additional one-time stipend in the amount of



1 five hundred dollars (\$500.00) in State funds after completing one year of employment as a lead
2 teacher in a licensed child care program in this State.

3 **SECTION 5.** The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., and local
4 partnerships shall (i) collaborate with the community college in the county or counties in which
5 the local partnership is located, as practicable, to implement the child care workforce academy
6 and (ii) ensure information about the child care workforce academy in the respective county is
7 made available to the public.

8 **SECTION 6.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
9 Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education, the sum of
10 seven hundred thirty-eight thousand dollars (\$738,000) in nonrecurring funds for each year of
11 the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium to be allocated to the North Carolina Partnership for Children,
12 Inc., to provide the State match for implementing the pilot program described in this act as
13 follows:

- 14 (1) The sum of four hundred eighty-six thousand dollars (\$486,000) for each year
15 of the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium for the State portion of tuition costs.
- 16 (2) The sum of two hundred fifty-two thousand dollars (\$252,000) for each year
17 of the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium for the stipends provided with State funds
18 in accordance with Section 4 of this act.

19 **SECTION 6.(b)** Funds described in subsection (a) of this section shall be allocated
20 equally among the local partnerships selected to participate in the pilot program. Local
21 partnerships shall provide documentation of a twenty-five percent (25%) local match as a
22 condition of receiving State funds under this act. Any unexpended and unencumbered funds at
23 the end of each fiscal year from the funds provided under this section shall not revert to the
24 General Fund but shall remain available for use in accordance with this act. Funds appropriated
25 under this act shall not be used for administrative costs.

26 **SECTION 7.** The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC), in
27 collaboration with the local partnerships and community colleges participating in the pilot
28 program, shall submit a progress report on the pilot program to the Joint Legislative Oversight
29 Committee on Health and Human Services and the Fiscal Research Division by March 31, 2026,
30 with any concerns or recommendations for program expansion. A final report shall be submitted
31 by December 31, 2026, and shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- 32 (1) The local partnerships community colleges participating in the pilot program.
- 33 (2) The number of students enrolled in each academy, by county.
- 34 (3) The number of students who successfully completed the academy, by county.
- 35 (4) The number of newly credentialed graduates employed as lead teachers in
36 licensed child care programs, by county.
- 37 (5) The outcomes achieved from the pilot program, including any
38 recommendations for expanding the program statewide.
- 39 (6) The number of new child care slots available as a result of adding the new
40 lead teachers.
- 41 (7) Total program costs, including any administrative costs borne by the county.
- 42 (8) The amount of funds needed to expand the program statewide.
- 43 (9) Recommendations on developing and implementing a similar academy for
44 child care directors.

45 **SECTION 8.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2025.