

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 389
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/1/25

Short Title: Child Care Workforce Pilot Program.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 13, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE ACADEMY PILOT
PROGRAM.

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, local community colleges, and NCPC 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. The Community Colleges System Office shall have the responsibility to verify the content of the academies to assure that accreditation requirements are met.

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 to assure that the equivalent instructional hours for either EDU 119 or EDU 3119 are met enabling graduates of the academy to be credentialed as a lead teacher in child care. A participating community college and Smart Start Local Partnership 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.



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

SECTION 6. The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC), in collaboration with the local partnerships and community colleges participating in the pilot program, shall submit a progress report on the pilot program to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Fiscal Research Division by March 31, 2026, with any concerns or recommendations for program expansion. A final report shall be submitted by December 31, 2026, and shall include, at a minimum, the following:

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

SECTION 7.(a) The provisions of this act shall become effective only if funds are appropriated by the General Assembly to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education, to be allocated to the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., for one or both fiscal years of the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium for the purpose of developing and implementing the pilot program described in this act.

SECTION 7.(b) If funds are appropriated for the pilot program as provided in subsection (a) of this section, 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 five hundred dollars (\$500.00) in State funds after completing one year of employment as a lead teacher in a licensed child care program in this State.

SECTION 8. This act is effective when it becomes law.