

Action for Children
Welcomes

Board Members:

Natalie Best, Raleigh
Judge Brenda Branch, Halifax
Clarence High, Jr., Ahoskie



Summer 2009
Issue 1 Volume 2

Action for Children North Carolina

A TOUGH BUDGET YEAR BUT SOME GAINS FOR CHILDREN

The 2009 session of the General Assembly ended on Tuesday, August 11th. The state operating budget for the next biennium is a very painful budget for children, with major cuts to health and human services and juvenile justice, some of which undermine the state's child-serving infrastructure. On the bright side, it was a good year for non-budget-related policy items that will move the child agenda forward.

State Budget

▼ The **overall budget** is \$19 billion in 2009-10, representing a 14% cut from the 2009-10 continuation budget. Health and human services (HHS) saw a 30% cut, juvenile justice lost 16%, and public education lost 10%. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds will make up about half the HHS cut and three-quarters of the education cut in the first year; however, these funds are time limited. The juvenile justice system will receive a small amount of federal money for gang prevention. The budget includes \$990 million in new revenue, raised mostly from a one-cent increase in the sales tax.

Health

Fully Fund N.C. Health Choice: In record numbers, hard-working North Carolina families have been losing employer-provided health insurance coverage for their children. North Carolina's Health Choice program has done a good job enrolling children; however, the rapid increase in loss of private insurance coverage has meant Health Choice struggles to keep up with the need.

▲ **Health Choice received a \$17 million increase in 2009-10 and \$21 million in 2010-11. This will allow growth of 7% in 2009-10, or about 9,000 children. This is a major success in the current budget climate!**

Implement N.C. Kids' Care: All parents should have the opportunity to buy health insurance for their children. When children are disabled, chronically ill or the parent's employer no longer provides dependent coverage, there is often no private insurance plan available. The Governor and state legislature have already approved the N.C. Kids' Care program to fill this missing piece of the private insurance market. Now it is time to fund its implementation for children in families up to 300 percent of federal poverty level and give families above that income the option to buy into the program at full premium.

▼ **N.C. Kids' Care was not implemented this session, due to the difficult budget climate.**

Continued on pages 5 & 6

President Holds Health Insurance Town Hall in Raleigh

On Wednesday, July 29, 2009, President Barack Obama held a Town Hall meeting regarding health insurance reform at Broughton High School in Raleigh. Action for Children attended to make input regarding children in health insurance reform.

1) **DO NO HARM TO CHILDREN.**

Health reform should not turn back the clock on progress our nation has achieved via Medicaid & Health Choice/SCHIP.

2) **INSURE ALL CHILDREN.**

More than 260,000 children in N.C. are uninsured—enough to reach from Greensboro to Wilmington, if holding hands. Six million of the nation's 9 million children are eligible but not enrolled.

3) **COVER CHILDREN HEAD TO TOE.**

All children need coverage that meets their unique developmental needs and provides them with the preventive services, medical care and oral and mental health benefits needed to succeed in life. When children are healthy, they can learn and grow and are more likely to stay in school and focused on learning.



**THERE ARE NO DO-OVERS IN CHILDHOOD!
We must get health reform right the first time!**

CREATE CHANGE FOR CHILDREN: JOIN ACTION FOR CHILDREN N.C.

Help Action for Children create change for children by donating your pocket change!!

Do you have spare change on your bedside table? Do you have an untapped Piggy Bank? Please donate your change to us so we can create change for children! Without your support, Action for Children cannot do what we do best! A little change can go a long way. Help us raise \$1 in change for each child in North Carolina. If you use our data, read our publications, or are an advocate for children, we need your help and your change.

Please contact Rosemary Wyche at: 919-834-6623 x 237 or rosemary@ncchild.org to learn how you can help Make Change for Children.



Thank you!

Special Thanks to Our Corporate & Foundation Sponsors!

A.J. Fletcher Foundation
Alliance for Children and Youth
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Applebee's
American Airlines
Asheboro Elastics
Asheville *Citizens-Times*
Bank of America
BB&T
BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina
Blueprint NC
Boone United Methodist Women
Mary Glen Burney Foundation
Campaign for Youth Justice
Capital Bank
CES (in-kind)
Corning Foundation
Corning, Inc.
Dominion Power
Duke Children's Hospital
Duke Energy
Eaton Corporation
EMBARQ
EMC
EyeNet Security (in-kind)
First Focus
GlaxoSmithKline
Golden Corral
Hanes Foundation
Hendersonville Pediatrics
HomeTrust Bank
Hueston Foundation
IBM (in-kind)
John Rex Endowment
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Kulynych Family Foundation, Inc.
Lenovo
Liggett Vector Brands
Lilly Endowment
Michael and Laura Brader-Araje Foundation
MDC

KIDS COUNT: N.C. Now Ranks 37th in U.S.

N.C. Association of Educators
N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
N.C. Foundation for Advanced Health Programs
N.C. Governor's Crime Commission
N.C. Pediatric Foundation
N.C. Pediatric Society
Raleigh News & Observer
Paragon Commercial Bank
Pediatric Urology of North Carolina, P.A.
Pearce, Brinkley, Cease + Lee, P.A.
Plachetka Family Fund of Triangle Community Foundation
Preyer Jacobson Foundation
Progress Energy Public Welfare Foundation
Pullen Memorial Baptist Church
Quintiles - via Triangle Community Foundation
RBC Centura
Redwoods Group
Roblee Foundation
Southeastern Lending Sprint/NEXTEL
State Employees' Combined Campaign
The Policy Group
Triangle United Way
UNC-Chapel Hill
UNC Children's Hospital
United Way of Forsyth County
United Way of North Carolina
Wachovia Corporation
Wachovia Foundation
Wake-Med
Joseph C. Woodard (in-kind)
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, in conjunction with Action for Children North Carolina, released the **2009 KIDS COUNT Data Report** on July 28th. North Carolina now ranks 37th in the nation in child well-being, showing the state has improved in 6 of the 10 key indicators since 2000, including family income, health and education.

The successful movement of North Carolina in this national ranking can be, in part, attributed to the sound public investments made in children over the years. In the current economic environment, such investments are at risk and, as a result, so are continued positive outcomes for children in the state.

North Carolina has made investments in programs and services that have worked to improve outcomes for children.

- Providing integrated prenatal care, raising public awareness about folic acid and SIDS and promoting smoking cessation have been successful efforts by the Department of Public Health and their community partners aimed at reducing infant mortality. Ongoing work in this area will look to pre-conception care of mothers to ensure a healthy start to pregnancy.
- The formation of the Child Fatality Task Force and the legislation on booster seats, car seats and bicycle helmets have aimed to reduce the child death rate by providing a forum for information-sharing, advocacy, and public awareness.

The long-term improvements North Carolina has experienced are the result of significant and thoughtful investments in policies and programs that work to improve children's outcomes.

- *The infant mortality rate in North Carolina dropped* from 8.6 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 8.1 in 2006. However, North Carolina's infant mortality rate is still higher than the national average.
- The child death rate declined from 24 deaths per 100,000 in 2000 to 21 deaths per 100,000 in 2006.

There are still more improvements needed especially on measures of children's economic security.

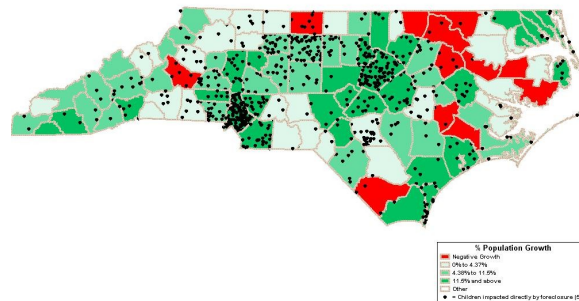
- Even before the current economic downturn, North Carolina had experienced a 5% growth in the child poverty rate.
- North Carolina ranks 26th in the percentage of children living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment. In 2007, one in three of North Carolina's children lacked secure parental employment.



ACTION FOR CHILDREN ANNOUNCES NEW DATA CENTER

Action for Children N.C. is excited to offer the state of North Carolina timely analysis and data products that promote improvements for children and families. The Research and Data function of Action for Children North Carolina has been hard at work collecting and analyzing data and evidence on child well-being in the state.

In July, the Annie E. Casey Foundation launched the KIDS COUNT Data Center, located at: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/nc>, which provides state profiles of child well-being. Action for Children North Carolina has updated the indicators in this online tool to include the latest and best available measures of how children are faring in the areas of economic security, juvenile justice, child maltreatment, and health. The new KIDS COUNT Data Center allows users to create county-level maps and graphs of data trends over time.



JOIN US FOR THE 2009 STEP-UP AND ACT FOR CHILDREN EVENT Entertainment, food & fun!

Everyone invited: Help Us Create Change for Children in North Carolina!
Monday, OCTOBER 5, 2009

GROUNDS OF THE OLD CAPITOL BUILDING
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

See you there!
See www.ncchild.org for details!



Session Review (continued from page 1)

Juvenile Justice

Adequately Fund Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPCs): North Carolina's JCPCs distribute grants to community service providers who work to prevent juvenile delinquency. Community providers are doing this work with less money than the legislature allocated in 2002. Additional funding is needed to keep up with inflation, meet the service needs identified by JCPCs, and allow the JCPCs to better monitor and support local programs.

▲ ▼ **JCPCs were not cut, but \$6.6 million cut from the Support Our Students (SOS) program was not shifted to the JCPCs as proposed in the House and Senate budgets. So overall, that \$6.6 million was a cut to community-based services for youth.**

Raise Presumptive Age of Adult Criminal Prosecution to 18: Children under age 18 are considered minors for nearly all legal purposes; however, outdated N.C. criminal law from 1919 still assumes all 16- and 17-year-olds are adults when in contact with the criminal system. North Carolina is the only state in the nation to automatically charge, try, sentence, probate and incarcerate minors in the adult criminal system with no exceptions. These children do not have access to services appropriate for youth, do not have the right to education, and their parents do not have to be notified of or participate in their charges, trial, probation or sentencing. All minors should be presumed to be under the juvenile court's jurisdiction unless a juvenile judge transfers them to the adult criminal court or they are charged with 1st degree murder.

Legislators should empower the appropriate commissions and agencies to take next steps with the feasibility study that the Governor's Crime Commission is to release before the end of this long session.

▲ ▼ **HB 1414: Youth Accountability Act was not passed this session; however, the task force portion of the bill was included in the budget as a special provision. The task force, which will create an implementation plan for moving youth from the adult system to the juvenile system, must begin meeting by November 1, 2009. Action for Children and partners will be working during the interim to move this issue forward.**

Public Education

Financial Literacy

Provide Financial Education to Students in K-12th grade: Understanding basic economic concepts has become an essential part of living and working in American society. A stable and competitive North Carolina economy requires its workforce and consumers to be financially savvy. Currently, five hours of financial education are required in high school to cover basic financial concepts like budgeting, savings, checking accounts and interest rates.

Establish a Financial Literacy Council: Involving public, private and non-profit organizations in the development of financial education curricula can improve the quantity and quality of financial education, leverage private-sector resources and introduce real-world applications to class work. A Council should establish student financial literacy goals and benchmarks, monitor implementation of financial education across the state and connect schools to private resources and financial curricula.

▲ **SB 1019: Establish N.C. Financial Literacy Council passed! A Council will be formed this fall to establish student financial literacy goals and benchmarks, monitor implementation of financial education across the state and connect schools to private resources and financial curricula.**

Session Review (continued from page 5)

Education

Ban Corporal Punishment

North Carolina law allows local school boards to permit corporal punishment. Sixty of the 115 local districts have banned the practice. These districts serve more than 80 percent of the student population in the state. In recent decades, studies have shown that corporal punishment does not produce long-term positive results and runs the risk of injuring students both physically and emotionally. All students deserve to be protected from injury, especially the tragedy of an inadvertent injury inflicted by school teachers and administrators. It is time for North Carolina to adopt a statewide ban on corporal punishment in the public schools.

▼ **H 442: *Parental Involvement in School Discipline* failed this session by only a few votes. Action for Children and other groups will be working during the interim to continue the effort to ban corporal punishment in North Carolina's public schools.**

Economic Security

Fund N.C. EITC Outreach and Expand EITC beyond five percent: In 2009, low income families will be able to receive a North Carolina earned income tax credit (EITC) equal to 3.5 percent of the federal EITC for which they already qualify. In 2010, the state EITC will increase to five percent of the federal credit. EITC pumps up local economies by annually helping over half-a-million working North Carolinians make ends meet in every part of the state. An increase in the EITC will further support families who have been forced by rising unemployment to work fewer hours or in lower-wage jobs.

▲ ▼ **The EITC was not expanded this session; however, due to the difficult budget climate, maintaining the 5% credit was a victory in itself.**

Expand the Child Care Subsidy Program: Currently, over 30,000 children are waiting to receive child care subsidies so they can be in safe, developmentally-appropriate child care arrangements while their parents are working. With the unemployment rate at a 25-year high, the subsidy program must provide additional help to unemployed parents.

Allocate additional funding to reduce the child care subsidy waiting list.

Make available new temporary subsidies for recently unemployed parents who are searching for work or participating in education or job training. Child care subsidies must support unemployed caregivers who are making themselves more employable through school or job training and while they search for work.

▲ ▼ **The state replaced significant funding for child care subsidies with temporary federal funding, which maintains subsidies for the short term, but is concerning for the long term since the federal funds are time-limited. In response to the current economic climate, the budget also broadens the possible uses of child care subsidies, allowing unemployed parents or parents in school to maintain their child care subsidies for longer.**

COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW (CfBT) Holds Kickoff at the Lake



On August 7, 2009, *Communities for a Better Tomorrow (CfBT)* held a kickoff event that brought together nearly 60 service providers, court counselors, community leaders and child/family advocates from Bertie, Halifax, Hertford and Northampton counties. To date, CfBT has accomplished the extraordinary—



including the development of a results-based plan, launch of a statewide resource database (<http://www.communitiesforabettertomorrow.org>), creation of several workgroups to implement identified priorities and award of additional grant funding to provide technical assistance, advocacy and coordination for the next two years of the initiative. The Kickoff explained future goals to the community, and the *Juvenile Justice Treatment Continuum (JJTC)* was introduced as the next phase of the initiative. JJTC is an integrated treatment continuum for court-involved youth with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders, grounded in best practice methods and shared responsibility among consumers and providers. The goal of CfBT is to unite the communities to benefit all children.

For more information about CfBT or to learn more about the Juvenile Justice Treatment Continuum, please contact Brandy Bynum at: 919-834-6623, x 234 or via email: brandy@ncchild.org



We Create Change for Children!

Donate online:
www.ncchild.org



Visit us online:
www.ncchild.org



1300 St. Mary's Street
Suite 500
Raleigh, N.C. 27605
Phone: 919-834-6623
Fax: 919-829-7299
www.ncchild.org

The **Vision** of Action for Children North Carolina is that our state will be the best place to be a child and raise a child.

The **Mission** of Action for Children North Carolina is to advocate for child well-being by educating and engaging all people across the state to ensure that our children are healthy, safe, well-educated and have every opportunity for success.