

Economic Security

- One of every four children living in poverty in North Carolina (\$22,050 in 2009 for a family of four) has at least one parent working full-time.¹⁵
- Nearly 30 percent of children live in asset poor households that do not have the financial cushion to remain above the Federal Poverty Level for three months without earned income.¹⁶
- From 2003-2007 in North Carolina, the number of children living in extreme poverty with at least one parent working full-time rose by 342 percent.¹⁷

QUIZ THE CANDIDATES:

QUESTION: What state policies are appropriate to make sure that struggling, working families have the tools they need to succeed and provide for their children?

QUESTION: What investments will you make to ensure that all children have the opportunity to become financially stable adults?

QUESTION: In this time of economic crisis, how will you work to ensure local economies are not hard hit and families are supported?

Invest in What Works

- Evidence-based programs, such as early childhood development programs, have demonstrated their return on investment. Studies show that every \$1 invested in high-quality early care and education returns \$7 or more to families and society.¹⁸

QUESTION: What are your criteria for investing state or federal dollars?

ACTION FOR CHILDREN NORTH CAROLINA

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.

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Who's for Kids and Who's JUST KIDDING?

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Ask Questions and Make Your Vote Count

On November 2, North Carolinians will go to the polls to elect all 170 state legislators, 13 U.S. Representatives, and a U.S. Senator. These officials will make decisions that shape our children's lives today and well into the future. But children can't vote. It is up to us to make sure children's issues, from public schools to health care, are an important part of the political debate.



Ask Candidates for their Positions on Children's Issues!

North Carolina ranks near the bottom of the nation on many conditions for children.

- One in five children grows up in poverty.
- Nearly nine in 100 babies are born with low birth weight.
- Nearly nine in 1,000 babies die before their first birthday.

The decisions made by elected officials can provide families with tools for success or can erect barriers to that success.

Adults need to ask candidates to make **children a priority** by investing in solutions that improve conditions and opportunities for North Carolina's children and their families. Let candidates know that your support for them hinges on their support for children. Ask the questions to determine *who's for kids and who's just kidding?*

Remember to Register and to Vote!

The general election is **Tuesday, November 2**. The voter registration deadline is **5 p.m. October 8**.

Voter registration forms are available online from the State Board of Elections at: <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/>. (Click on "Voter Registration" and then "Registration Forms.") The form must be mailed to the board of elections office in your county. Forms may also be obtained from public libraries and high schools. To determine where to mail your voter registration form and where to vote, visit: <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/>.

You may also register to vote while conducting official business with or applying for benefits at other government agencies, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles, county Departments of Social Services, and the Employment Security Commission.

One-Stop Registration & Voting - Any North Carolina resident who is qualified to register to vote may register. For more information on One-Stop Voting, visit: <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/>. (Click on "Voter Registration" and then "How to Register.")

The State Board of Elections also provides information on where to vote at: <http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/>. Click on "Voting in North Carolina" and then "Locate Your Polling Place."

18 Schweinhart, Lawrence J. "The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project Through Age 40." Available online at: <http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm>.

KNOW THE FACTS:

North Carolina's children face barriers to success that directly impact the economic growth and social cohesion of our state. Issue by issue, voters need to know how children are doing and candidates must be asked about their plans to improve outcomes for all of North Carolina's children.

Health and Safety

- **The number of children who lack health insurance coverage is rising.** From 2003-2007, the number of children lacking health insurance coverage increased by 10 percent.¹ As young people age in our state, they are more likely to be uninsured.²
- **Forty percent of 18- to 24-year-olds report not having health insurance.**³
- **30 percent of 12- to 18-year-olds are overweight.**⁴ Children who are overweight are more likely to have high cholesterol and high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem.

QUIZ THE CANDIDATES:

QUESTION: What are your plans for sustaining and improving health coverage for North Carolina's children?

QUESTION: What is the appropriate role of state and local government in reducing childhood obesity?

Ask the tough questions and let candidates know that your support for them hinges on their support for children!

Early Childhood & Education

- **Some 30,000 families are on a waiting list for child care subsidies.** Child care subsidies are an important resource to help working parents afford safe, reliable child care. However, due to inadequate funding, in 2009 more than 30,000 children whose families qualified for child care subsidies were not receiving services.⁵
- **Long-term suspensions of children from school remain high, but there were 31 percent fewer long-term suspensions during 2008-2009 than in previous years.**⁶ During the 2008-2009 academic year, Wake County accounted for 28 percent of all long-term suspensions in N.C. (an increase of seven percentage points from the previous year), even though Wake County has only nine percent of the state's students.⁷
- **Seventy percent of high school students are graduating in four years or less, according to North Carolina's four-year cohort graduation rate for the graduating class of 2008.**⁸ In 2008, 70 percent of the students who started ninth grade in 2004-05 had completed high school in four years or less. Graduating from high school provides, on average, an additional \$6,613 in earnings annually in North Carolina. Young people without a high school degree are more likely to live in poverty and have negative health and social outcomes.

QUIZ THE CANDIDATES:

QUESTION: What will you do to make sure that children have safe, reliable care when their parents go to work?

QUESTION: What will you do to reduce suspensions and dropouts and improve achievement?

Child Abuse and Neglect

- **Child deaths due to homicide increased 33 percent** from 2003-2007.⁹ Children who grow up in safe surroundings are less likely to engage in crime as adults.
- **Incidents of school violence increased 42 percent** from 2003-2007. Bullying, assaults and threats create an environment of anxiety and distraction and can reinforce violent behavior and victimization.¹⁰

QUIZ THE CANDIDATES:

QUESTION: What is the role of government and the community in preventing or detecting child abuse and neglect?

QUESTION: How can government eliminate school violence?

Juvenile Justice

- **Youth of color** in N.C. are about as likely as white youth to have a juvenile complaint approved for court, **but are more than 1.7 times as likely to be admitted to a detention center and more than four times as likely to be committed to a secure institution.**¹¹
- **About 25,000 youth annually receive locally-provided juvenile justice services, but funding has not kept pace with demand or inflation.** Funding for JCPCs is lower now than in 2002.¹² Local law enforcement, parents, schools and social services comprise local JCPCs across the state, and distribute funds to community-based services for youth in the juvenile system or those at risk of delinquency, and their families. Services include restitution to victims, therapies, education, parent and family counseling, punishment and rehabilitation.

- **Most youth entering North Carolina's juvenile justice system have encountered numerous difficulties during their lives,** including having parents unable or unwilling to supervise (34 percent), a history of running away (23 percent), mental health needs (62 percent), substance abuse needs (34 percent), and/or serious school problems (61 percent) (2008).¹³
- North Carolina is **one of two states that do not treat 16- and 17-year-olds as the minors** they are. More youth in N.C. are processed as adults than as juveniles. Research has shown that the juvenile system is developmentally appropriate for children under the age of 18, providing both the rehabilitation and reorientation necessary for future success.¹⁴

QUIZ THE CANDIDATES:

QUESTION: What policies do you support to ensure that more troubled teens have access to preventive services, quality education and other community supports to avoid or minimize interaction with the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems?

QUESTION: Do you support raising the presumptive age of adult criminal prosecution to 18 to better protect and treat youth and improve public safety?

QUESTION: How will you ensure that the N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is adequately funded to provide safety, treatment and education to the youth they serve?

1 Action for Children North Carolina, *2009 North Carolina Children's Index*, January 2009.

2 2009 Portrait of Adolescent Health in North Carolina. A Report by Action for Children North Carolina. 2009.

3 Ibid.

4 2009 Portrait of Adolescent Health in North Carolina. A Report by Action for Children North Carolina. 2009.

5 Action for Children North Carolina, *2009 North Carolina Children's Index*, January 2009.

6 School Suspension in North Carolina: Key Facts & Statistics from the 2008-2009 Academic Year. Kara Bonneau & Jenni Owen. N.C. Family Impact Seminar, Center for Child and Family Policy, Duke University. Available online at: http://www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/pdfs/familyimpact/2010/Suspension_Data_Summary.pdf

7 Stop the North Carolina School-to-Prison Pipeline. Available online at: <http://sites.google.com/site/ncstpp/home>.

8 Public Schools of North Carolina. State Board of Education. Department of Public Instruction. Available online at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/news/2008-09/20080807-03>.

9 Action for Children North Carolina, *2009 North Carolina Children's Index*, January 2009.

10 Ibid.

11 Action for Children North Carolina, *The 2009 Youth Delinquency Report Card*. 2009.

12 N.C. OJJDP Annual Report available online at: <http://www.ncjdp.org/statistics/reports/ar2008/> and American Community Survey, 2007, PUMS data.

13 Action for Children North Carolina, *The 2009 Youth Delinquency Report Card*. 2009.

14 Ibid.

15 Action for Children North Carolina. *2009 Child Economic Opportunity Report Card*. 2009.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.