

2015 Legislative Agenda

1. **Increase Access to High-Quality Health Care**—Healthy children perform better in school and in life. All children need access to high-quality and affordable health insurance, preventive health care, a medical home, specialized services when necessary, and physically and emotionally healthy parents. In 2015, the legislature can increase access to high-quality health care by:
 - a. Ensuring that Medicaid reform improves access to high-quality care for children enrolled in Medicaid and NC Health Choice by rewarding preventive care and management of chronic conditions.
 - b. Expanding Medicaid to cover adults under 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Line to promote healthy birth outcomes and improve family health.

2. **Promote Economic Security for Working Parents**—Children excel when they live in economically secure families with parents that have the support they need to overcome obstacles like low-wage jobs, child care, and housing. The ability to work and earn a living wage is the most basic building block of financial security. In 2015, North Carolina can support working parents by:
 - a. Providing on-the-job accommodations for working women during pregnancy and breast feeding.
 - b. Ensuring children in relative placements have access to child care subsidies, restoring prorated co-payments for partial day care, and making eligibility consistent at 200% FPL for all children 0-12.

3. **Ensure Developmentally Appropriate Services and Protections**—Adolescence is a time of tremendous opportunities and challenges. To maximize the opportunities and overcome the challenges, North Carolina must ensure that our public systems—juvenile justice, social services, and public schools—reflect the needs of this unique population. Legislators should consider the following reforms in 2015:
 - a. Modernize our juvenile code to ensure due process rights and eliminate unnecessary confinement.
 - b. Raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 16- to 18-years-old.

4. **Promote Early Literacy**—Early literacy, starting at birth and going through third grade, provides the foundation on which all later learning is built. A successful statewide strategy will start with infants and toddlers, which is where we see the biggest return on investment, and continue through the first years of elementary school.

5. **End the Outdated Practice of Corporal Punishment in Public Schools**—Academic success depends on the ability of schools to provide safe and nurturing learning environments for their students. Evidence shows that corporal punishment is an inappropriate disciplinary technique that aggravates, not ameliorates, discipline problems for at-risk students.