

**Senate Bill 2012**

Senate Appropriations Committee  
Senator Dever, Chairman

---

Early Childhood Section, Kay Larson, Director

February 6, 2023

NORTH  
**Dakota**  
Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services



# Early Childhood Program Purpose and ND Century Code Reference

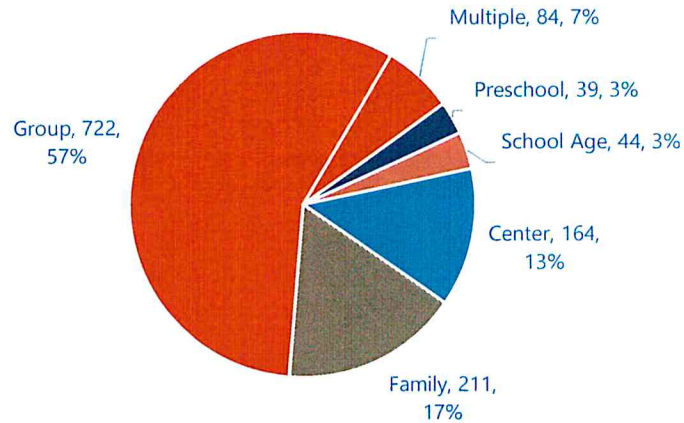
Facilitate delivery of programs and services so kids ages 0 – 5 from all backgrounds and circumstances, their families, and those who support them have the opportunity to realize their potential.

Chapter	Chapter Name
50-11.1	Early Childhood Services



# Early Childhood by the Numbers

1,264 Licensed Early Childhood Programs



7,523

Growing Futures members

1,000+

Coaching hours delivered by our contracted partners

3,179

Children supported by IDEA Part C Early Intervention

1,653

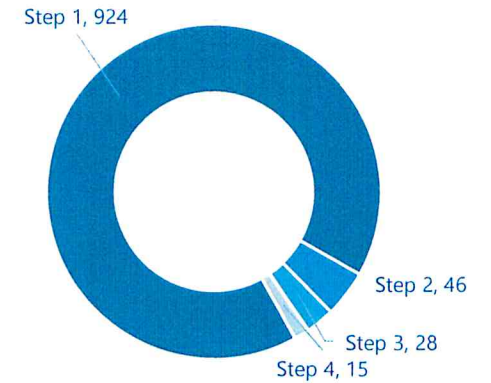
Children supported by IDEA Part B 619 services

1,117

Waterford Upstart households representing all but two counties

Data current as of December 2022

1,013 Quality Rated Programs

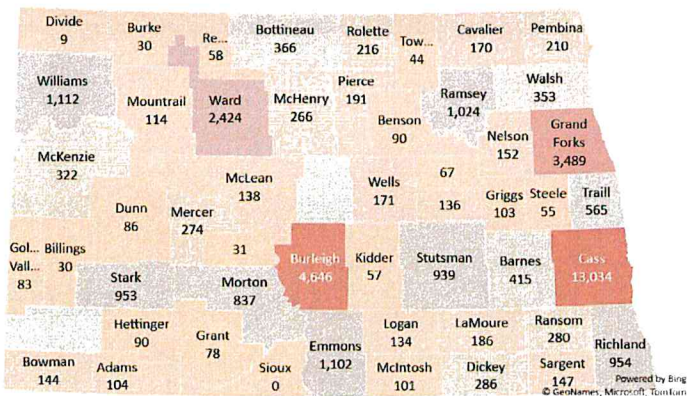


33 Best in Class Programs 2022-23



NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services  
Be Legendary.

Licensed Child Care Capacity – 36,866





# Early Childhood Section: Team Staffing and Structure

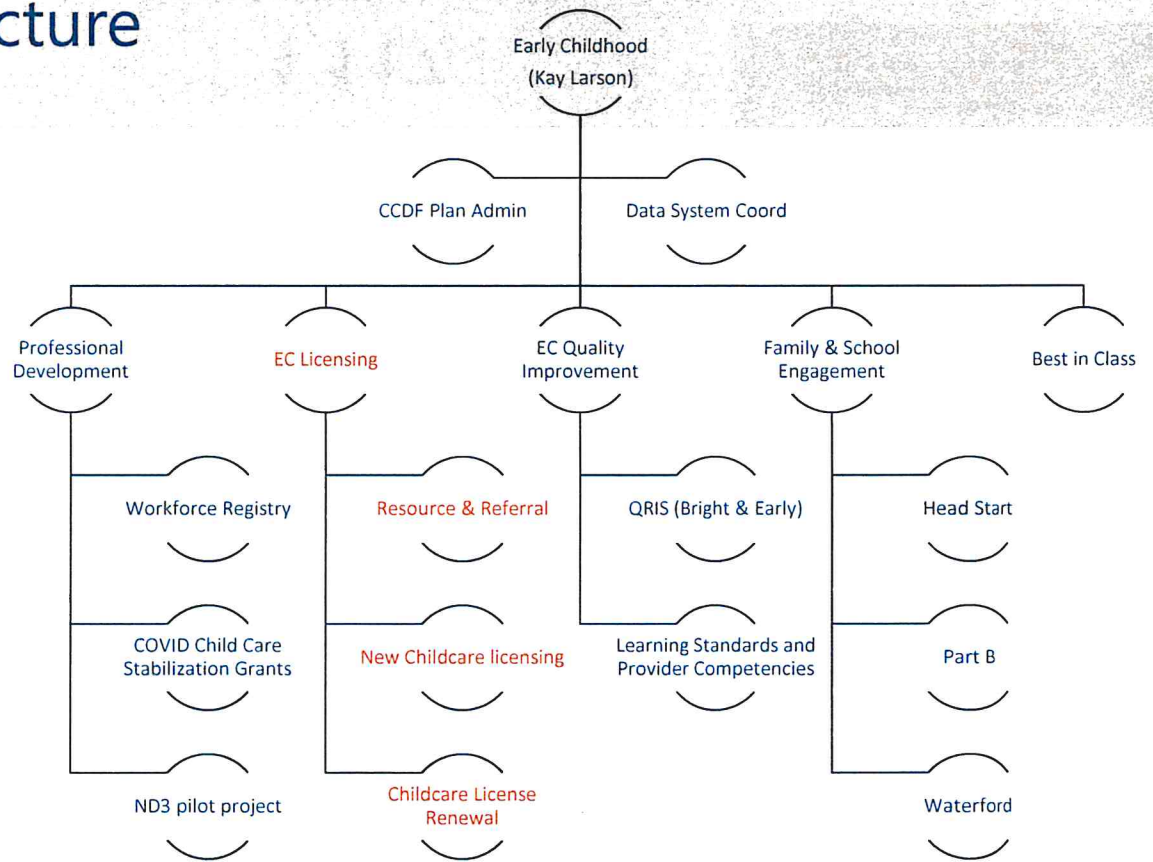
## Early Childhood (HHS budget)

21-23 Authorized FTE Base		23-25 Executive Budget FTE	12-31-22 Vacancies	
19.0		47.0	0.00	
Avg Age	Avg Yrs of Service	Turnover 2021	Turnover 2022	
48	8	16.7%	2.3%	

## Early Childhood (457/HSZ budget)

21-23 Authorized FTE Base		23-25 Executive Budget FTE	12-31-22 Vacancies	
26.0		0	0	

Red font = Staff funded via 457/Human Service Fund





# About Early Childhood Audit Findings

## STATE

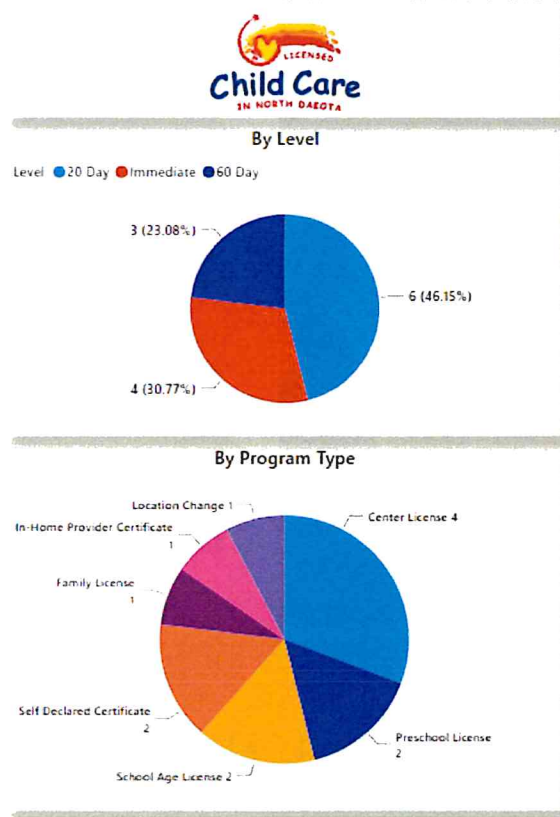
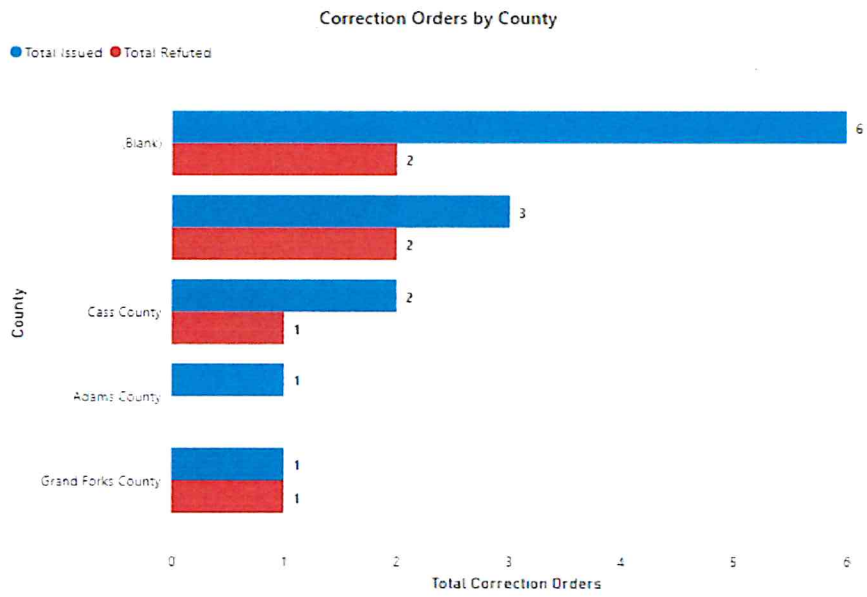
Finding	Resolution
Rechecks on Correction Orders	Child Care Licensing Data System dashboards for specialists to know workload at a quick glance ✓

## FEDERAL

Finding	Resolution
Statewide Disaster Planning Collaboration	Engaged providers on the Early Childhood Council for input and review. Brought to full council when relaunched in 2022 ✓
Health and Safety Standards (i.e. Pediatric first aid, consistency of regulations across license types)	Corrections made in NDAC effective 1.1.23 ✓ Still to come – updating monitoring checklists in Child Care Licensing Data System




# Child Care Licensing (CCL) Data System will support more effective and timely insight



- CCL dashboards can help licensing specialists be more effective in supporting early childhood programs
- Applications by status
  - Processing time
  - Correction statistics
  - Caseload overviews
  - Future renewals



# COVID Grants for Child Care Programs and Workforce

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<p>Child Care Emergency Operating Grants \$48.88M</p>		<p>APRA Child Care Stabilization Grants \$37.5M Program level grants for: Stabilization, Facility Health and Safety, Technology, Inclusion</p>	<p>CRSSA CCDF Funding \$1.65M Career Path and Training Incentives</p>	<p><b>Program Grant Participation</b> 884 Stabilization 819 technology grants 744 health and safety 99 start up 86 inclusion</p>	<p><b>Workforce Grant Participation</b> 411 Career Pathway 500 Training Incentives 2852 workforce retention</p>
		<p>CRSSA +ARPA Funding \$18.6M Child Care Workforce Retention</p>			

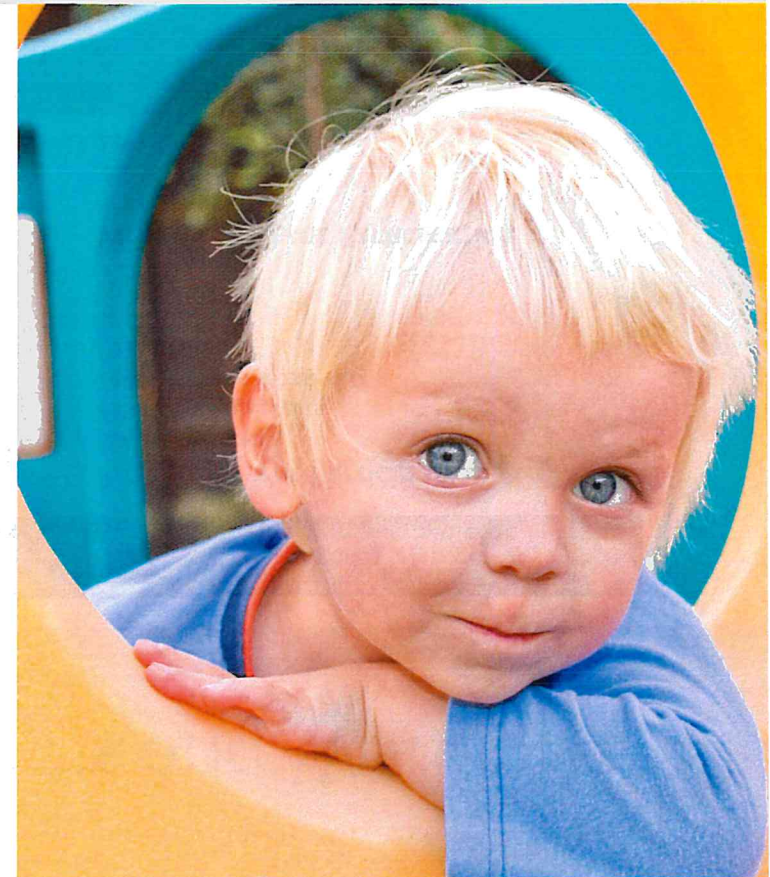


## Included in 2023-25 Executive Budget Request: Supporting Workforce / Early Childhood

Supporting Workforce Initiative: \$34 M to improve affordability, availability and quality

- Grants, Resources and Shared service supports for child care providers - \$7 million
- Pilot partnership(s) between employer(s) and child care program(s) for care offered during non-traditional hours - \$1 million
- Invest in quality infrastructure to support child care programs continued excellence in service delivery, including 1 FTE - \$3 million
- Expand Best in Class program - \$16 million, including 1 FTE (1,800 children participating each year by 2025)
- Extend Employer-led Child Care Cost Sharing Pilot - \$5 million (supplement \$9 million ARPA provided during special session, to serve an estimated 1,500 children/families)
- Reward child care workers with training stipends for completing “above and beyond” training - \$2 million

Total	General	Other
\$34,000,000	\$23,000,000	\$13,000,000





## Included in 2023-25 Executive Budget Request Waterford Upstart family engagement

- Waterford Upstart is a home-based family engagement and online early learning program with personalized family education and coaching for families with children who are a year away from entering kindergarten.
- Pilot implementation in 2021 and 2022 with funding from DPI.
- Request would provide funding for 1,000-1,200 children each year of the biennium (includes internet service for homes without service and ongoing support for families using the service)

Total	General	Other
\$ 2,400,000	\$2,400,000	\$0





# Early Childhood: Overview of Federal Funding Sources

Federal Funding Source	Purpose	Spending Deadline	Grant Year 2022 Deadline	Grant Year 2022 Award
<b>Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)</b>  <i>CCDF funds are used in both Early Childhood and Economic Assistance</i>	Primary Federal Program specifically devoted to providing families with child care subsidy and funding supports to states to improve quality.  Requirements: 3% Infant Toddler Quality 9% Quality 5% Admin 70% Direct Service	Discretionary (100% Federal) By end of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Federal Fiscal Year	9/30/2024	\$10,950,402
		Mandatory (100% Federal) No specific liquidation date requirement.	N/A	\$2,506,022
		Matching – Federal/State Match (based on Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage) By end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Federal Fiscal Year	9/30/2023	Federal: \$5,621,324 (\$4,291,779 + \$1,329,545 100% ARPA Increase)  State: \$2,886,309
		Maintenance of Effort (MOE) By end of 1 <sup>st</sup> Federal Fiscal Year	9/30/2022	\$1,017,036
<b>Head Start State Collaboration Grant</b>	Facilitate collaboration among Head Start agencies and entities that carry out activities designed to benefit low-income children from birth to school entry, and their families.	100% Federal Annual awards March 1 – Feb 28	2/28/2023	\$125,000



# Early Childhood: Overview of Federal Funding Sources

Federal Funding Source	Purpose	Spending Deadline	Grant Year 2022 Award
<p><b>Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Part B Section 619</b></p> <p><i>HHS interdepartmental billing to ND Department of Public Instruction for joint supervision of state requirement</i></p>	<p>Assist the State in ensuring the oversight and provisions of all requirements under IDEA, including the assurance of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment, are granted to children with disabilities ages 3-5.</p>	<p>Federal allocation is awarded annually to NDDPI. Federal IDEA, Part B-619 funds are directly distributed to the 31 Special Education Units who serve as the local educational agency (LEA). Administrative set aside funds for the NDHHS 619 Coordinator position continue at 5%</p>	<p>\$64,825</p>

# Early Childhood: Overview of budget changes

Description	2021 - 2023 Initial EC Section Budget	Increase/ (Decrease)	2023 - 2025 Executive Budget
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 3,824,550	\$ 5,776,127	\$ 9,600,677
Operating	585,522	416	585,938
Grants	10,152,967	35,950,000	46,102,967
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 14,563,039</b>	<b>\$ 41,726,543</b>	<b>\$ 56,289,582</b>

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$ 6,960,072</b>	<b>\$ 29,101,069</b>	<b>\$ 36,061,141</b>
<b>Federal Funds</b>	<b>7,422,479</b>	<b>(194,039)</b>	<b>7,228,440</b>
<b>Other Funds</b>	<b>180,488</b>	<b>12,819,512</b>	<b>13,000,000</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$ 14,563,039</b>	<b>\$ 41,726,542</b>	<b>\$ 56,289,581</b>

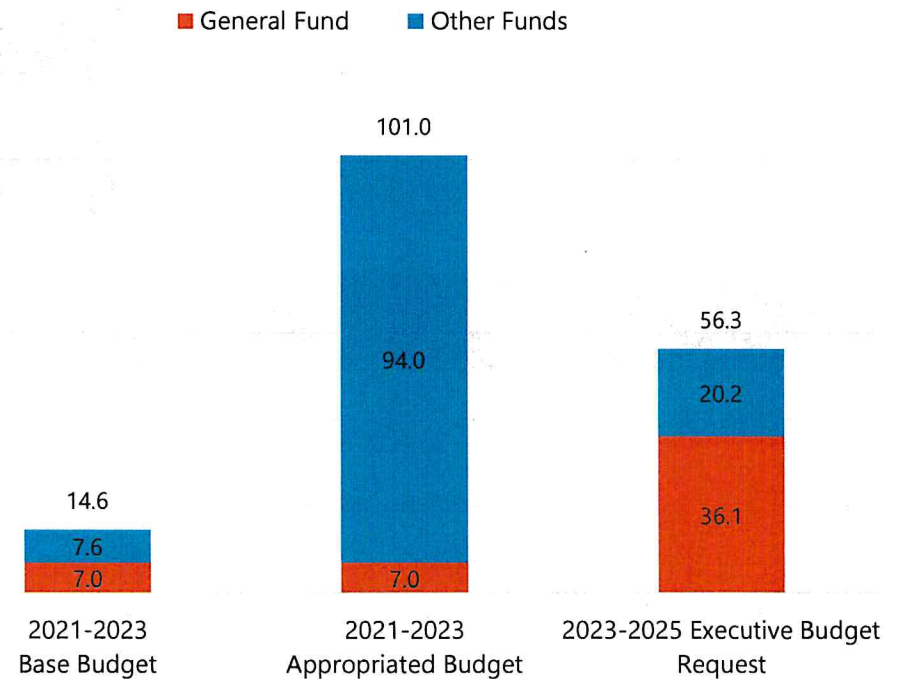
Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	19.00	28.00	47.00
----------------------------	-------	-------	-------



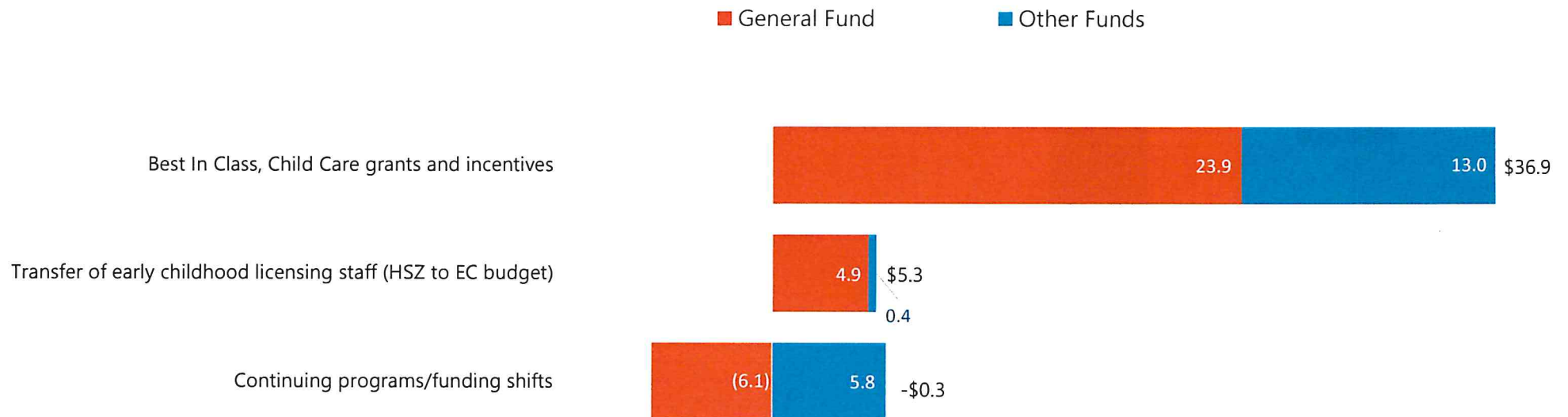
# Early Childhood: Overview of budget changes (IN MILLIONS)

## INCREASE FROM BASE TO EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION \$ 41.7 MILLION

- 2021-2023 base budget reflects original section funding from CFS and DPI
- 2021- 2023 appropriated budget includes federal COVID funding designated for early childhood (appropriated during both regular and special session)
- 2023 – 2025 executive budget request includes increase in state funds to enhance impact and transfer of licensing staff budget from HSZ to EC



# Early Childhood: Overview of budget changes (IN MILLIONS)





# Early Childhood: Overview of budget changes

Description	2021 – 2023 Initial EC Section Budget	Increase/ (Decrease)	2023 - 2025 Executive Budget
511x Salaries - Regular	\$ 3,526,254	\$ 2,732,361	\$ 6,258,616
513x Salaries Temp	-	187,840	187,840
516x Salaries Benefits	298,297	2,855,923	3,154,220
<b>Total Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 3,824,551</b>	<b>\$ 5,776,125</b>	<b>\$ 9,600,676</b>
52x Travel	173,478	148,333	321,811
53x Supply	6,600	4,500	11,100
54x Postage & Printing	6,214	500	6,714
61x Professional Development	1,960	52,325	54,285
62x Fees - Operating & Professional	397,270	(205,242)	192,028
71x Grants, Benefits, & Claims	10,152,967	35,950,000	46,102,967
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>\$ 10,738,489</b>	<b>\$ 35,950,416</b>	<b>\$ 46,688,905</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 14,563,040</b>	<b>\$ 41,726,541</b>	<b>\$ 56,289,581</b>

# About Early Childhood Section Contracts

## Child care resource and referral

- Provide referrals and consumer education to families searching for child care
- Consultation and resources for existing and potential licensed providers to support their day-to-day work with special attention to health and safety in group child care settings, child care environments, interactions with children and families, and business essentials.
- Contract held by South East Education Cooperative. \$2,056,250



## QRIS Coaching and Assessment

- Continuous quality improvement coaching and assessment of programs participating in QRIS cohorts
- Contract held by Community Action Program Lakes and Prairies. \$984,508



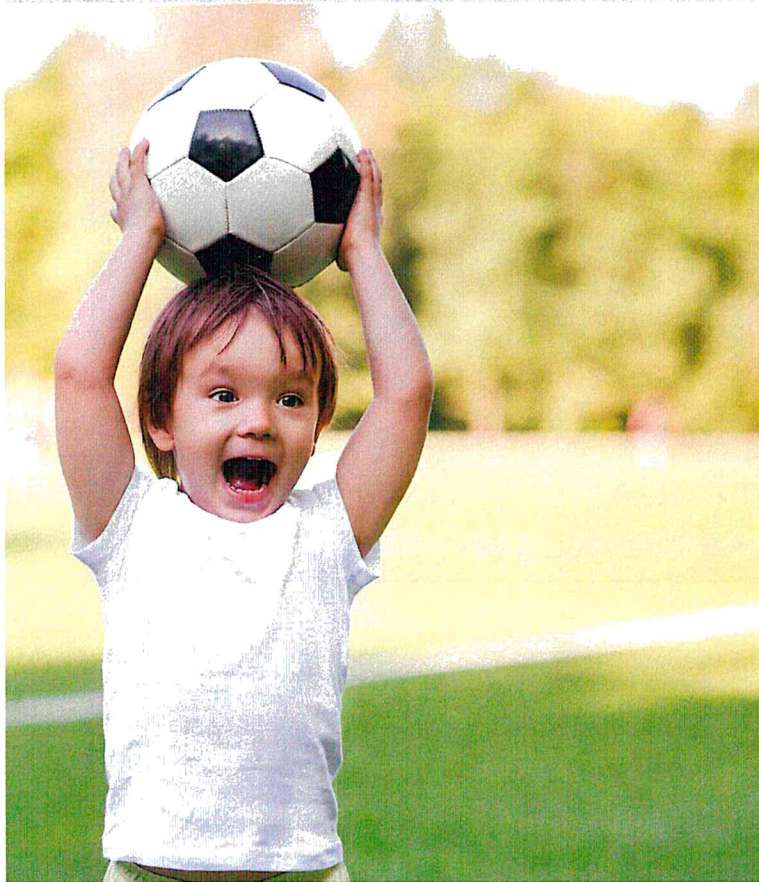
## Inclusive Child Care Support

- Consultation, coaching and resources to support providers in caring for children with physical, developmental, or behavioral needs.
- Contract held by USpireND. \$306,250





# About Early Childhood Section Vendor Contracts



- **Teaching Strategies.** GOLD Online Assessment Portfolios, Creative Curriculum, Professional Development. \$332,125
- **Waterford Upstart.** Recruitment, educational technology, software, training and support for parents, progress monitoring. \$1,789,836
- **Insight Solutions.** Insight Data System that powers Early Childhood Workforce Registry, QRIS and other Quality Initiatives, Learning Management System, Grants Administration. \$344,407

# Early Childhood: Overview of budget changes

Description	2021 - 2023 Budget Base	Increase/ (Decrease)	2023 - 2025 Executive Budget
<b>General Fund</b>	\$ 6,960,072	\$ 29,101,069	\$ 36,061,141
<b>Federal Funds</b>	7,422,479	(194,039)	7,228,440
<b>Other Funds</b>	180,488	12,819,512	13,000,000
<b>Total Funds</b>	\$ 14,563,039	\$ 41,726,542	\$ 56,289,581



# Additional Request to amend SB 2012

## Increase in Federal Program Grants (request for federal authority)

- Consolidated Appropriations Act provided an increase in CCDF and LIHEAP grants
  - CCDF Discretionary Funds (100% Federal), estimated increase of \$3,114,294 (*est 80% to Economic Assistance section budget and 20% to Early Childhood section budget*)
  - LIHEAP (100% Federal), estimated increase of \$12.7 million (*Economic Assistance section budget*)
- Preschool Development Grant renewal (100% federal)
  - 3 year grant of \$20,268,309 (awarded 12-31-22); approximately \$6.8 million each year

	Total	General	Federal
Econ Assistance	\$15,191,435	\$0	\$15,191,435
Early Childhood	\$20,891,168	\$0	\$20,891,168





# Policy Bills with Budget Impact to Early Childhood Section

- **SB 2301** – Child Care Stabilization program.
  - HHS fiscal note of \$36,181,170
  - Status: Senate Workforce Development Committee recommends Do Not Pass, re-referred to Appropriations
- **SB 2323** – Grants to expand Best in Class and supplement federally funded Head Start programs.
  - Senate Human Services Committee amended to \$20,000,000
  - Do Pass recommendation, re-referred to Appropriations





# SB 2012 Section 2 One-Time Funding (ND Child Care Proposal)

**SENATE BILL NO. 2012  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' BUDGET  
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES SECTION**

**SECTION 2 (SECTION 2 of Governor's Recommendation). ONE-TIME FUNDING -  
EFFECT ON BASE BUDGET - REPORT TO SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY.**

<u>One-Time Funding Description</u>	<u>2021-23</u>	<u>2023-25</u>
Child Care Programs	0	16,000,000

EBR lists the following 4 elements of the ND Child Care Proposal as One-Time Funding

- \$7 million – grants and shared svcs for early childhood programs
- \$1 million – partnership to pilot approach for care during non-traditional hours
- \$3 million – quality coaching, infrastructure, and evaluation
- \$5 million – employer-led cost share program for working parents child care benefit





# SB 2012 Section 7

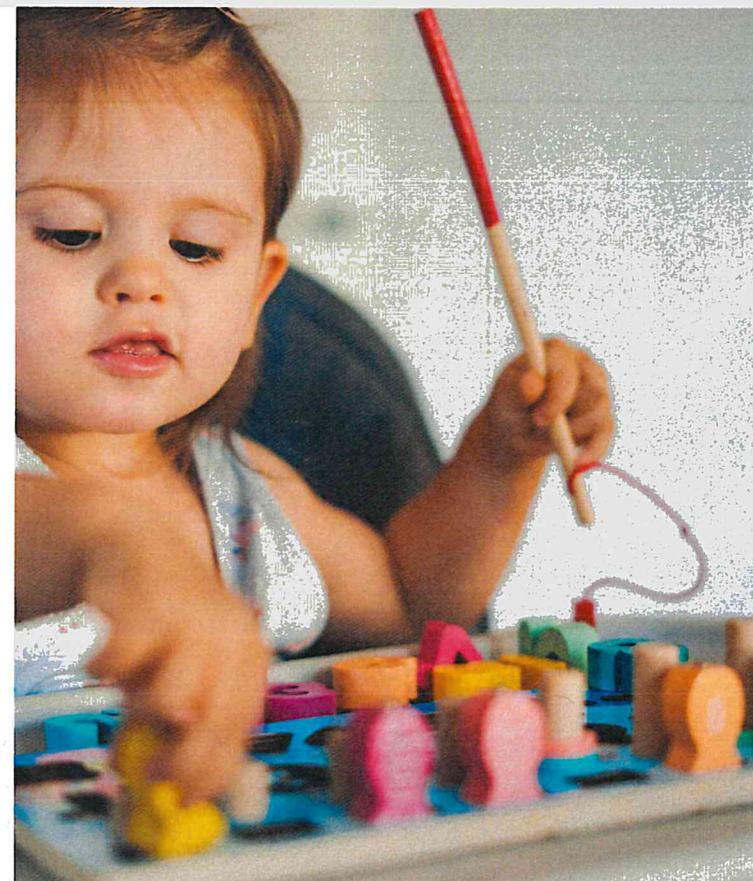
## Estimated Income – Legacy Earnings Fund (ND Child Care Proposal)

SENATE BILL NO. 2012  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' BUDGET  
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES SECTION

**SECTION 7 (SECTION 9 of Governor's Recommendation). ESTIMATED INCOME - HEALTH CARE TRUST LEGACY EARNINGS FUND.** The estimated income line item in subdivision 2 of section 1 of this Act includes the sum of ~~\$1,000,000~~ \$13,000,000 from the ~~health care trust~~ legacy earnings fund and ~~\$1,150,538 from federal funds for nursing facility operating margin adjustments~~ defraying expenses for the child care assistance programs.

EBR includes Legacy Earnings Fund as source for the following 3 elements of the ND Child Care Proposal

- \$7 million – grants and shared svcs for early childhood programs
- \$1 million – partnership to pilot approach for care during non-traditional hours
- \$5 million – employer-led cost share program for working parents child care benefit





## SB 2012 Section 13

# Estimated Income – Child Care Financial Assistance-Direct Payments (ND Child Care Proposal)

SENATE BILL NO. 2012  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' BUDGET  
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES SECTION

**SECTION 13 (Governor's Recommendation). CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – DIRECT PAYMENTS.** Subdivision 2 of section 1 of this Act includes the sum of \$5,000,000, for the purpose of financial assistance and direct payments, for child care services for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025. Notwithstanding subsection 3 of section 50-11.1-14.1, the department may provide financial assistance to beneficiaries related to child care services. The requirements of chapter 54-44.4 do not apply to this subsection, including the selection of recipients and the disbursement of funds.

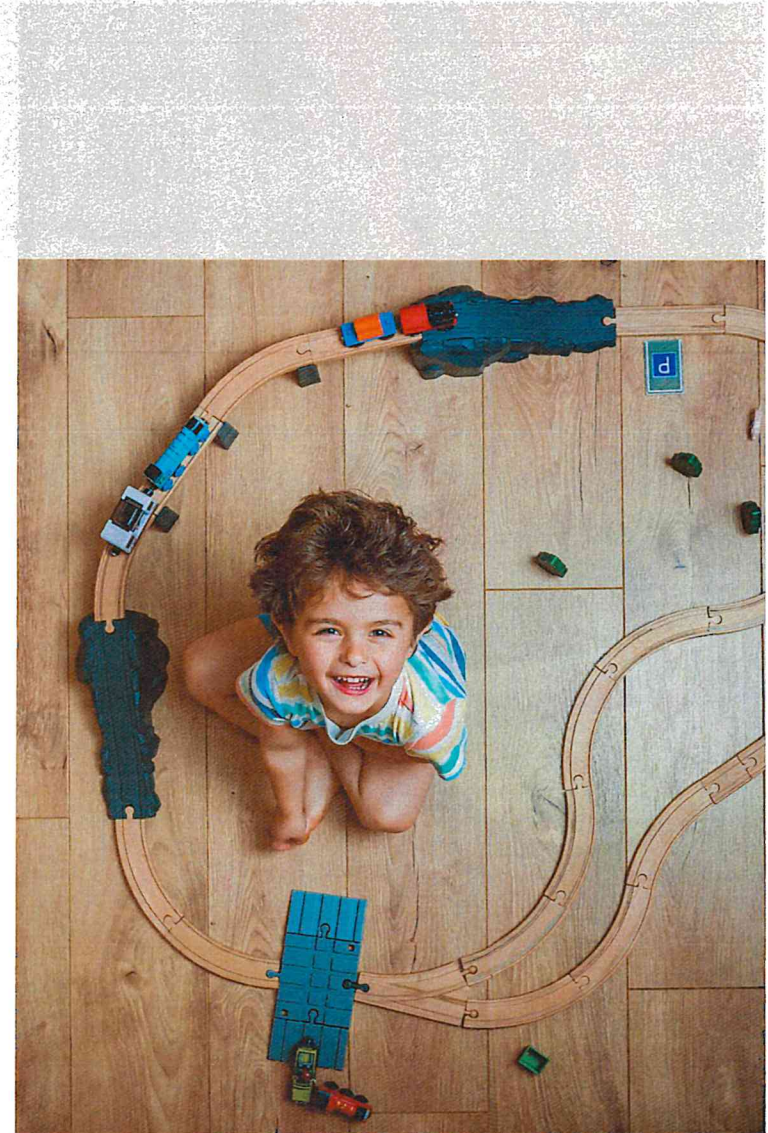




# SB 2012 Section 21 Exemption

## SENATE BILL NO. 2012 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' BUDGET EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES SECTION

**SECTION 21 (Governor's Recommendation). EXEMPTION.** The requirements of chapter 54-44.4 do not apply to the selection of a vendor, the procurement award, or payments made under this section regarding an early childhood workforce and professional development information system or an early childhood resource and referral information system.





# SB 2012 Section 39 Legislative Management Report – Four-Year Old Program – Early Childhood Grants

SENATE BILL NO. 2012  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' BUDGET  
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES SECTION

**SECTION 39 (Governor's Recommendation). LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT REPORT - FOUR-YEAR OLD PROGRAM - EARLY CHILDHOOD GRANTS.** During the 2023-24 interim, the department of health and human services shall provide reports to the legislative management regarding the status of four-year old program approvals, the North Dakota early childhood council, and the early childhood grant for best-in-class four-year old experiences.





# SB 2012 Section 29 Exemption – Intent (Child Care)

SENATE BILL NO. 2012  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' BUDGET  
EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES SECTION

**SECTION 29 (Governor's Recommendation). EXEMPTION - INTENT.** The amount appropriated for the purpose of projects, financial assistance, grants, and services including Medicaid eligibility system upgrades, child care services, to provide community-based behavioral health services, and for substance use disorder treatment voucher system grants in chapter 550 of the 2021 Special Session Session Laws is not subject to the provisions of section 54-44.1-11. Any unexpected funds from this appropriation are available for projects, financial assistance, grants, and services during the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025. Notwithstanding subsection 3 of section 50-11.1-14.1, the department may provide financial assistance to beneficiaries related to child care services. Notwithstanding subsection 2 of section 50-06-42.1, the department may award up to four grants rather than two grants for substance use disorder treatment voucher system grants. The requirements of chapter 54-44.4 do not apply to this subsection, including the selection of recipients and the disbursement of funds.





# Continued progress includes an enhanced focus on early childhood access, affordability and quality



## Best in Class

Expanding opportunities in the year before kindergarten ensuring every child whose family is interested has access



## Inclusive Child Care

Business solutions, facility grants and resources to create environments for children with special needs



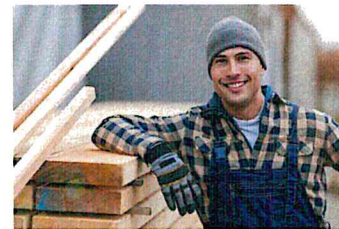
## Support for Sustainable Child Care

Grants, incentives, training, and shared service resources with focus on infant toddler care and meeting quality standards



## Early Childhood Career Path

Partnerships with CTE, K-12, and Higher Education to offer on-the-job training and certification in early childhood careers



## Support for Working Parents

Partnerships with employers to offer child care benefits and find creative solutions for parents working non-typical hours. Expanding Child Care Assistance Program to more families and increasing parental choice by creating quality-based payment tiers in the Child Care Assistance Program.



# Early Childhood: What's on the horizon?

We'll be keeping an eye on

- Processing time of licensing applications and correction orders
- Workforce retention grants and how many participate for all eligible quarters
- Quality early childhood experiences and impact on school readiness







## Contact information

### **Kay Larson**

Director, Early Childhood

kaylarson@nd.gov

<https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services>





The 67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly made a targeted state investment in programs serving children in the year before kindergarten that are committed to delivering the highest quality experiences to the children and families they serve, and whose actions can demonstrate the return on investment that is possible with intentional, research-supported investments in early childhood.

Best in Class is built on program characteristics that drive results – high quality, supported interactions between adults and children based on developmentally appropriate experiences. Teaching staff are coached and supported in implementing developmentally appropriate environments, play based curriculum, and authentic observation-based assessments to drive individualized experiences to support children in reaching widely held expectations in the year before kindergarten.

### Eligible Programs

- **HHS approved four-year-old programs operated by educational facilities, public or private.** These entities must be compliant with ND Department of Public Instruction’s desk audits and federal Title program monitoring
- Federally funded **Head Start programs.** Head Start grantees must be compliant with Federal Head Start Monitoring Protocol
- **Licensed child care settings** (center or group), inclusive of those operated in connection with a church, business, or organization. These entities must be participating in our state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) with a current rating of Step 3 or higher

### Best in Class Program Expectations

- Operate for a minimum of 400 hours over 32 consecutive weeks, serving children that are 4 years old before August 1<sup>st</sup> of the program year. Programs operating at least 800 hours over 32 consecutive weeks are encouraged.
- Conduct a randomized selection process for enrollment, prioritizing 50% of slots in each section for children whose family’s household income is less than 60% of state median income or children who have an identified developmental delay or disability.
- If charging tuition, use the HHS-approved sliding fee scale
- Maintain 1:10 ratio of staff to children
- Implement a research-based curriculum appropriate for the age of children served
- Utilize Teaching Strategies GOLD for observations and assessment of progress
- Coordinate and/or offer onsite health screenings and referrals (developmental, hearing, vision, dental & physical)
- Incorporate at least ten hours of research-based family engagement
- Participate in programmatic research, including randomized studies that examine core components of program design and program outcomes.



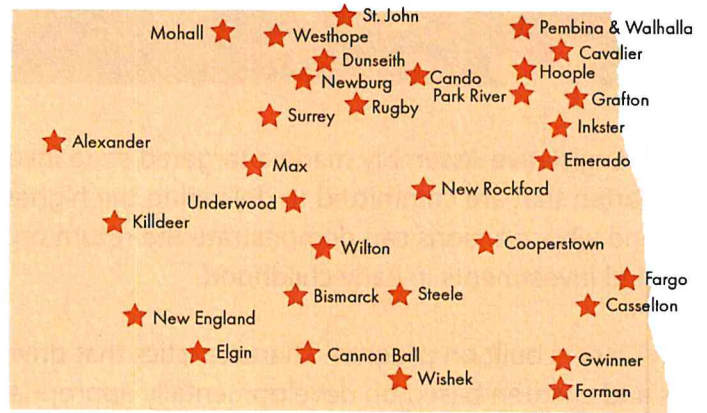
## Participation

In our pilot thus far, we have fully committed the resources made available, serving 915 children in 36 different communities, utilizing two Best in Class coaches to serve 42 teachers. 99% of families completing the 2021-2022 parent survey felt their child had a successful year and were provided a quality experience and many mention child's readiness for kindergarten.

Pilot Year 1 2021-2022



Pilot Year 2 2022-2023



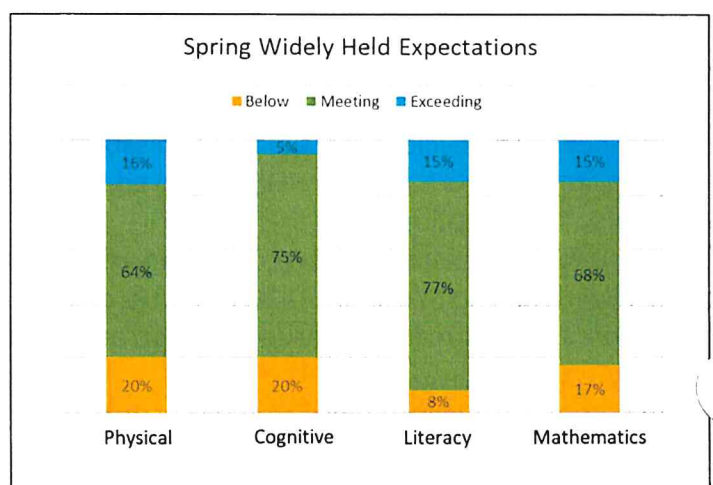
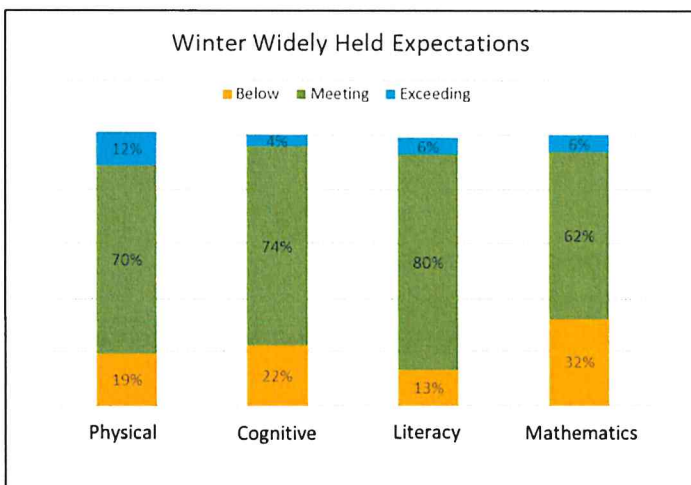
## Child Outcomes

Developmentally appropriate, ongoing, observation-based assessment occurs when teachers are observing children during regular, everyday play-based activities on a continuous basis throughout the year. Best in Class teachers use authentic observation-based assessments to complete three checkpoints using Teaching Strategies GOLD® to document children's learning over time, inform instruction, and facilitate communication with families.

GOLD® developmental progressions are based on widely held expectations that describe the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities that children of a particular age typically demonstrate over a year of life. These expectations are based on the latest research in early childhood and are frames of reference that help parents and teachers focus on the development of the individual child.

## Beginning Trend Line Data

Programs in the first pilot year completed two checkpoints. Scale scores correlate moderately strongly with age and since the tool being used is meant to measure progress across skills that follow a developmental progression, these results are positive and promising.





### Spotlight on Grafton Public School Best in Class

Grafton Public Schools participated in the inaugural year of Best in Class (2021/22).

They were awarded **four** sections of the program's small group size (8 – 10 kids). They decided to operate two additional sections of pre-kindergarten that utilized Best in Class teachers and the same resourced environment in the time slot that was opposite of their Best in Class- funded sessions.



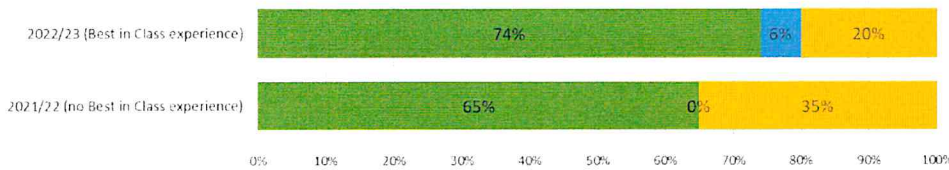
Based on the school's fall kindergarten assessment data, the children who had a Best in Class experience in the year before kindergarten **STARTED kindergarten an average of 12% AHEAD** of where the children without a Best in Class experience started.

### Start-of-Kindergarten assessments show early signs of positive impact

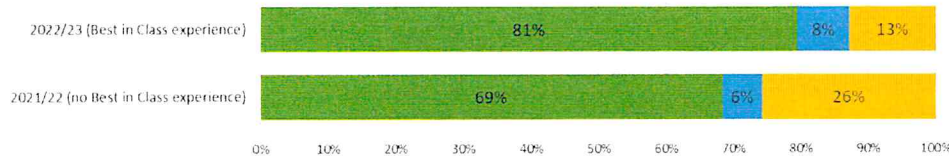
*Best in Class cohort (2022-23) compared to cohort without Best in Class experience (2021-22)*

#### LETTER SOUNDS

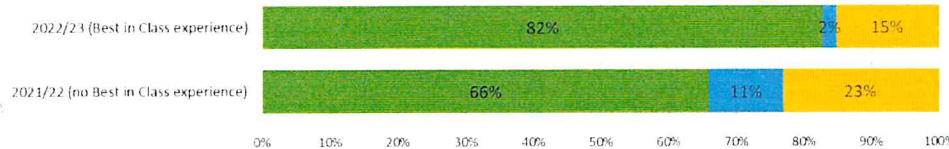
■ At Level ■ Some Risk ■ High Risk



#### EARLY READING



#### EARLY MATH



The **Best in Class** program represents a targeted state investment in programs that are committed to delivering the highest quality experiences to the children and families they serve, and whose actions can demonstrate the return on investment that is possible with intentional, research-supported investments in early childhood.

Best in Class is built on program characteristics that drive results:

- Staff to child ratio of 1:10 or better; class size of 20 children or lower
- Evidence based curriculum appropriate for the age of children served and aligned with early learning standards
- Specialized teacher education with training in early childhood instruction and child development
- Coaching and ongoing professional development for staff
- Regular assessment of child progress
- Vision, hearing and health screenings and referrals





The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) is the law that authorizes the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program, which is administered by states, territories, and tribes. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides CCDF program funds to support North Dakota's efforts to provide child care services for low-income families and enhance the quality of child care for all children.

The CCDF State Plan serves as the application for funds, details the State's response to federal requirements, and describes early childhood programs and services available to eligible families. North Dakota's 2022-2024 State Plan can be found online at: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/child-care-development-fund>.

### Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

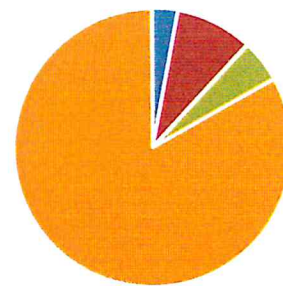
Statewide, CCDF dollars benefit more than 4,100 children from 2600 families receiving child care subsidies, as well as children cared for alongside them who receive no direct assistance from CCDF but benefit from safer child care settings with better skilled providers and staff.

### To receive CCDF Funds

The State must establish requirements and training in eleven health and safety standards. All licensed and self-declared providers in North Dakota are eligible to receive CCDF funding and must follow these standards:

- Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunization)
- SIDS prevention and use of safe sleep practices
- Administration of medication
- Prevention/response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions
- Building and physical premises safety
- Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment
- Emergency preparedness and response planning
- Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of biocontaminants
- Transportation (if applicable)
- Pediatric first aid and CPR
- Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect
- Child development

CCDF Funding



■ Infant Toddler ■ Quality ■ Admin ■ Direct Services

Monitoring visits must include both announced and unannounced visits to ensure health and safety standards are being met. Comprehensive background checks are also required as a basic safeguard to protect the safety of children in child care and minimize children's risk of abuse and neglect.





North Dakota law states that a child care provider must be licensed if they care for more than 3 infants (0-2 years) or 5 children (0-12 years). The provider must count their own children who are under 13 years of age in this total. Anyone caring for more than three infants or six or more children without a license is operating against North Dakota state law.

Child Care Licensing is a form of consumer protection that reduces the risk of children being cared for in an unsafe environment. North Dakota state laws, and local ordinances in some locations, regulate child care licensing. Licensing sets minimum requirements and ensures that programs are monitored for compliance with these requirements.

Child care licensing regulations cover many topics, including the following:

- The number of children one adult can care for a time (child-staff ratio) and the number of children allowed in a class (group size)
- Supervision of children
- Safety of the building (such as emergency exits, cleanliness and repairs, and potential dangers)
- Immunizations, handwashing, diapering, and other methods to stop the spread of disease
- Nutrition of food served to children
- Training, health, and other requirements such as background checks for the staff working at the child care programs

Licensing determines the number of children that can be cared for by providers. Adult-to-child ratio, total square footage, ages of the children and group size are all considered.

Child care licenses are issued by the state. A Child Care Licensing Specialist performs the licensing study and monitoring visits, one announced and one unannounced. Child Care Licensing Specialists work with providers to understand regulations, issue correction orders when necessary and support providers to satisfy and maintain licensing compliance. They also investigate concerns and participate in CPS investigations involving child care staff.

Licensed providers are required to display their current license, allowing parents to verify that a program has completed the licensing process and holds a current license. Licensed child care programs can enroll children whose care is subsidized by federal financial assistance, participate in state quality initiatives, grants, and stipends, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.



## Licensed Child Care Program Types

**Family License:** Individuals caring for 7 or fewer children in the provider's own home. Family providers are required to include their own children in the adult-to-child ratio.

**Group License:** Programs caring for up to 30 children in their home or a public/private building. Maximum group size may be restricted based on square footage of facility, adult-to-child ratios or local ordinances.

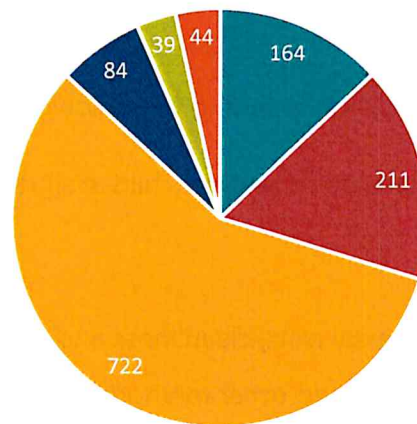
**Center License:** Programs caring for 19 or more children in a public/private building. The total number of children who can attend at any given time is based on square footage of facility and adult-to-child ratios.

**Preschool License:** Programs providing education and social experiences for children ages 2 to 5. A child's attendance is limited to 3 hours per day.

**School Age:** Programs providing care for school-age children before and after school, during school holidays and summer vacation.

A program with a **multiple license** is most often a family, group, or center license that also offers preschool.

## ND Licensed Programs - 1264



■ Center ■ Family ■ Group ■ Multiple ■ Preschool ■ School-Age

## License Exempt Program Types

**Self-declared Providers:** Individuals caring for 5 or fewer children can enroll children whose care is subsidized by federal financial assistance and participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. These providers are subject to background checks and monitoring visits like licensed providers. The difference between a family license and self-declaration is the number of children that can be cared for, and the hours of annual training required.

**In-home Providers:** Individuals caring for up to 5 children, of which no more than 3 may be under the age of 24 months. Care is provided in the children's home.

**Approved-Relatives:** Individuals may care for 5 or fewer children or 3 children under 24 months in a home. The approved relatives must be related by marriage, blood relationship or court order and include grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, and uncles. A sibling who is age 18 or older and who does not live in the same home as the children for whom care is being provided, can also become an approved relative.



Since 2012, the Growing Futures Early Childhood Workforce Registry (Registry) has been the state system for approval of all training accepted toward annual child care licensing requirements and state initiative projects such as the QRIS. In addition to serving as the system of record for training approval and completion, the registry also tracks, verifies, and reports the Career Pathways placement, education levels, professional qualifications, and employment history of individual members of the workforce. The Career Pathway is designed to support individuals toward completing the national CDA Credentialing requirements of 120 hours of informal non-credit training and includes formal preparatory tracks for individuals completing for-credit coursework or who hold degrees in early childhood and related fields.

**Registry Membership and Career Pathway Placement**

The Registry includes 7523 individuals, of whom 5541 have verified employment as a director, teacher, assistant teacher, aide, or family/group caregiver in an early childhood program.

Career Pathway	No. of GF Members
Category A	4969
Category B	255
Category C	62
Category D	93
Category E	215
Category F	19
Category G	230
Category G+	7
Category H	179
Category H+	7
Category I	25
Category I+	4
Category J	2
Not Placed	1456
<b>Total</b>	<b>7523</b>

**Basic Licensing and Paraprofessional**

Career Pathway Categories A – D

**Professional Qualification Categories**

E: Child Development Associate Credential

F: Center Director Credential

G: Associate Degree

H: Bachelor’s Degree

I: Master’s Degree

J: Doctorate Degree

Registry data shows that 66.3% of registry members have met only the minimum requirements for child care licensing. Just 5.4% have completed some informal clock hour training beyond the minimum requirements but



not enough to meet the 120 hours of training needed to earn the national CDA Credential, and only 3% have an early childhood professional credential such as the CDA Credential or Aim4Excellence Center Director Credential and just 6% have an associate degree or higher in early childhood or a related field with an early childhood minor. Moreover, registry data suggests that turnover of the workforce may be as high as 40% annually.

**The Registry is not a training sponsor.**

All training delivered for the Early Childhood workforce in North Dakota is provided by other organizations and agencies. These organizations provide training voluntarily and set their own policies for the training they deliver (e.g. fees, registration policies, and so on). While training must meet the Growing Futures standards, the organizations that deliver training are free to deliver the topics they wish, in the areas of the state they chose.

**HHS-EC sponsors** the **federally mandated** health and safety pre-service training as well as the **state mandated** safe sleep course and makes them available to providers at no cost to them.

The Registry hosts an online training calendar that shows all currently available training approved for child care licensing and ongoing professional development in North Dakota. There are currently **87 approved training sponsors**. In the last quarter they **delivered 820.50 hours of training**.

**Training offered in the previous quarter – October through December 2022**

<b>Core Competencies by Training Level and Clock Hours</b>			
<b>Core Name</b>	<b>Level 1 Basic Licensing</b>	<b>Level 2 Professional Training</b>	<b>Clock Hours</b>
Assessment And Planning For Individual Needs	23.00	10.00	<b>33.00</b>
Child Growth And Development	41.50	56.50	<b>98.00</b>
Families And Communities	20.00	4.00	<b>24.00</b>
Health, Safety, and Nutrition	77.00	24.00	<b>101.00</b>
Interactions With Children	198.50	10.00	<b>208.50</b>
Learning Environments And Curriculum	64.50	77.00	<b>141.50</b>
Principles of Child Development	9.50	2.00	<b>11.50</b>
Professional Development And Leadership	22.00	147.00	<b>169.00</b>
Program Planning And Evaluation	12.00	22.00	<b>34.00</b>
<b>Total Clock Hours</b>	<b>468.00</b>	<b>352.50</b>	<b>820.50</b>



## Introduction

Bright & Early ND is North Dakota's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). A QRIS is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early childhood programs.

Bright & Early ND was developed to help early childhood programs offer high-quality care that supports each child's learning and development.

Bright & Early ND is designed to:

- Ensure that children have high-quality early experiences that help them develop the skills they need to be successful in school, work, and life.
- Support early childhood professionals to provide high-quality care by offering resources such as professional development opportunities, coaching, and financial supports.
- Help families find high-quality in early childhood programs that fit their needs by providing information about program quality.

The Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) administers Bright & Early ND as a key strategy for quality improvement with funding from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

## Framework

Bright & Early ND uses a block system approach which includes four levels, or steps, to quality. Each step focuses on a component of quality care and must be demonstrated by the program before moving to the next step. The outcome is a program that maximizes a child's readiness for school, work, and life.

The Bright & Early ND Quality Standards are aligned with Child Care Licensing and include:



**Step 1**

Health and Safety



**Step 2**

Space and Materials



**Step 3**

Activities and Experiences



**Step 4**

Relationships and Interactions



## Step 1: Health and Safety

Meeting and maintaining child care licensing regulations is the foundation of the Bright & Early ND Steps to Quality. These regulations are designed to protect and promote child safety and well-being in all types of settings. Licensed child care and early education programs are required to maintain at least minimum standards related to; physical space, safety features, cleanliness, staff qualifications and staff-to-child ratios. Children need to be healthy and feel safe to learn and grow. It is the first step in preparing children to be ready for school, work, and life.

An automated process for Step 1 Quality Ratings was launched in October 2022. Step 1 automation allows all programs who hold a current license issued by HHS to be automatically welcomed into Bright & Early ND as a Step 1 Quality Rated program.

## Step 2: Space and Materials

A safe, responsive, and engaging environment sets the stage for optimal early childhood experiences. An intentionally designed environment allows opportunities for children to experiment, practice their skills, analyze, socialize and problem solve. When the environment supports children's learning and development, they are better prepared for school, work, and life.

## Step 3: Activities and Experiences

Children succeed when their providers know them well, understand their levels of development, and provide meaningful activities and experiences that build upon children's strengths and development. When children have meaningful experiences, they are better prepared for school, work, and life.

## Step 4: Relationships and Interactions

All children benefit from being in warm, supportive environments where they can take risks, learn new things, and develop strong relationships with their caregivers and peers. When children experience high-quality interactions, they are better prepared for school, work, and life.

## Participation

