

NC Receives \$4.5 Million Federal Grant For Early Childhood Needs Assessment

By Donna Martinez

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North Carolina has been awarded a \$4.5-million preschool development grant, Governor Roy Cooper announced today. The grant will help North Carolina improve the health, safety, and developmental and academic readiness of young children across the state.

“Every young child in our state deserves a strong start in a safe and nurturing family and early learning opportunities,” said Governor Cooper. “Winning this grant represents our continued commitment to that goal and a step forward in improving opportunities for North Carolina’s children.”

The grant will fund a comprehensive statewide needs assessment and planning process for the state’s early learning system, support family outreach and engagement efforts, and provide infant-toddler teachers with training and resources.

The grant comes from the U.S. Administration for Children and Families Office of Child Care. Funding for the grant is included in the current U.S. Health and Human Services budget and is therefore not impacted by the ongoing federal government shutdown.

The grant will help North Carolina make progress with its Early Childhood Action Plan. In August 2018, Governor Cooper issued an Executive Order directing the NC Department of Health and Human Services, in coordination with the Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), to lead the development of an Early Childhood Action Plan. DHHS worked extensively with over 350 stakeholders from across the state to develop the draft Early Childhood Action Plan, released on Nov. 1, 2018.

The final plan will present a bold vision for North Carolina’s children from birth through age 8, and set measurable goals for improving children’s health, safety and well-being, and developmental and academic readiness. Governor Cooper will speak at an Early Childhood Summit to launch the plan on February 27th.

The grant will be administered by the Division of Child Development and Early Education, which promotes positive child outcomes by helping families access high quality early care and education. Research shows that children’s early experiences impact their brain development

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and provide the foundation for all future learning and health.