



Opportunity & Prosperity: The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce supports policies that increase opportunity and economic mobility for our community, through encouragement of a balanced and sustainable economy and the reduction of barriers to fulfilling employment.

- State
 - o Expand affordable access to quality childcare and pre-k education. Continue investment in education to support the current and future workforce of our region.

Quality childcare and early education is critical to both current workforce and future workforce development. Maintaining an effective, and diverse workforce requires that workers have a safe place for their children while they perform their jobs. Moreover, early education is proven to have long-term benefits for our children, the workforce of the future. Numerous studies have shown that those with access to quality pre-k education are far more likely to graduate high school, make a living wage, and be healthier as adults compared to those without early education. Children need proper development and special skills provided by an education system that is made up of well-compensated educators, administrators, and support staff.

The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce encourages the North Carolina General Assembly to ensure affordable access to quality childcare and early education across the state by continuing to develop, fund, and stabilize the childcare industry. This may include:

- continuing investment for early childhood education
- incentivizing retention for early childhood workers
- preserving childcare subsidy rates by continuing the 2022 market rate adjustment while modifying the subsidy formula to ensure all counties are receiving an equitable rate.

In order to support both the current workforce and that of the future, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce urges the North Carolina General Assembly to continue investing in the education system from early childcare through higher education.