



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Child Development
and Early Education

Division News and Updates

Rebecca Hammond

Virtual Educational Meeting

February 12, 2026





Legislative and Rule Updates

Legislative Updates

- **Session Law 2025-36**

- Signed into law by Governor Josh Stein on July 1, 2025
 - SA Only programs in public or private schools – building and grounds are considered approved
 - Two Workgroups established (Liability Insurance and Licensed Child Care Licensure Workgroup)
 - Regulatory Changes for minimum standards and QRIS
 - DOD Exemptions for Family Child Care Homes



Child Care Rule Updates

Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) Modernization Rules

- In April of 2025 the Child Care Commission voted to adopt a new section in the child care rules. Section .3200 – Standards for Two through Five Star Rated Licenses
- Rules became effective July 1, 2025
- Implementation:
 - Webinars
 - Rule Roll Out Module in Moodle
 - Summary of the Rules
 - Director and FCCH Operator meetings
 - Individual conversations with operators at visits during the months of October to March with an established plan to apply for a reassessment during the months of April to September
- Anticipate full transition in 2026



Child Care Rule Updates (cont.)

- **Periodic Review of Rules**

- [NC Administrative Procedures Act](#) requires review of all existing rules in the NC Administrative Code every 10 years
- Multi-step process beginning with the Child Care Commission making initial determination recommendations of “necessary” or “unnecessary” for each rule
- The Child Care Commission is scheduled to begin initial review for the first section of rules on the Periodic Review of Rules Readoption Timeline at the March 9, 2026 meeting
- Periodic Review of rules will continue through 2028
- Rule package with drafted revisions is expected to be finalized by February 2029 which will be followed by the publication of the rules, a public hearing, and vote to adopt.



A group of diverse children of various ages and ethnicities are gathered together, smiling and laughing. They are in a classroom or playroom setting with shelves of books and toys in the background. The lighting is bright and warm, creating a joyful and inclusive atmosphere.

Quality Rating and Improvement System Modernization



What are the changes in QRIS?

- Shifted to a Star Level System, instead of a points-based system
- Three licensure pathways to earn a 2-5 Star Rated License
- Use of ERS-3 and SACERS-U for program assessment, instead of ERS-R
- Addition of Family & Community Engagement Standards
- Addition of Continuous Quality Improvement Standards
- Choices in education standards to include the CDA, early childhood education certificates, work experience, training and competency evaluations
- Coaching/mentoring opportunities
- Acknowledgment of quality initiatives, in addition to QRIS standards



Section .3200 Overview

- **Three Pathways**
 - Program Assessment
 - Classroom and Instructional Quality
 - Accreditation and Head Start
- Enhanced staff/child ratio, space, and activity requirements
- Education requirements
 - Applies to Pathway 1 and 2
 - Applies to Pathway 3, with some accreditation types
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)
 - Applies to Pathway 1 and 2 only
- Family and Community Engagement
 - Applies to Pathway 1 and 2 only
- Recognition of Quality Initiatives
 - Accompanies the star rated license but does not help achieve it.

QRIS System Overview

	Pathway #1: Program Assessment 	Pathway #2: Classroom & Instructional Quality 	Pathway #3: Accreditation & Head Start 
2 Star	All 2 Star Standards	All 2 Star Standards	NAFCC NECPA AMS IMC
3 Star	All 3 Star Standards	All 3 Star Standards	NAEYC NAC COGNIA Head Start
4 Star	All 4 Star Standards	All 4 Star Standards	AND 4 Star Education Standards
5 Star	All 5 Star Standards	All 5 Star Standards	AND 5 Star Education Standards

Helpful Resources

QRIS Modernization – find more details regarding proposed rules

<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Provider/Licensing/Star-Rated-License/QRIS-Modernization>

NC Rated License Assessment Project (ERS-3 and SACERS-U)

<https://ncrlap.org/Resources/pages/get-ready-for-3s/>

Approved Curriculum and Formative Assessments

<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Services/Licensing/Star-Rated-License/Curriculum>

What's New at DCDEE – sign up for newsletters and updates

<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Whats-New>



Announcements

NC Task Force on Child Care and Early Education

- Task Force Report Released on January 13, 2026 and available at this link:
[Year-End Report from the Task Force \(Dec 2025\)](#)
- The Task Force has developed six recommendations to make child care accessible and affordable across North Carolina.
- The 2026 Task Force Meeting schedule has not yet been announced but anticipate they will convene every other month.
- Read the [Governor's Press Release](#) and find more information and updates about the Task Force's work [here](#).

Preschool Development B-5 Grant (PDG)

- North Carolina was one of 11 states awarded a PDG Renewal Grant.
- Key Personnel
 - Nicole Boone – PDG Birth to Five Project Coordinator
 - Katherine Falen – PDG Grants Manager
- \$9 million per year for three years: September 30, 2024, through September 29, 2027
- Builds on state's past success
- Supports implementation of the revised Quality Rating and Improvement System



Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood Plus (MCCYN+)

- Fee assistance program for eligible military families who are unable to access on-base child care
- Launched in NC, March 2023
- Administered by Child Care Aware®

Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood PLUS (MCCYN+)

Eligibility:

- Licensed child care centers and family child care homes
- Inspected by an oversight agency (DCDEE) once per year
- Approved national accreditation or participation in Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) at 3-Star Rating or higher

DCDEE Collaborative support:

- Weekly – Verify licensure and star ratings to Child Care Aware
- Monthly – Provide child care data reports to DOD and Child Care Aware
- Quarterly – Attend MCCYN+ Statewide Partner meetings

DCDEE Regulatory Regions

Western Regional Manager
Rebecca Hammond
Bonnie Mathis
Pam Hauser
Tammy McGalliard
Erin Pickard

DCDEE

Regulatory Services Section

Regional Territories

North Central Regional Manager

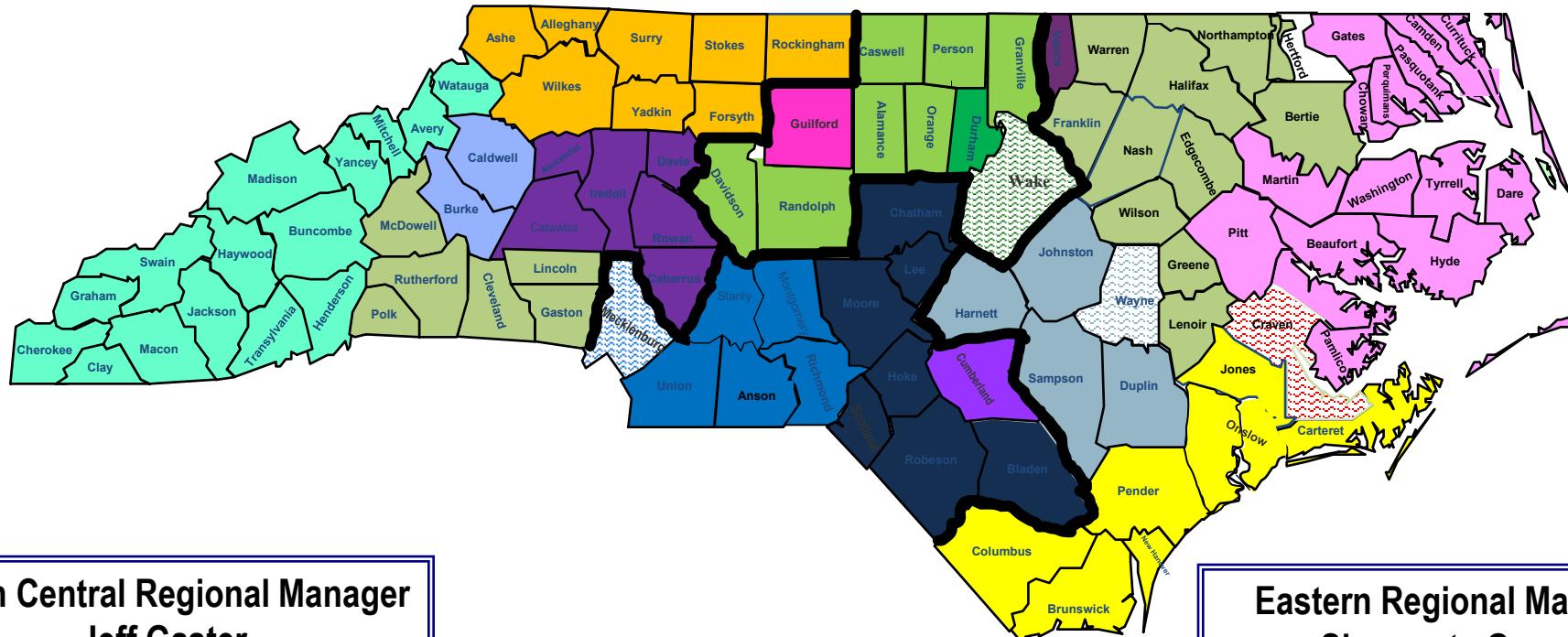
Kimberly Williams-Binkley

Holli Hemby

Meg Riddle

Michele Remington

Kaye Adkins



South Central Regional Manager

Jeff Gaster

Michele Sullivan

Ebony Duncan

Janet Edwards

Vacant

Eastern Regional Manager
Sharoneta Garner
Kim Sherry
Teraesa Leak
Susan Fuller
Jennifer Linhardt



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