

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

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- **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

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## 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.)

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- **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.





# **Quality Rating and Improvement System Modernization**



# What are the changes in QRIS?

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- 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

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- **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

|               | <b>Pathway #1:<br/>Program Assessment</b><br> | <b>Pathway #2:<br/>Classroom &amp; Instructional Quality</b><br> | <b>Pathway #3:<br/>Accreditation &amp; Head Start</b><br> |                                      |
|---------------|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>2 Star</b> | All 2 Star Standards   | All 2 Star Standards  | NAFCC<br>NECPA<br>AMS<br>IMC   | NAEYC<br>NAC<br>COGNIA<br>Head Start |
| <b>3 Star</b> | All 3 Star Standards   | All 3 Star Standards  |  |                                      |
| <b>4 Star</b> | All 4 Star Standards   | All 4 Star Standards  |  |                                      |
| <b>5 Star</b> | All 5 Star Standards   | All 5 Star Standards  |  |                                      |
|               |  |   | <b>AND</b> 4 Star<br>Education<br>Standards  |                                      |
|               |  |   | <b>AND</b> 5 Star<br>Education<br>Standards  |                                      |

# Helpful Resources

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**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

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- 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+)

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## **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



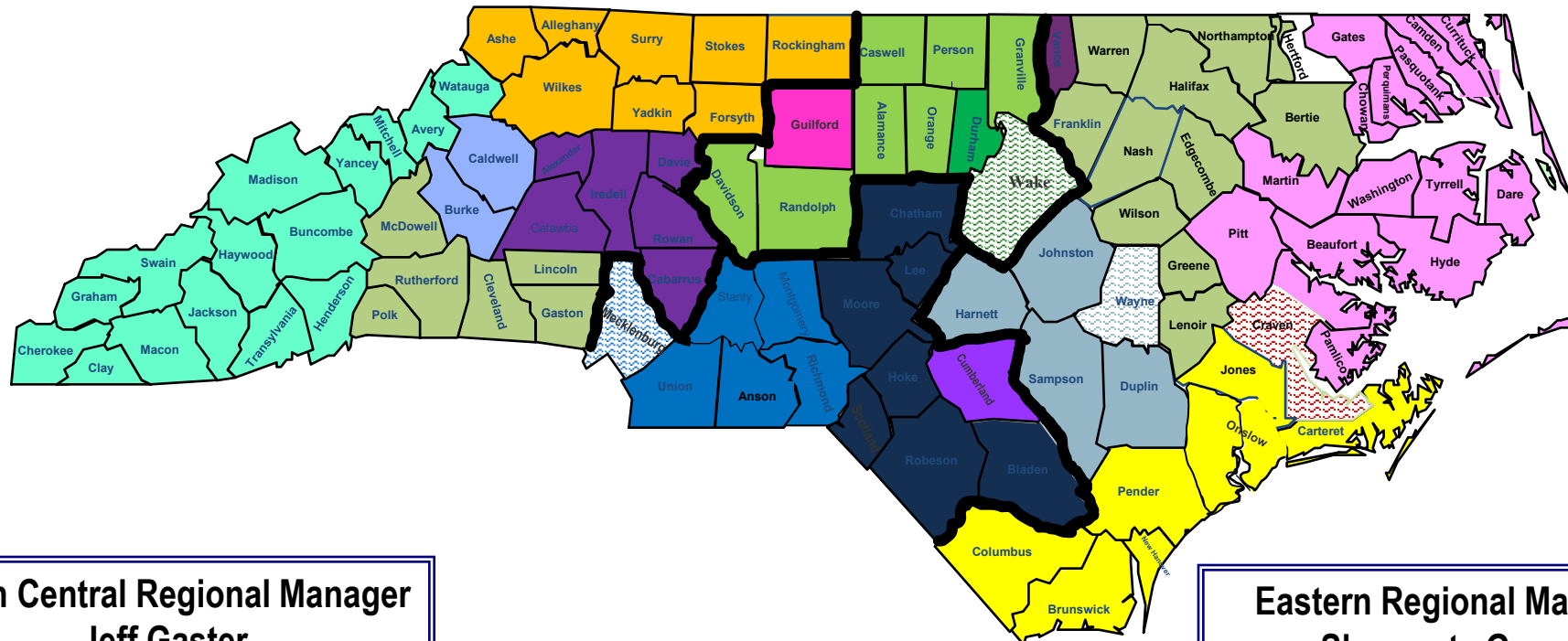


## **DCDEE Regulatory Regions**

**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**  
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Michele Sullivan  
Ebony Duncan  
Janet Edwards  
Vacant

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



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***[ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov](https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov)***

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