

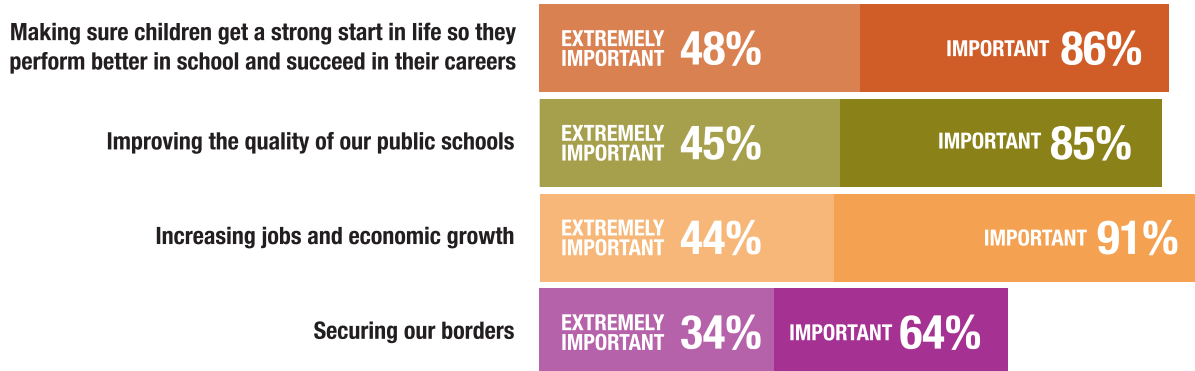
NORTH CAROLINA SPEAKS: INVESTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS A TOP PRIORITY.



A new state poll conducted by the bipartisan team of Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates shows that North Carolina voters view early childhood education as critically important for the state and nation.¹ **Majorities of Democrats, Republicans and Independents support investments in early childhood programs in the state—including expanding access to Smart Start, Pre-K, teacher training and home visiting programs.** More than four in five (83%) say that these investments would help North Carolina’s economy.

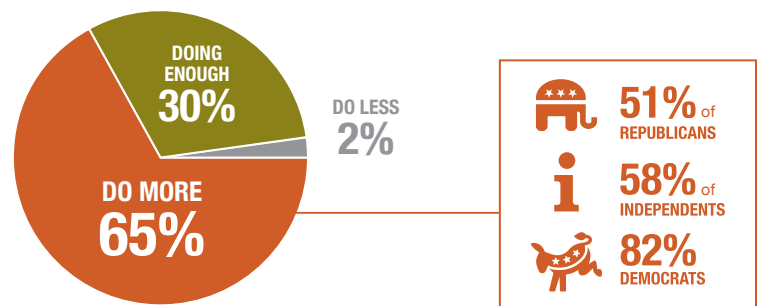
North Carolina voters support greater federal investment to help states provide more access to high-quality early childhood education for low- and middle-income families. 74% of voters support greater investment in early childhood education even if it temporarily increased the deficit in the short term but paid for itself in the long term by improving children’s education, health and economic situations so that less spending is needed in the future.

Making sure children get a strong start in life is considered extremely important by more voters than any other state priority—including jobs. Jobs are the number one priority overall at 91%, with 44% saying it’s extremely important; a strong start for children is second overall at 86%, with 48% saying it’s extremely important.



North Carolina voters link investments in early education to helping the state’s economy. More than four in five (83%) believe it will strengthen the economy and only 16% say it would have little effect.

North Carolina voters sense a school readiness problem that only quality early childhood education can solve. Nearly two-thirds of voters say that we should be doing more to ensure children begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need. 65% say we should do more; only 30% say we are doing enough; and virtually nobody says we should be doing less (2%). A majority of Republicans (51%), Independents (58%) and Democrats (82%) call for doing more.



¹ **Methodology:** Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates conducted a telephone survey of N=500 voters throughout North Carolina on both landline and cell phones. The survey was conducted August 17-19, 2014 and has an overall margin of error of ±3.4%. Sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be larger. The sample was distributed proportionally throughout the state and is demographically representative of the electorate.

NORTH CAROLINA VOTERS AGREE: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR THE STATE AND NATION.

Seven in ten North Carolina voters support a proposal that would increase federal investment to help states provide more access to high-quality early childhood programs for low- and moderate-income families. This includes 51% of Republicans, 67% of Independents and 88% of Democrats.

By greater than a two-to-one margin, voters want Congress to take action on this issue now. 65% of voters want Congress to take action on a federal plan now. Only 30% think this is an issue that can wait until later.

North Carolina voters were equally supportive of investing in the state's early childhood education programs. Three-quarters of state voters support expanding access to the NC Pre-K and Smart Start programs so that more children in the state can participate in them. This registers overwhelming support among the electorate with relatively little opposition, as 74% support it and only 24% oppose it.



Voters also support programs that strengthen families, like voluntary home visiting and parent education programs. 70% of North Carolina voters support these programs, including a majority of Republicans (54%), Independents (64%) and Democrats (86%).

There is even stronger support for investments in teacher training and classroom resources— with overwhelming majorities across the political spectrum. Nearly nine in ten voters (88%) support investments so that all preschool and early elementary school teachers are able to teach each child in a way that meets his or her individual needs. This includes 81% of Republicans, 86% of Independents and 94% of Democrats.



A majority of voters are more likely to vote for candidates who support early childhood education. 55% of voters say that if a candidate in North Carolina supported investments in early childhood education they would be more likely to vote for him or her. In fact, 32% say they would be much more likely, with only 9% saying they would be less likely.

Key voter groups, especially mothers, are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports early childhood education.

