

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

**SESSION LAW 2019-87
HOUSE BILL 886**

**AN ACT TO STUDY THE CHALLENGES CHILD CARE FACILITY OPERATORS FACE
IN PARTICIPATING IN THE NORTH CAROLINA PREKINDERGARTEN (NC PRE-K)
PROGRAM.**

Whereas, the North Carolina Prekindergarten (NC Pre-K) program has been proven, through over 15 years of rigorous research, to have lasting positive impacts, including increased reading and math proficiency, reduced placements in special education, and less grade retention, with these positive outcomes lasting through at least the eighth grade; and

Whereas, this rigorous research has confirmed that, as the number of NC Pre-K eligible children participating in the program increases, children who do not participate in the program experience some of the positive impacts as well; and

Whereas, this research confirms also that NC Pre-K is a critical foundation for increasing third grade reading proficiency and continued success in North Carolina's K-12 system, which will strengthen the talent pipeline necessary to meet the skills needs of North Carolina businesses; and

Whereas, North Carolina is nationally recognized for its early care and education system; and

Whereas, research shows investment in NC Pre-K generates a strong return on investment by reducing the number of children placed in special education classrooms in the third grade by thirty-nine percent (39%); and

Whereas, research shows children enrolled in NC Pre-K learn to socialize, make decisions, interact with others, and negotiate, which are all critical components of necessary executive function skills that translate into critical soft skills North Carolina businesses need; and

Whereas, recent increases in State funding have raised statewide participation in the NC Pre-K program to forty-seven percent (47%) of eligible children, and research shows participation by at least seventy-five percent (75%) of eligible children in every North Carolina county would increase the likelihood of success in school and in the workforce, but there are unique challenges in counties across our State to expanding the program to serve at least seventy-five percent (75%) of eligible children; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education (Division), shall complete a statewide study of operators of four- and five-star centers who are not currently participating in the North Carolina Prekindergarten (NC Pre-K) program to identify those operators' perception of the challenges associated with becoming an NC Pre-K site. In addition, the Division shall complete a county-by-county study of additional local challenges. Findings from these two studies shall be used to make recommendations to address these challenges, including any recommended changes in the State funding structure, to facilitate achieving the goal of enrolling in the NC Pre-K program at least seventy-five percent (75%) of eligible children in each county. The Division shall submit a report on its recommendations regarding the challenges, as well as any



recommendations for changes to support increased access for children eligible for the NC Pre-K program, to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by February 1, 2020.

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 27th day of June, 2019.

s/ Bill Rabon
Presiding Officer of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper
Governor

Approved 11:46 a.m. this 8th day of July, 2019