

# North Carolina

## A profile of its children

**Understanding the facts about children in North Carolina illustrates why smart, proven investments in North Carolina's children and youth are critical to protecting North Carolina's competitive edge in a global market place.**

### Children in North Carolina<sup>i</sup>

- 2,286,528 children (under the age of 18) live in the state;
- 586,000 children (26%) live in poverty (about \$23,283 or less for a family of four);
- 268,000 children (12%) live in extreme poverty (about \$11,641 or less for a family of four);
- 37 percent of children live in a household with only one parent.

### Early Childhood<sup>ii</sup>

- Approximately 18,542 children participate in the federally-funded Head Start program. However;
- Only 8 percent of 3-year-olds and 31 percent of 4-year-olds were enrolled in state-funded pre-kindergarten, Head Start or a special education preschool program;
- 65 percent of children under the age of 6 have both or their only parent in the workforce.

### School Readiness<sup>iii</sup>

- Math:
  - 55 percent of fourth graders are below grade level in math;
  - 64 percent of eighth graders are below grade level in math.
- Reading:
  - 65 percent of fourth graders are reading below grade level;
  - 67 percent of eighth graders are reading below grade level.

### Graduation Rates<sup>iv</sup>

- 17.5 percent of high school students do not graduate on time with a high school diploma (2012-2013 school year),
- These rates are worse for youth of color:
  - 22.5 percent of African-Americans do not graduate on time;
  - 25 percent of Latinos do not graduate on time.
- Only 17 percent of all high school graduates met the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in all four core areas: English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science.<sup>v</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013). KIDS COUNT data center. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved on August 8, 2013 from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

<sup>ii</sup> Barnett, W.S., Carolan, M.E., Fitzgerald, J., & Squires, J.H. (2013). The state of preschool- 2012. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University for Early Education Research; Annie E. Casey Foundation. U.S. Census Bureau 2011 population estimates and U.S. Census Bureau 2011 American Community Survey data. Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013). KIDS COUNT data center. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved on August 8, 2013 from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

<sup>iii</sup> National Center on Education Statistics (2011). The Nation's Report Card. National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

<sup>iv</sup> North Carolina State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction. (2013). 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report: State Wide. Retrieved August 9, 2013 from <http://accrpt.ncpublicschools.org/app/2013/cgr/>

<sup>v</sup> 100% of students tested. ACT Inc. (2013). 2013 Condition of College and Career Readiness. Iowa City, IA: Author. Retrieved August 26, 2013 from <http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2013/>