



# North Carolina Child Fatality Task Force MEETING AGENDA December 9, 2025 | 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm

**Members will meet in person** at the new NC DHHS building, 1915 Health Services Way, Raleigh, NC 27607 (parking deck address is 1910 Human Services Lane). The public may also register to watch the live meeting virtually [here](#).

<b>1:30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome</li> <li>Approval of minutes from last meeting 9/4/25 available at: <a href="https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/103515">https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/103515</a></li> <li>Today's agenda &amp; things to keep in mind</li> </ul>	<b>Co-Chairs, NC Child Fatality Task Force:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Jill Cox</b>, President &amp; CEO, Communities in Schools</li> <li><b>Karen McLeod, MSW</b>, President &amp; CEO, Benchmarks NC</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations &amp; Report from the Unintentional Death Prevention Committee</b>		
<b>1:45</b>	Legislative recommendation to strengthen child passenger safety	<b>Kella Hatcher, JD</b> , Executive Director, NC Child Fatality Task Force
<b>1:55</b>	Administrative efforts on the Graduated Driver License	<b>Scott Proescholdbell, MPH</b> , UD Committee Co-Chair
<b>2:10</b>	Legislative recommendations to protect kids from harmful impacts of nicotine and cannabis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlights of committee work</li> <li>Understanding the impact of nicotine and cannabis on the adolescent</li> <li>Personal Story</li> </ul>	<b>Martha Sue Hall, MS</b> , UD Committee Co-Chair <b>Tobi Gilbert, Psy.D., ASPBB-APIT, NERPSC, HSP</b> , Clinical Neuropsychologist, Jacksonville Police Department <b>Dabney Ferris</b>
<b>Recommendations &amp; Report from the Intentional Death Prevention Committee</b>		
<b>3:00</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislative recommendation to endorse efforts to address addictive algorithms in social media</li> <li>Administrative efforts to continue study of AI chatbots and companions</li> </ul>	<b>Whitney Belich, JD</b> , ID Committee Co-Chair <b>Ava Smithing</b> , Young People's Alliance
<b>3:40</b>	Legislative recommendation to increase numbers of school support professionals	<b>Jennie Kristiansen, ID Committee Co-Chair</b> <b>Ellen Essick, Ph.D.</b> , Section Chief, NC Healthy Schools, NC Department of Public Instruction
<b>3:55</b>	Closing remarks and adjournment	<b>Committee Co-Chairs</b>

*See committee recommendations on next page.*

**Child Fatality Task Force Website:** <https://sites.ncleg.gov/nccftf/>

**CFTF Member Roster:** <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/103516>

**CFTF Leadership Biographies:** <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/100771>

## **Committee Recommendations for Consideration Today**

*Committee recommendations become final upon approval by the full Child Fatality Task Force. Additional committee recommendations will be considered at the next meeting of the Task Force scheduled for February 25th. Final recommendations will be included in the CFTF 2026 Annual Report*

### **Unintentional Death Prevention Committee Recommendations**

Support legislation to **strengthen NC's child passenger safety law** to address best practices by making the following changes:

1. To address the importance of younger children riding in rear seat, require children under age 8 to be properly restrained in the rear seat of a vehicle when the vehicle has a passenger side front air bag and has an available rear seat.
2. To clarify the need for infants and toddlers to ride in rear-facing seats, modify law to say that a child must be properly secured in a weight and height-appropriate child passenger restraint system according to manufacturer instructions, including instructions for the use of rear-facing restraint systems for infants and toddlers.
3. To clarify safe transition from booster seat to adult seat belt, require a child to be properly secured in a weight-appropriate child passenger restraint system until the child is four feet 9 inches tall (57 inches) and the adult seat belt fits properly without a booster seat (law to describe proper fitting of seat belt).

Administrative efforts to **educate about the Graduated Driver License (GDL), the importance of the science behind the GDL, and to continue to get updates on the science** surrounding the GDL to inform future work.

Endorse legislation to **raise the legal age for sale of tobacco products in NC from 18 to 21 to align with federal law; legislation to include licensing of tobacco product retailers** and appropriate enforcement measures.

Support **legislation to prevent child and youth access to intoxicating cannabis** by: prohibiting the sale or distribution of intoxicating cannabis or hemp products to those under 21; implementing regulations for the packaging of such products to require appropriate warnings, child-resistant packaging, and to prohibit packaging that is attractive to children and youth; requiring permitting for retailers who sell intoxicating cannabis or hemp products; and prohibiting those under 21 from entering vape shops.

### **Intentional Death Prevention Committee Recommendations**

Endorse **legislation that addresses addictive algorithms in social media** that harm children.

Administrative **efforts to continue to study the impact of AI (Artificial Intelligence) chatbots and companions on youth**, including the study of design features.

Support **recurring funds to increase the numbers of school nurses, social workers, counselors and psychologists** to support the physical and mental health of students and to move North Carolina toward achieving nationally recommended ratios for these professional positions in schools.