



PRORITY: Ensure that every child in Buncombe County has an equal opportunity to thrive during their first 2,000 days including access to quality early childhood education

BACKGROUND: The period in a child's life from birth to kindergarten is approximately 2,000 days, and that formative period is critical for development for lifelong health and success. Studies show that high quality early development experiences position children to enter school ready to succeed, graduate from high school and grow into thriving adults. In particular, high quality pre-k programs are proven to provide measurable short and long term results for children and their peers, families and communities. Yet access to early childhood education is limited based on availability and affordability. Programs maintain long wait lists, and it is difficult for providers to cover the costs of high quality care and difficult for families to afford it. At-risk families face additional barriers such as low income, educational attainment, complex behavioral and health care needs, individual/family/community trauma, and fragmented support systems. Funding early childhood education is a complex and fragile mix of federal, state and local government funding, philanthropy and fees. In addition, there is a shortage of highly trained and qualified teachers and staff.

GOALS:

- Collaborate with community leaders and stakeholders for a coordinated system approach
- Increase the availability of high quality early childhood care and education with an emphasis on pre-kindergarten programs
- Address issues of affordability, both for providers in a sustainable business model and for families in access to care
- Support a robust career track in the field of early education, with development ladders from entry level to highly educated, credentialed, seasoned professionals
- Cultivate a system that responds to the needs of families, such as those impacted by trauma, poverty and addiction

LEAD DEPARTMENTS: Health and Human Services; Strategic Partnerships

ACTIONS: The following is a summary of activities and investments by Buncombe County Government in support of the goals listed above.





BUNCOMBE COUNTY STRATEGIC PRIORITY:
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

DRAFT 12/1/17

	<i>Completed/Ongoing</i>	<i>Proposed/Upcoming</i>
<i>Collaboration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Commissioners work session and community panel on early childhood education challenges and opportunities • Funding for and leadership in the Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative • Participation in system coordination activities and events including Institute for Emerging Issues Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entering Phase 3 of planning work with community collaborative
<i>Availability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for Valley Child Development program through Southwestern Child Development • Preschool classrooms at Eliada Homes, Christine Avery Learning Center, Johnston Elementary, Lonnie Burton Child Development Center, • Funding for empowerment drop in child care at the YWCA • Funding for provider technical assistance through Childcare Resource and Referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated economic development incentive funds for early childhood education to support emerging efforts and creative partnerships with start-up or first time funding
<i>Affordability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer state/federal Child Care Subsidy program to provide subsidized child care services to eligible families • Advocate for policy changes at other levels of government, such as increased Subsidy reimbursement rates, increased funding for NC Pre-K, and reauthorization of federal Child Care and Development Block Grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<i>Career</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for 5th floor of Allied Health Building at Community College for Early Childhood Instruction classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus workforce development efforts toward the field of early childhood education
<i>Trauma Informed Approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement trauma-informed strategies to child welfare, such as Project Broadcast to equip staff and community partners to better serve children • Facilitate community access to Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) and Community Resiliency Model (CRM) curriculums for responding to trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

