

Developing a Comprehensive Staffed Family Child Care Network to increase FCCH slots

FY2021 Early Childhood Grants

Buncombe County Partnership for Children

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Application Form

INSTRUCTIONS

Buncombe County requests proposals for community based projects to enhance outcomes for young children and their families in our community. Grants made through the Early Childhood Education and Development Fund will be focused on access to quality early childhood care and education.

Please refer to the Grant Guidelines published on the Early Childhood Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants for complete information about the grant program, including: Purpose; Funding; Eligibility; Timeline; Grant writing workshop; Review process; Awards; and more.

Applications are due by 5:00 pm on February 14, 2020.

BASIC INFORMATION

BASIC INFORMATION – Before completing the application, please tell us a little about the request.

Project Name*

Developing a Comprehensive Staffed Family Child Care Network to increase FCCH slots

Strategy*

Recognizing that some projects will use more than one strategy, select the strategy that most closely applies to this project:

Creating new classrooms to serve more children in early care and education settings

Funding Request*

How much funding is this project requesting for FY2021?

\$28,882.00

Grant Guidelines*

Have you read and understand the information presented in the FY2021 Grant Guidelines for Early Childhood Grants (Grant Guidelines)?

If no, please contact County staff to request assistance: Rachael Nygaard, (828) 250-6536 or rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org.

Yes

APPLICATION

APPLICATION QUESTIONS – Responses to these questions will be scored by the grant committee. Each question is worth 10% of the final score.

Organization*

Give a brief history, including date of founding, focus, services, and record of success.

Buncombe Partnership for Children (BPFC) was established in 1995, with a mission to strengthen the capacity of educators, families and the community to build a strong foundation for children's learning and development beginning at birth. We invest in and partner with organizations to offer programs that: improve the quality of early care and education; increase access to affordable, quality early care & education; expand early literacy activities; support children's healthy development; and provide family support.

Child Care Resources (CCR) is a program of BPFC that serves as Buncombe County's established resource for Early Childhood professional development and offers a rich variety of supports for Early Childhood teachers and administrators through training, classroom coaching, and technical assistance on topics ranging from developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed classroom practices to child care business and administration. In FY 18-19, CCR supported roughly 700 educators with training, coaching and technical assistance in 2018-2019.

BPFC provides services specifically for Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) in Buncombe County, including:

- Hosting quarterly provider meetings, offering opportunities for FCCH owner/directors to network and support each other and access FCCH-relevant training opportunities;
- Providing Technical Assistance (TA) for the FCCERS (Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale) prior to the rated-license assessment;
- Offering Child Care Business Basics training series for FCCH owners/directors; and,
- Coaching around start-up licensing and business support for individuals interested in opening new homes

This project is an expansion of our existing supports for new providers with an emphasis on removing barriers to DCDEE licensure for Family Child Care Homes and incorporating more operational tools and peer network supports.

Need for the Project*

What is the main issue this project is established to address? What data or qualitative factors/stories are available to show that need?

The NC Early Childhood Education Coalition and the Think Babies Campaign named Buncombe County (BC) a "child care desert" in 2019, noting there are 4.76 infants & toddlers per available slot. Over the last 15 years, child care slots for infants & toddlers in BC decreased by 216, resulting in fewer families with access to licensed care. Of these lost slots, 104 were in FCCHs. The number of licensed FCCHs in BC has dropped from 47 in 2005 to just 14; the trend is similar across the state.

A FCCH is the smallest child care license issued by the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). The license is issued to an individual provider in their home for up to 5 children aged 6 weeks to 5 years with the option for 3 additional school-aged children. FCCHs have long been a staple of care for children under 3, as they provide a smaller, more home-like atmosphere than a traditional center. While individually small, FCCHs could have a profound positive impact on our current crisis in infant and toddler

care. Opening a FCCH is not as time- or resource-consuming as opening a new center or new infant classroom. BC has a relatively high subsidy reimbursement rate for infants in FCCHs (\$1022/month for 5-star home), so a provider can make a profit from serving infants, while centers, with lower reimbursements and higher overhead, almost always serve infants at a financial loss. FCCHs also have potential to meet other needs, since they can open in less populated parts of the county or in communities where residents have transportation, language, or other barriers to accessing center-based care.

However, there are compelling reasons why FCCH numbers have declined: owners operate alone, start-up costs are high and profit margins narrow, and increasing regulatory demands mean providers spend more evenings and weekends on admin/compliance. And even with our supply crisis, most young families do not know about FCCHs, so new homes may struggle to enroll.

Project*

Explain the project and how it will work. Include the overall purpose and any models or evidence-based practices that will be included. What specific activities and milestones are included in the project plan?

Our project aims to address the shortage of FCHH child care slots and the barriers to opening/maintaining a FCCH by developing a local Staffed Family Child Care Network, a strategy endorsed by the federal Office of Child Care in 2015 to help FCCHs meet new regulations and improve quality. While BPFC's Child Care Resources (CCR) has participated in recruitment, training, and support of FCCH providers for many years, capacity for focused supports was minimal until receiving FCCH start-up grant funds from BC in FY19-20. Engaging in that more targeted FCCH start-up work, we learned: 1) it is helpful, and 2) it is not enough for FCCHs to thrive in current market and regulatory conditions.

Staffed FCCH Networks are shared service networks for FCCHs. They include the important start-up supports BPFC began last year (recruitment, start-up training, licensure TA, and mini-grants) PLUS business and administrative supports, marketing, ongoing regular TA, and active peer networking to keep FCCH providers from feeling isolated. We propose building this more comprehensive staffed FCCH network by tweaking the focused start-up supports CCR provided last fiscal year, while partnering with Wonderschool.com (or a similar staffed FCCH Network with significant online presence/tools) to add online professional communities, online marketing expertise and platforms, and technology-based back-office supports like fee collection, student management and family communications. Key steps:

- Ongoing – CCR provides TA to prospective FCCH providers.
- Ongoing – BPFC works with Opportunities Exchange to design Staffed FCCH Network
- Summer 2020 – Project announcement, application for TA and mini-grants
- Summer/Fall 2020 – Recruitment of FCCH providers
- Fall 2020-- Partner with providers to pilot Wonderschool
- Spring 2021 – Child Care Business Basics course offered, Professional Learning Community for new FCCH providers established; Evaluate impact and alignment of services provided

People Served*

Who will be served by this project? Include demographics for children and families served, workforce, and/or any other relevant groups.

Providing both local, intense start-up and licensing support with mini-grants, along with online networks, marketing, and technology to make compliance and business management easier will benefit current home providers at risk of closure due to lack of supports. It will also help new/potential providers open FCCHs with confidence, knowing they have peer networks and practical tools to support their business. In addition, we hope these added supports will attract caregivers currently providing child care informally (outside the system for background checks & other vital safety oversight) into the formal, licensed system where they can

be regulated and can also accept subsidy. More FCCHs mean more infant and toddler slots for BC families who desperately need them.

CCR is also in talks with several community members of color who have explained a hesitation among African-American residents to place young black children into large preschool centers where they might experience institutional racism and “start the school to prison pipeline even before kindergarten.” We hope to work with these partners to recruit FCCH providers of color to address this concern and expand access to and options for quality child care.

The small size and home environment of FCCHs make them an ideal care option for infants and toddlers, but also for children who have trauma histories or other neurobiological reasons why larger centers full of children, noise, and bright colors can be triggering. Many kinds of families benefit from having quality FCCH options.

Results*

What results do you hope to achieve with this project? Be specific about how much impact the project will have in line with the goals of the fund, and how many people will be served.

For projects requesting funding for slots, also please include:

- Total new slots created
- Total slots maintained
- # of Subsidy slots created
- # of Subsidy slots maintained
- # of teachers/staff positions created
- # of teachers/staff positions maintained

BPFC recognizes the importance of FCCHs as an option that can meet a wide variety of children’s needs, and we continue to conduct small tests of change to discover what exactly our local EC system can do to change their downward trend. We learned several lessons from last year’s start-up work, and our hope this year is to continue to learn and identify the particular combination of supports that make FCCHs an appealing and viable business model.

At the end of this year our overall goal is to have identified those essential supports, and develop a plan for much larger-scale implementation that would eventually get BC back to having 70+ licensed, high quality FCCHs, located in child care deserts and communities of color, reducing families’ barriers to (and fears about) putting their children in licensed care.

We expect the following program results during this program year:

- 20 new licensed slots will be created
- Maintain all current FCCH providers
- 100% of newly licensed FCCHs will plan to enroll in the Child Care Subsidy Program allowing them to accept vouchers
- 8 prospective Family Child Care Homes providers will receive Technical Assistance services
- 4 potential FCCH providers will receive registration fees and transportation assistance to attend the required DCDEE pre-licensing workshops in Hickory
- 2 new FCCH providers will receive start-up grant funds to become licensed providers.
- 4 FCCH providers will join the new Staffed FCCH Network
- One 30-hour Child Care Business Basics course for new FCCH providers will be offered.
- Information and recruitment campaign (social media and print) targeting caregivers in unlicensed homes will be launched

Evaluation*

How will you know you have succeeded? Explain the project evaluation process, including specific measures that will be tracked.

Success in this project would be 4 thriving new FCCHs, fully enrolled with infants, toddlers and preschoolers who wouldn't otherwise be able to get care. The owner/providers have the tools and skills to excel at both the business and the educational demands of the job, and they are confident that they can get quick answers to their questions. Providers also come together formally and informally to learn together and support each other, and they tell their friends that opening an FCCH in BC is easy and profitable.

We will regularly reevaluate outreach and recruitment strategies, CCR service delivery, efficacy of our printed materials, and alignment with and value of Wonderschool (or similar FCCH network). We will solicit feedback from community members, prospective FCCH providers, and the families that they serve through regular surveys, in-person conversations, and/or focus groups. We will hold regular meetings with community partners to discuss feedback and make appropriate changes to the program to increase positive outcomes, ensure that we are providing services that are reflective of what FCCH providers need to be successful licensed caregivers in BC. By the end of FY20-21, success will include:

- 4 new licensed FCCHs will open
- 80% of new FCCH providers will participate in a Professional Learning Community for peer support and mentoring.
- 80% of new providers will be at full desired enrollment within 3 months of licensure
- 80% of new FCCH providers will report that the Staffed FCCH Network model is helpful in starting and sustaining their business.
- 100% of new FCCH providers will provide feedback about the supports provided to them from CCR and Wonderschool (or similar network) to inform future efforts.

Equity*

Describe your approach to racial and socio-economic equity, both inside and outside the organization. What are some specific examples of practices that are in place or to be put in place with this project?

Leading with racial equity means prioritizing strategies that work to improve outcomes for children of color and give special consideration to the knowledge, experience and innovation of people of color. Buncombe Partnership for Children continues its racial equity journey with our Board, staff, and programs. Our Board has included goals related to board member diversity and racial equity in its last two governance plans. Program data disaggregated by race/ethnicity is collected by program staff and reviewed by board committees. Staff have convened an Equity Team to help define what we mean by equity, diversity and inclusion. We have redesigned hiring practices, job descriptions, and our employee handbook using an equity lens. Staff hold monthly book/article discussion sessions focused on equity content. This year, we entered into a contract with Cenzontle for language justice training for board, staff and contractors. We are beginning to incorporate more language justice strategies with outreach materials and interpretation services. We hosted Racial Equity Institute (REI) training in January 2020 and now 100% of Buncombe Partnership for Children staff and 30% of the Board have been through REI training, with a goal of 100% by end of 2020. Our organization understands we have much to learn and are committed to changing our systems to produce better outcomes for people of color.

This FCCH expansion work has the potential to be a powerful tool in increasing access to culturally appropriate, quality ECE for children of color. FCCHs also have the potential to remove several barriers to care for low-resourced families by accepting subsidies for infants and potentially being located in lower-

resourced neighborhoods where transportation wouldn't be needed. Our recruitment strategy will include more intentional outreach to potential FCCH providers in racially and economically diverse neighborhoods.

Collaboration*

List any formal and/or supportive partners. Describe their roles in the project. How will they make it stronger?

At the heart of this project is the partnership between the prospective FCCH providers and the knowledgeable Child Care Resources team members who provide training, coaching, and technical assistance to set up a quality learning environment and navigate complicated licensure requirements.

A new collaborator this year is Opportunities Exchange, THE national leader in ECE shared services. Their work in communities all over the country has pointed to other areas of support that hugely impact the success and sustainability of FCCHs. Opportunities Exchange has a partnership with Wonderschool.com to bring the technology, marketing, business coaching, mentoring and peer networking Wonderschool currently provides only in large cities to smaller communities by working alongside "on the ground" teams like our CCR staff.

CCR will continue to work closely with Child Care Licensing Consultants from DCDEE and Child Care Health Consultants (a Smart Start-funded program based at MAHEC) to support new providers on their path to licensure. Ongoing supportive partners include Mountain BizWorks and Self-Help Credit Union, who provide the Child Care Business Basics course, and Pisgah Legal, with whom we are working to remove barriers to licensure and business ownership for potential providers. A new, very early, partnership is developing with key members of local communities of color who want their children to be in care with providers who look more like them, so we will be exploring together if FCCHs are a solution to this particular community need.

Finally, our regional CCR partner, Southwestern Child Development Commission, has recently hired Nicole Pearson as a Statewide FCCH consultant, whose job it is to dig deeper into the sharp decline in FCCHs and propose ways to turn that curve, so we will be working closely with her, both connecting her to providers and responding to her findings as they are available.

Budget*

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Explain how grant funds will be used, specifically what type of expenses will be covered by County funds. Describe other sources of revenue, including type of funding, source, restrictions and status.

FCCH Budget 20-21.xlsx

Requested funding for this project include 20% of one CCR staff and the staff-related expenses (travel, standard allocation for utilities and rent, etc.). The only other major expense is \$12,000 for two mini-grants to help potential providers with up-front investments in educational materials, equipment, outdoor space enhancement, etc. This funding for up-front expenses has made recruiting potential providers much easier, and it is absolutely essential if we are to recruit lower-resourced people to become successful FCCH providers. In addition, \$2,400 is allocated for communications (print, social media, etc.) to aid in recruiting potential providers.

Sustainability*

How will the project continue to succeed after the funding of the grant? Explain your plan for making this an ongoing effort.

One reason a partnership with Wonderschool (or similar FCCH network) is so appealing is that it comes with no direct expense to BPFC. Wonderschool provides a variety of ongoing marketing, business management, and peer networking and coaching, all for a small percentage of a program's revenue. Since their tools allow FCCHs to fill vacancies faster and collect more complete payments, as well as streamline many other admin tasks, the service easily pays for itself. CCR recruits providers and provides in-person TA and opportunities for local learning and networking. This means that CCR can "stay in our lane," continuing to be the local resource on child development, learning environments, licensure, and professional development, providing in-person support as providers build their programs, but we would not have to add staff or try to become marketing experts. This project, if our local providers are open to the web platform and receiving "blended" support from CCR and Wonderschool, could be easily sustained long-term. It is possible that this blended Staffed FCCH Network could even add capacity to our local TA providers to focus more on recruitment and early TA, with Wonderschool meeting more of the long-term business management and peer networking needs. This first year will include much learning, as we work with Wonderschool (or similar FCCH network) to supplement and not duplicate their services, all to ensure new and existing FCCH providers have comprehensive business and programmatic supports.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONAL INFORMATION – This information will not impact grant scoring but will be helpful to the committee.

Partial Funding

If the project were to be offered a grant for partial funding, what factors would need to be considered?

This budget basically covers .20 FTE for staff to provide targeted recruitment a start-up technical assistance, and funding for two mini-grants. The \$12,000 mini-grants could possibly be taken out, but that would ensure that no lower-income providers could be recruited. It would also make success on our desired outcomes much less likely.

Multi-Year Funding

If you would like this project to be considered for multi-year funding (up to 3 years), what amounts would you request for years 2 and 3? What milestones would this funding allow you to accomplish? Explain why more years are needed to accomplish goals.

Resource Support

How can Buncombe County support your organization with this project and in strengthening your work (related to equity, scale, or impact)?

We will work with prospective providers to build trusting relationships and identify barriers to becoming licensed homes. Some barriers are financial and others are administrative due to licensing requirements. We will be working to address and remove barriers for prospective programs. Buncombe County has been a resource for coordinated efforts with building inspections, planning and zoning of new FCCHs. They have also been a resource in reaching out to similar departments within the city of Asheville. Continued participation of county health inspectors and fire marshals in our quarterly Early Childhood Program Quality Team meetings is a huge resource for this work and related supports for our centers.

As we learn more about Wonderschool.com (or other similar FCCH networks) and begin to engage more in raising awareness of what FCCHs are and where they are, we may request communications support in spreading the word, sharing information via the County's channels as appropriate.

Scale-up

What is your vision for how the strategies from this project could contribute to a significant scale-up the overall system to collectively address the child care crisis?

Because this year is very much a learning year, engaging with an unknown platform, we cannot be certain exactly what scale-up will look like. But our desired outcome is to have a plan for comprehensive supports that WILL ensure sustainability of FCCHs and get us back to 70+ homes.

Other

Is there anything else that you want the committee to know?

BC FCCH Workforce Report FINAL.pdf

Please see the attached Workforce Report specific to Buncombe County Family Childcare Homes for more detailed data on trends, average income, demographics, etc.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- FCCH Budget 20-21.xlsx
- BC FCCH Workforce Report FINAL.pdf

Early Childhood Education and Development Fund

Proposed FY2021 Project Budget (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

Organization Name:	Buncombe Partnership for Children
Project Name:	Family Child Care Home Expansion
Grant Amount Requested:	\$28,882

FY2021 Proposed Project Revenue	Amount	Notes
Proposed Buncombe County Early Childhood Grant	\$ 28,882.00	
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
Total	\$ 28,882.00	

FY2021 Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Grant	Other Funds	Total	Notes
Personnel	\$ 11,231.00		\$ 11,231.00	
Travel/Training	\$ 1,500.00		\$ 1,500.00	Personnel - .20 FTE salary and benefits; Travel - local mileage, DCDEE workshops
Technology			\$ -	
Curriculum/Assessments			\$ -	
Licensing/Dues			\$ -	
Nutrition			\$ -	
Transportation			\$ -	
Supplies/Materials	\$ 1,200.00		\$ 1,200.00	Materials for information sessions, fee scholarships for required workshops, books
Building Maintenance/Repair	\$ 175.00		\$ 175.00	Repair and maintenance
Rent/Occupancy/Utilities	\$ 375.00		\$ 375.00	Utilities, rent
Furniture			\$ -	
Playground/Outdoor space			\$ -	
Printing/Marketing/Website/Postage	\$ 2,390.00		\$ 2,390.00	Start-up & recruitment materials, classified advertising, communications and postage
Admin Expenses (Legal, Accounting, Insurance, etc.)			\$ -	
Other (please list in comments section)	\$ 12,011.00		\$ 12,011.00	Cash grants for start-up facilities, Equipment rental
Total			\$ 28,882.00	

Overall Organization Budget	Amount	Notes
FY2019 Actual Year-End Revenue	\$ 5,484,282.00	Some grants received in FY17-18 were budgeted for FY18-19
FY2019 Actual Year-End Expenses	\$ 5,571,472.00	Includes \$1,064,717 for child care vouchers & 2M+for NC Pre-K slots
FY2020 Adopted Budget Amount	\$ 5,695,892.00	Current approved budget
FY2021 Proposed Budget Amount	\$ 5,710,000.00	

Fall 2019

Working in Early Care and Education in Buncombe County: The Family Child Care Workforce



Produced by



**Buncombe
Partnership
for Children**

a partner in the
Smart Start network



Working in Early Care and Education in Buncombe County: The Family Child Care Workforce

This report was completed by Buncombe Partnership for Children (BPFC) as a companion to the *Working in Early Care and Education in Buncombe County: 2018 Workforce Study*¹ published by Child Care Services Association and commissioned by Buncombe Partnership for Children. The data in this report comes from a survey BPFC sent to all NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH) providers in the spring of 2019. In March of 2019, 13 of the 15 licensed Family Child Care Homes in Buncombe County completed and returned surveys. Supplemental data for this report was pulled from the DCDEE Monthly Statistical Report² in March 2019 regarding the FCCHs licensed at this time.

What is a Family Child Care Home?

A Family Child Care Home is the smallest child care license issued by the North Carolina DCDEE. The license is issued to an individual provider in their home for up to five children ages six weeks to five years, with the option of serving three additional school-aged children for a total of eight children. Family Child Care Homes have long been a staple of care for children under three years old, as they provide a smaller, more home-like atmosphere than a traditional child care center. In North Carolina, one can legally care for up to two unrelated children (in addition to an unlimited number of their own children/grandchildren/nieces/nephews) without a license. Additionally, one can care for any number children for four hours or less per day, or less than four months of the year, without a license (examples include morning preschools and summer camps).



Family Child Care Homes are as diverse as the providers who operate them. Some integrate the children they are caring for into their daily family routines, with the children joining in family meals and errands between more traditional classroom activities. Some providers keep a separate space for the children and operate more like a traditional classroom. Family Child Care Homes are an attractive early education option for families who seek low adult-child ratios, more individualized care, mixed-age groups, or more home-like settings. A unique characteristic of a FCCH is that children have the opportunity to form deep attachments with one consistent caregiver over multiple years.

Supply and Demand

The NC Early Childhood Education Coalition and the Think Babies Campaign named Buncombe County a “child care desert” in 2019.³ Think Babies is a national campaign created by Zero to Three to bring awareness to the importance of quality care for infants and toddlers.

They found that there are currently 4.76 infants and toddlers for every one available infant child care slot in Buncombe County. Over the last 15 years, the number of child care slots for infants and toddlers in Buncombe County decreased by 216 between March 2005 and March 2019, resulting in fewer families having access to licensed care. Nearly half (104) of these lost slots were in Family Child Care Homes. The number of licensed FCCHs in Buncombe County has dropped from 47 in 2005 to just 15 in March 2019. This trend is not unique to Buncombe County; counties across the state are experiencing a decrease in the number of FCCHs. Some of the reasons for the decrease include planned retirement, the combination of low wages and long hours, and the demand of meeting increased requirements of licensing, sanitation, and zoning.



Star Rating and Licensure

North Carolina uses a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) for licensure, which has a 1-5 star scale. The licensing system applies to FCCHs and centers *that operate for more than four hours per day*. This star-rated licensing system evaluates the quality of care that a program provides using research-based predictors of quality, such as teacher education, staff-child ratios and the child care environment. The license is made up of two components: 1) Staff Education, and 2) Program Standards. Program standards are measured by DCDEE using the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) assessment every three years. Four- and five-star rated programs are considered high quality in NC. The QRIS system is voluntary. Licensed facilities who choose not to participate in the QRIS system receive an automatic one-

star rating.

The table below shows the star-ratings of licensed FCCHs as of March 2019. Thirty percent of homes in Buncombe County have a 4- or 5-star license, compared with 73% of Buncombe Child Care Centers. Lower star ratings in Family Child Care Homes are due in part to 2 of 15 owners opting out of the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment. Without an ERS assessment, a FCCH cannot receive more than two out of seven points in the Program Standards portion of the Rated License. The Program Standards Portion makes up seven of a possible 15 total points. A provider with the highest number of education points (7) can reach a four-star license without an ERS assessment.

Buncombe Family Child Care Home Star Levels ⁴	Number of Buncombe County FCCHs
One Star	2
Two Stars	1
Three Stars	7
Four Stars	4
Five Stars	1

Staffing

The staffing structure of a Family Child Care Home most often consists of one primary caregiver, also called the license holder. Five of 13 survey respondents said they had a secondary caregiver working part-time in the program. These secondary caregivers included substitutes as well as caregivers supporting the primary provider during busy times of day. The secondary caregivers are often family members. DCDEE requires all people over the age of 16 living in a licensed FCCH to pass a DCDEE background check, whether or not they will be left alone with children. Secondary caregivers must meet the same licensing requirements as primary caregivers if they are left alone with the children at any time. In order to count in the licensed ratio or to care for the children without the primary caregiver present, caregivers in a FCCH must follow the same rules as a substitute caregiver in a Child Care Center regarding professional development, health and safety training, and CPR/First-Aid.



Pay, Hours and Longevity

Of the survey respondents who provided information regarding their own salary, the average was \$16.47 per hour based on a 40-hour work week. While this seems to suggest that Family Child Care Home providers are making a wage comparable to the higher range of median wages for teachers in Child Care Centers, it is important to note that FCCH providers often work much more than 8 hours per day.

Hours worked per week ⁵	Number of FCCH Survey Respondents (n=13)
Under 45	3
46-55	7
56-65	2
>66	1

Years in Operation ⁶	Number of FCCH Survey Respondents (n=13)
< 5	4
6-10	2
11-20	5
>20	2

Financial Stability of FCCH Owners

The survey included questions regarding a range of employment benefits and public assistance benefits. The three tables below provide information on the kinds of insurance coverage used, in addition to public assistance received in the past three years, and annual family income (including income from all household earners, not just the FCCH provider).

Anecdotally, some providers expressed to BPFC staff that they did not see insurance (and similar benefits) as “employment” benefits that they receive as a part of their job, but rather a separate bill that comes from their family budget. This is indicative of the complications many providers face in separating their family budgets from the business of Family Child Care. When budgets are not separated, it makes it difficult to determine the true cost operating a FCCH. While newer providers are being strongly encouraged to form LLCs and keep the business finances separate from family finances, many long-established providers do not operate this way.

Insurance Coverage ⁷	Number of FCCH Survey Respondents (n=12)
Receive health insurance from any source	12
<i>Covered under a spouse or parent’s policy</i>	4
<i>Covered under Medicare/Medicaid</i>	2
<i>Purchase through Marketplace/Affordable Care Act</i>	4
<i>Other</i>	2

Financial Assistance Received in last 3 years ⁸	Number of FCCH Survey Respondents (n=13)
WIC	1 (8%)
Medicaid for Child	1 (8%)
Child Care Subsidy for their own child	3 (23%)
Other	2 (15%)
Have not received any of these	7 (54%)

Family Income ⁹	Number of FCCH Survey Respondents (n=13)
Annual Family Income <\$30K	1 (8%)
Annual Family Income <\$40K	4 (31%)
No response	8 (61%)

The table below includes basic demographic information about the respondents. It is important to note that we have an aging workforce with the majority of the FCCH owners nearing retirement age. Emphasis must be placed on cultivating new Family Child Care Home providers to meet community need.

Demographics ¹⁰	Number of FCCH Survey Respondents (n=13)
50 years of age or younger	3
51-60 years of age	4
61-70 years of age	4
Older than 70	2
Female	13
Male	0
African American/Black	4
White	6
Native American	1
Race: "other"	1
No response	1

Education

Education level data for Family Child Care Home providers is publicly available on the DCDEE website. Like the Program Standards referenced above, a provider's education level allows them to receive between one and seven points for Education Standards. These points are seven of the possible 15 in the NC Rated License system. For example, a center earning between 13 and 15 total points would receive a five-star license. Current FCCH providers have an average of 4.33 points on the star rated license education scale, the equivalent of EDU119 (the NC Early Childhood Education Credential) plus six additional ECE-focused semester credit hours.

Education Standards	Education Standard points on DCDEE Rated License	Number of Buncombe FCCH Licenses (n=15) ¹¹
High school diploma	1 point	1
Above plus 4 ECE credits or 5 years experience in ECE	2 points	1
2pt standards plus EDU 119	3 points	1
2pt standards plus 6 ECE credits	4 points	5
2pt standards plus 12 ECE credits	5 points	1
2pt standards plus 18 ECE credits	6 points	0
Associate of Arts (AA) degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or AA + 12 ECE credits or higher	7 points	4
No data available	Opted out of ERS	2

Summary and Recommendations

Families in Buncombe County deserve a variety of early education options for their children, as different children thrive in different settings. Family Child Care Homes are a vital part of our early childhood system, offering low child-adult ratios in a home-like environment that might be particularly supportive for infants as well as children with sensory issues or histories of trauma. Family Child Care Homes allow a child to experience one consistent caregiving relationship over multiple years, deepening the child-adult connection that is central to healthy early brain development. They also allow for more geographic, language, and racial diversity among early education providers. Finally, with relatively low start-up costs, compared to center-based start-up cost, they are a financially viable option for Buncombe County to increase access to child care slots.

Buncombe County has seen a significant decrease in the number of licensed Family Child Care Homes in the last 10 years. Retiring caregivers are not being replaced by new providers. Family Child Care Homes are less attractive to operate now than in the past due to increased licensing requirements and a new complex subsidy attendance and payment system. There is also little incentive for providers to further their education or to meet enhanced licensing standards, given the long hours of the job and the high demand for their services.



While the current outlook may seem bleak, in recent years early childhood advocates have taken note of the decline in Family Child Care Homes, happening statewide and not just in Buncombe County. There are some incentives for local providers, as well. The subsidy rates for Family Child Care Home providers serving infants and toddlers in Buncombe County have increased significantly. Start-up grants and focused technical assistance are available for new and existing Family Child Care Home owners from Buncombe Partnership for Children. Public interest in increasing the supply of Family Child Care Homes is being studied locally and by the state licensing agency, NC DCDEE.

These efforts are a good start, but they are not enough to reverse the trend in this critical part of our Early Childhood service system. At the local and state level, work to support FCCHs could include:

- Concerted efforts to increase awareness of and recruitment for FCCHs as a child care option and a small business option
- Investments in organizations that build connections, collaboration, and business supports among Family Child Care Home providers to reduce isolation and build professionalism
- A shared services structure that reduces administrative burdens (both monetary and time)
- A review of state and local government regulations (licensing, sanitation, zoning, subsidy-NC FAST system) to ensure this small, home-based business model remains feasible

Photos courtesy of Danitza Baker's Spanish for Kids, a Buncombe County 5-star rated FCCH



¹ Working in Early Care and Education in Buncombe County: 2018 Workforce Study, <https://buncombepfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Working-in-Early-Care-and-Ed-Buncombe-Co-Report-2018-FINAL.pdf>

² NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (NC DCDEE) Monthly Statistical Report, <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/County/Child-Care-Snapshot/Child-Care-Statistical-Report>

³ NC Early Education Coalition, Think Babies Fact Sheet (<https://www.ncearlyeducationcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Availability-Fact-Sheet.pdf>)

⁴ NC DCDEE Monthly Statistical Report, March 2019, https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/S/statistical_detail_report_september_2019.pdf?ver=2019-10-01-080014-737

⁵ Buncombe Partnership For Children (BPFC) March 2019 FCCH Survey, <https://buncombepfc.org/about-us/news-events/>

⁶ BPFC March 2019 FCCH Survey

⁷ BPFC March 2019 FCCH Survey

⁸ BPFC March 2019 FCCH Survey

⁹ BPFC March 2019 FCCH Survey

¹⁰ BPFC March 2019 FCCH Survey

¹¹ Source: NC DCDEE Website, Individual program licenses effective March 2019

Organization Name:	Buncombe County Partnership for Children	Project Name:	Developing a Comprehensive Staffed Family Child Care Network to increase FCCH slots
COVID-19 Response:			
<p>Depending upon the time frame of the pandemic/Stay Home Order, we anticipate smaller settings becoming more desirable and a potential increase in the demand for FCCH care. We will plan to provide consultation re: the design of the home owners' physical space via videos of the space and use of Zoom.</p>			
Response to Committee Questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is there no response on the multi-year question? <p>While we hope this program will be successful and we may ask for future funding, the FY 21 proposal is for a single year of funding and the results will help inform future requests.</p>			