



Early Childhood Committee

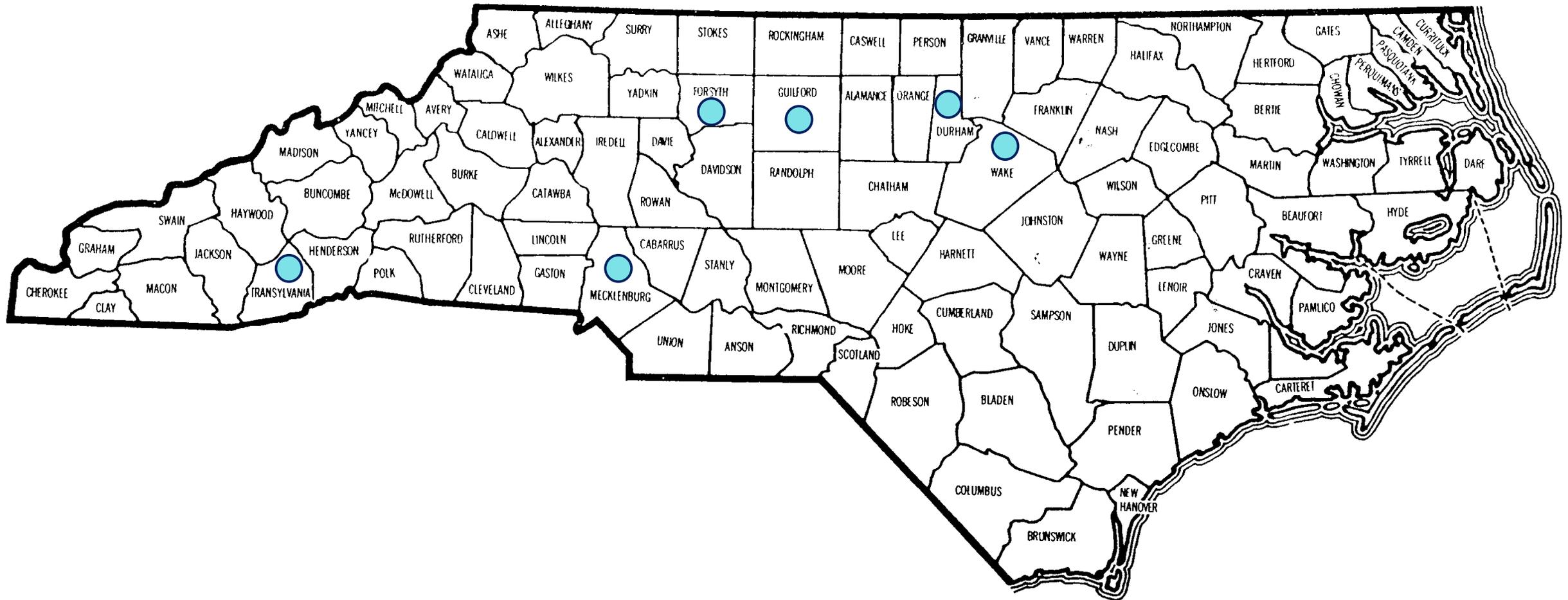
Models for Success:

Promising Practices from Other NC Communities

February 4, 2020



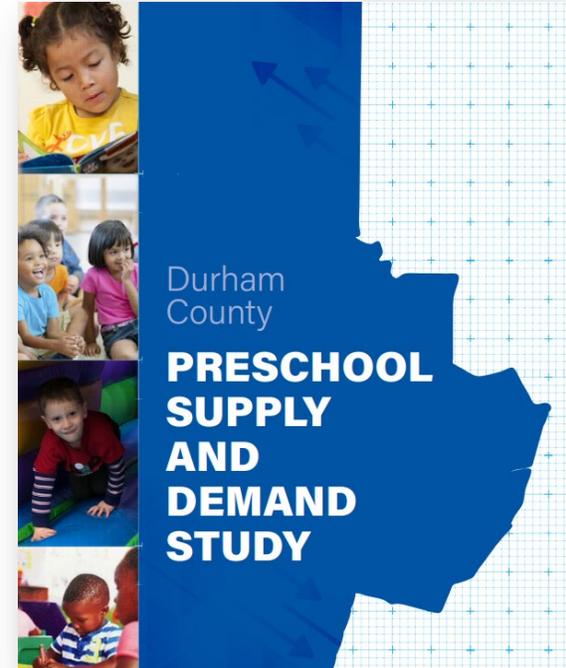
Bright Spots for Early Learning in NC



Durham County

Pop. 316,739

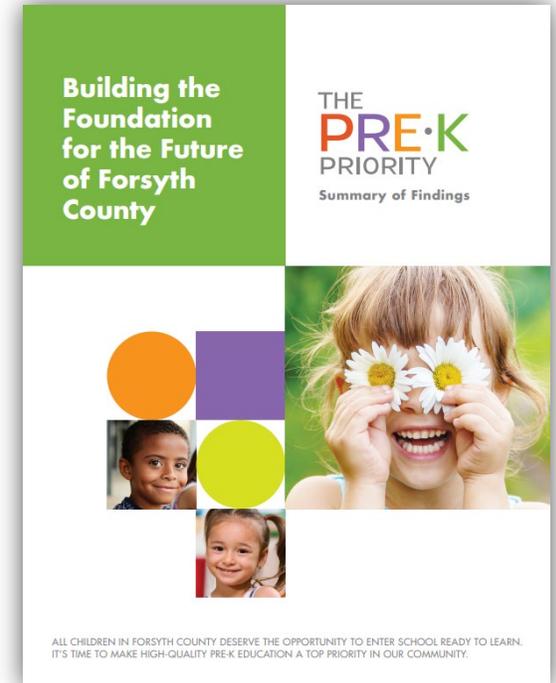
- “Durham Pre-K” plan is to expand access to high quality preschool services, first to low income 4-year olds, then to moderate income 4-year olds, and then to all 3-and 4-year old children in Durham County
- Total County investment has grown to \$5,250,000 including public & private classrooms, instructional costs, teacher pipeline, technical assistance and community engagement
- Child Care Services Association manages the model & expansion



Forsyth County

Pop. 379,099

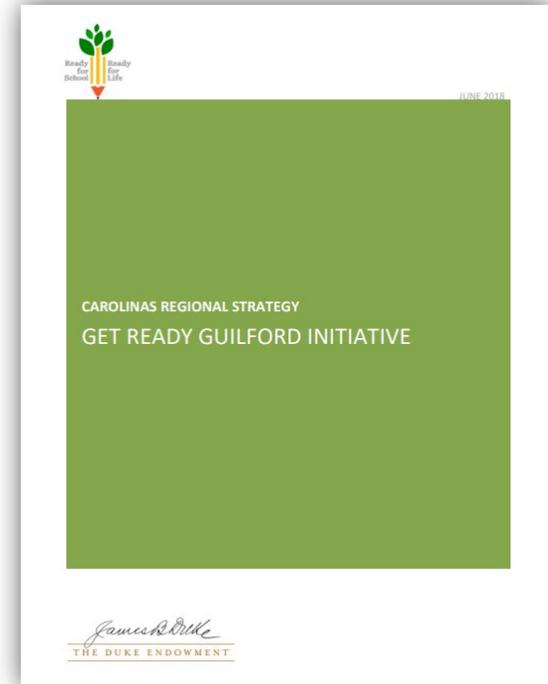
- Goal is for every Forsyth County child to do better in school through quality Pre-K learning.
- Forsyth County Universal Pre-K Steering Committee later became “The Pre-K Priority”
- Lead agency is Family Services
- Focus on quality, teacher compensation, workforce development, increasing high quality classrooms, funding and system administration.



Guilford County

Pop. 533,670

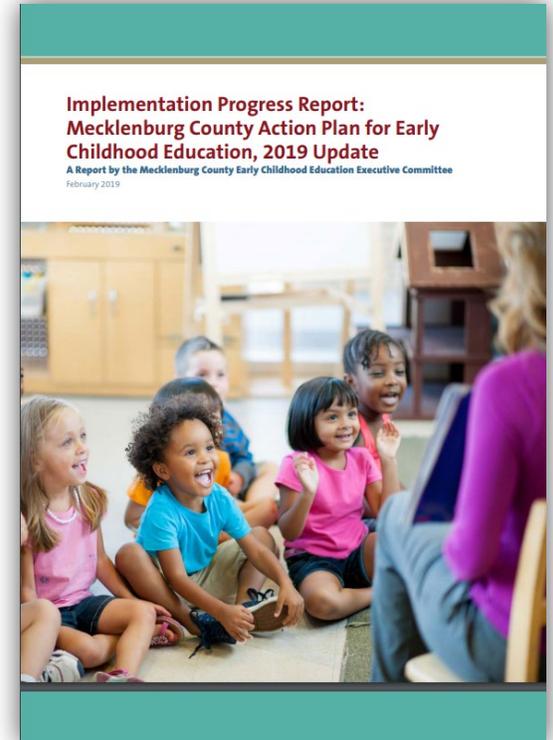
- “Get Ready Guilford” initiative aims to ensure critical developmental needs are met by expanding proven programs and weaving disjointed early childhood resources into one seamless system of care
- Spearheaded by The Duke Endowment and Ready for School, Ready for Life
- Secured a \$32.5m investment from Blue Meridian Partners to support a wide range of services for children birth – age 8, including early childhood education (phase 1 focuses on children up to 36 months old)



Mecklenburg County

Pop. 1,093,901

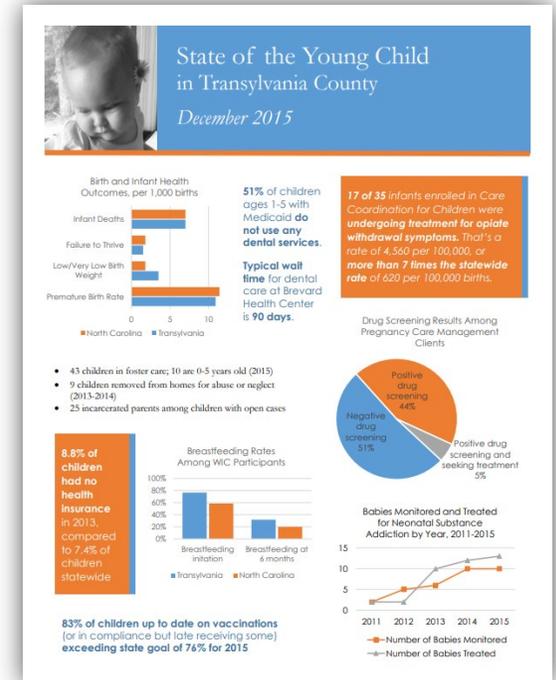
- “MECK Pre-K” is expanding early education through a County funded universal pre-k program
- Goals are to clear the child care subsidy waiting list, increase slots, develop the workforce, and continuously evaluate/improve
- County funding FY2020 is \$15,603,775 with expansion plans for annual increases up to a total of ~ \$60m in FY2024
- Slots are located in community-based centers and managed by Smart Start, which is County-operated



Transylvania County

Pop. 34,215

- “Get Set Transylvania” is an early childhood initiative focusing on child development and school preparedness/kindergarten readiness
- Goals are to increase access, quality, and affordability of early education
- Successes so far include receiving a \$100,000 grant from Smartly United Early Childhood Collective (Smart Start & United Way) and securing an affiliation with Sesame Street in Communities



Wake County

Pop. 1,092,305

- “Wake Pre-K” utilizes local support to expand the NC Pre-K program to serve more children through this high quality early childhood program
- The program blends Wake County funding with support from Smart Start, NC Division of Child Development and Early Education, and private contributions to serve eligible children through the public school system, Head Start and private child care
- The FY2020 Wake County investment is \$1,688,028 to Smart Start to maintain the expanded slots

Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) extends life-changing opportunities to Wake County children birth to age five, providing *stepping stones* to their success. This report documents how the path is constructed to ensure its strength.

Through a comprehensive strategic plan, WCSS leadership has mapped out stepping stones for the years ahead. Our partnerships, programs, and initiatives all play a role in early childhood success.

WCSS programs fall under four Goal Areas, guiding principles around which outcomes are evaluated and their impact assessed:

- 1 Children are in safe, supportive home environments.
- 2 Children are in high quality care that contributes to positive child outcomes.
- 3 Children are healthy and developmentally ready for school.
- 4 Children and families are supported by a strong, diverse, integrated early childhood system.

Too often, children can find the route to their success waylaid by obstacles. For nearly 14,000 of Wake County's young children, their hurdles are due to poverty, limiting access to resources and opportunities. In response, WCSS-funded programs prioritize services to children in families with economic challenges and additional risk factors and to the child care facilities serving these families. This focus on "greatest need" helps us lift our community starting with those who need a hand the most.

 Children are in safe, supportive home environments.

The first steps of learning happen at home. Parents and guardians aren't raising their children alone, however. Last year, WCSS funded nearly 7,000 home visits to families to help support these first steps toward success.

"My children are happier, I'm happier, and I have more time to play with my kids and support my family. PAT is one of the best things that has happened to us!"

Crystal, mother of 2½-year-old twins and Parents as Teachers (PAT) client. Over 2,200 home visits were made in FY2017-18 by PAT, which helps prepare children for success in school by focusing on child development and school achievement through parent education at home.



NC Early Childhood Foundation



- Works to promote understanding, spearhead collaboration, and advance policies to ensure each North Carolina child is on track for lifelong success by the end of third grade. Initiatives:
 - Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
 - Early Learning and The Every Student Succeeds Act
 - Family Forward NC
 - First 2000 Days
 - Local Funding for Early Learning
 - NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading

Investing in North Carolina's Healthy Future

Health and Learning are Interconnected
Healthy development beginning at birth impacts children's ability to learn. A strong foundation in good physical and emotional health helps ensure that children are successful learners from their earliest years. Healthy children are more likely to be physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally ready for kindergarten, attend school consistently, and benefit from high-quality learning environments.
Children who are often sick,¹ have tooth pain,² are dealing with chronic untreated or undiagnosed physical or behavioral health conditions,³ or who struggle with developmental delays and lack the services and supports they need⁴ are less likely than their peers to be reading on grade-level by the end of third grade.

Delivering health care cannot be separated from supporting the relationship between the family and child.⁵ Dr. Charles Willson, East Carolina University, Department of Pediatrics
Children's development during the early years of life is strongly affected by their health and experiences during this time are often hardwired into their brains and bodies, forming the foundation for all subsequent development.⁶ These experiences shape the brain's architecture and affect how biological systems develop. Positive early experiences build a strong foundation for learning capacities, behavior and future health.
Good health in utero and a healthy birth, access to needed health services, and families and communities that support healthy outcomes all increase the chances of good physical and social-emotional health and on-track development during childhood and throughout life.⁷

Preventing Chronic Disease
High-quality early learning has demonstrated positive effects on child and future adult health. Children from low-income families that attend universal prekindergarten in New York City are more likely to be diagnosed and treated for chronic medical problems such as asthma, vision and hearing.⁸ Early identification and treatment leads to improved outcomes for children.⁹
Children who participated in a high-quality early learning program that included health screening and nutrition had better adult health and low chronic disease, including lower hypertension and obesity. These outcomes from the North Carolina Abecedarian Study suggest that high-quality early learning should be considered as a strategy for chronic disease prevention.

By the Numbers

- 591,000**
Number of children birth through age eight in North Carolina living in poverty (under 200 percent of Federal Poverty Level). Children in low-income families have significant health disparities and are less likely to be successful in school.¹⁰
- 13**
Percentage of North Carolina kindergartners with untreated tooth decay.¹¹
- 15**
Percentage of two-to-four-year-old children living in North Carolina's poorest families (under 100 percent of Federal Poverty Level) that are obese. Obesity in early childhood can have long-term health, social and learning consequences.¹²
- 50-60**
Percentage range of birth-to-three-year-olds in North Carolina who received early intervention services that saw improvement in their social/emotional health, knowledge and skills and behaviors.¹³
- 68.3**
Percentage of Medicaid-enrolled North Carolina children receiving regular well-child visits (ages 0-9).¹⁴

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