

FY2024 Buncombe County Early Childhood Grant Report

Organization Name:	The Christine Avery Learning Center	
Project Name:	Facilitating Holistic Education; Facilitating Whole Families-Phase Two	
Reporting Quarter: (Check one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 1 (July 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 2 (October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 3 (January 1, 2024 - March 31, 2024)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 4 (April 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024)

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide a brief summary (no more than 1500 characters). You may attach supplemental documents if needed.

Quarter 1	<p>We currently have one curriculum specialist who assists the classrooms with curriculum alignment. She is meeting weekly with each classroom lead teacher to discuss lesson planning. The meetings help the classrooms align the lessons with the monthly themes. The curriculum specialist is also assisting the classrooms with assessing the learning of the students. We have one child advocate (behavior specialist). She helps the classrooms with behavior management. Her work with the classrooms also consists of helping the lead teachers develop and implement social-emotional activities within the classroom. Our child advocate also assists in finding and connecting needed resources for the students and their families. 50% of the funds drawn for the first quarter were to help with the salaries and benefits of these two positions. Our early learning sites (both Hill Street and St. Mark) employ a total of 5 lead teachers 5 assistant teachers and 3 floaters (who are part-time to help cover wrap-around in the afternoons). The remaining 50% of the funds requested for the quarter were given to the staff in the classrooms to help them get their pay to a living wage. Unfortunately, when we submitted the grant, the living wage was close to 19.00/hr. Since then, the living wage has increased to \$20.10/hr which will cause us not to be able to give each staff a living wage, but close to it.</p>
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Quarter 2	<p>Our Child Advocate (Behavior Specialist) continue to direct families to resources that not only help with the success of their child in our early learning program, but also help families who have the desire to receive services for the entire family (parenting classes, or family therapy) connected to the right resource. To date, we have had three family events that were well attended. Our Parent/Teacher conference day resulted in 95% of our families attending the conferences. These amazing results are due to the staff building relationships and staying in constant contact with our families. Our second family engagement event was a Thanksgiving luncheon where 82% of our families were present. The families sat and ate with their child at the center. The uniqueness is that the teachers and other CWA staff were at the tables with some of the families eating and connecting as a community. the third family event took place near the end of December. A large donation was provided to our families from Salvation Army for Christmas. The families were able to come to the center and "shop for free," for needs for their children. Fourteen staff received the bonuses that were appropriated for them to get them close to the living wage as possible. As stated previously. When we first wrote this grant to get staff living wage pay, the living wage was \$19/hr. Since that time it has increased to over \$20/hr. We, however had been able to maintain our staff with no turnover this quarter or last quarter.</p>
Quarter 3	<p>We gave all staff supplemental bonuses to help equal living wage pay. The total number of staff receiving bonuses were 14. Our Behavior Specialist(aka: Child Advocate) continues to work with the families, children, and staff. She connects the families with needed resources. Resources families are receiving are family counseling, individual counseling,department of social services connections to assist with transportation, utility costs, and rent. Five of our families were connected with these resources. The children (15) are connected with speech therapists, occupational therapists, behavior therapists. Currently 5 additional students are receiving assessments for additional services. One familiy engagement even took place (kindergarten registration). 2 charter schools as well as Asheville City and Buncombe County School systems participated in the event. Our curriculum specialist created a packet for the event. Included were things families could do to help prepare their child academically for kindergarten. The child advocate does mindfulness meditation in each of the classrooms each week. In addition she works with the teachers on ways to implement conscious discipline into the classroom. Our retention rate holds steady at 99%. Bonuses to help with the living wage helps keep the staff constant.</p>

Quarter 4	<p>This quarter, our family workshops and events were well-attended, with participation from over 40 families. We held two key events:</p> <p>Kindergarten Readiness Workshop: This session was designed for PreK families providing them with information on what to expect when their child transitions to kindergarten. It included demonstrations of ways families can help prepare their children for kindergarten. The workshop was led by our curriculum specialist, along with representatives from Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools, PEAK Academy, and Mountain City Montessori.</p> <p>Positive Discipline and Engagement Workshop: This session focused on providing families with information on positive discipline strategies and ways to engage positively with their children. Families participated in hands-on activities that they could take home and use. Childcare and dinner were provided for families that registered. This workshop was coordinated by our Child Advocate, who connects families with various community resources. Although we are currently unable to pay all staff a living wage, we do offer a comprehensive benefits package that includes health and supplemental insurance for full-time staff.</p>
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Progress toward annual goals

		Actual Results (Enter Data) Please only include new data for the specific quarter				Progress toward Annual Goal
Measure	Annual Goal	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
% of staff earning a living wage	100%		17%	30%	28%	75%
# of staff earning a quarterly bonus	17		13	14	14	41
# of staff members attending at least 2 training courses	20		13	14	14	41
# of family workshops held	4		2	1	2	5

Comments:

Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to ensure that 100% of our staff receive a living wage due to the consistent increases in the living wage standards. However, 98% of our staff are close to earning a living wage. New staff members start at a slightly lower wage during their 90-day probationary period, after which they receive an increase, though it still falls short of the living wage as defined by Just Economics. We do, however, offer a comprehensive benefits package.

Additionally, we are dedicated to the professional growth of our team. Recently, all staff participated in a two-day retreat that featured classes on foundations of learning, classroom management, lesson planning, summer learning activities, gardening and environmental play, and literacy in the classroom. These classes were conducted by our partners, BPFC, R2S, Plant House, and the Abolitionist Teaching Network. Some classes, approved by DCDEE for credits, were taught by our curriculum specialist, NC PreK teachers, and administrative staff.

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Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Starting Budget	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount Remaining
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel	\$ 223,060	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 23,060	\$ -
Travel/Training	\$ 38,000			\$ 10,000	\$ 28,000	\$ -
Technology	\$ 28,500		\$ 28,100		\$ 400	\$ -
Curriculum/Assessments						\$ -
Licensing/Dues						\$ -
Nutrition						\$ -
Transportation						\$ -
Supplies/Materials						\$ -
Building Maintenance/Repair						\$ -
Rent/Occupancy/Utilities						\$ -
Furniture						\$ -
Playground/Outdoor space						\$ -
Printing/Marketing/Website/Postage						\$ -
Admin Expenses (Legal, Accounting, Insurance,						\$ -
Other - retirement startup for staff/administrators	\$ 21,900		\$ 21,900			\$ -
Total	\$ 311,460	\$ 80,000	\$ 130,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 51,460	\$ -

Comments:

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