



# Early Childhood System Panel Presentation

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Early Childhood Committee

October 6, 2020



BUNCOMBE COUNTY




# PANELISTS

<b>Panel Organizers</b>	Amy Barry, Executive Director & Deanna Lamotte, Early Childhood System Coordinator, Buncombe Partnership for Children
<b>State of Child Care – COVID Edition</b>	Jenny Vial, Director of Child Care Resources, Buncombe Partnership for Children
<b>Policy &amp; Advocacy</b>	Michele Rivest, Director - NC Early Education Coalition
<b>Workforce &amp; Compensation</b>	Allison Miller, Director of the NC WAGE\$ Program - Child Care Services Association
<b>Subsidy</b>	Shelly Ledford - Southwestern Child Development Commission





a partner in the  
smart start network 

The text "a partner in the smart start network" is positioned to the left of the Smart Start Network logo, which consists of several overlapping squares in various colors (blue, green, red, yellow, orange) arranged in a cluster.

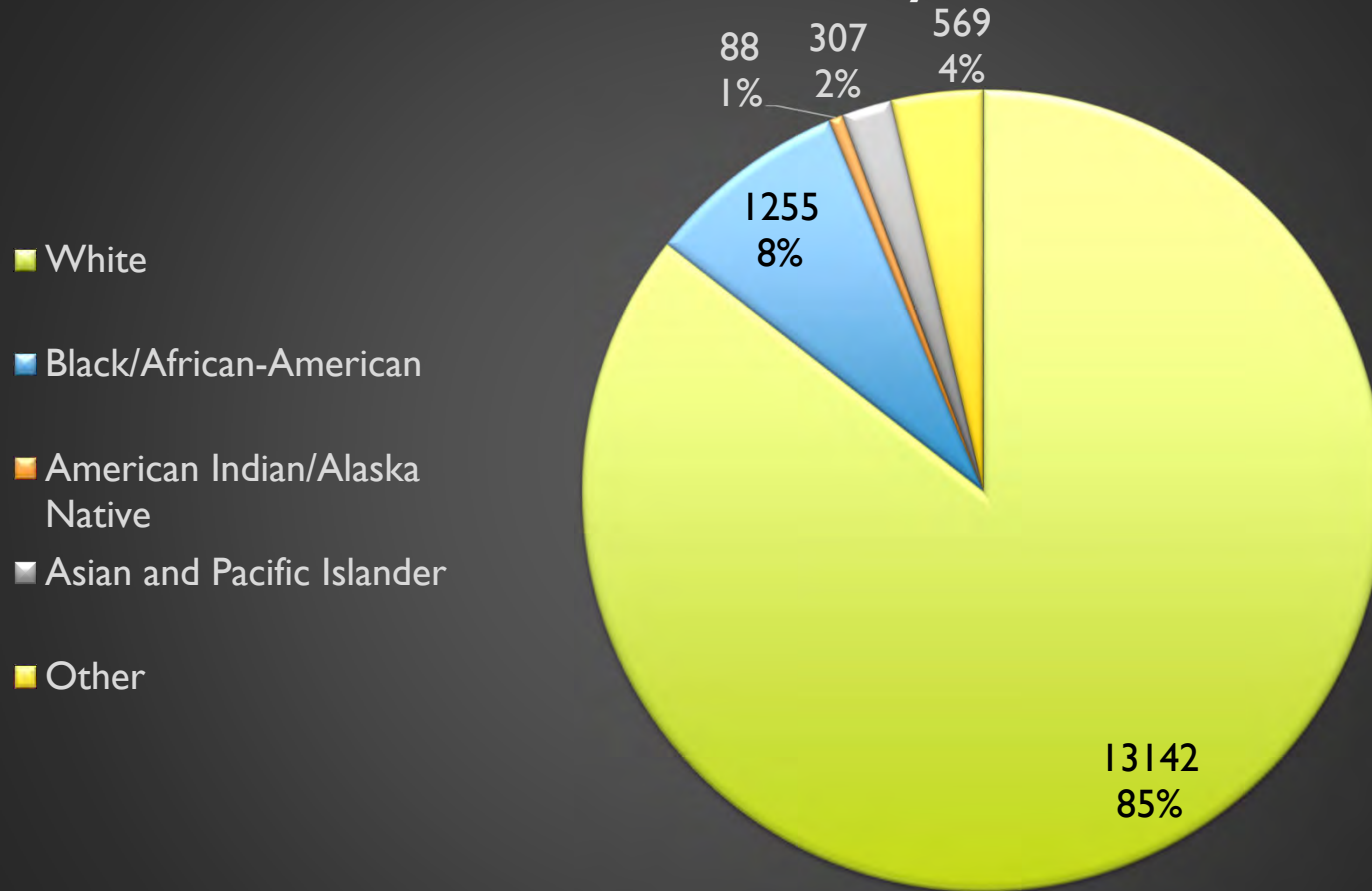
THE STATE OF CHILD CARE IN  
BUNCOMBE COUNTY  
OCTOBER 2020

## OVERVIEW

- Child Demographics
- Types of Care
- COVID Response
- Quality
- Availability
- Affordability
- Workforce
- Child Health

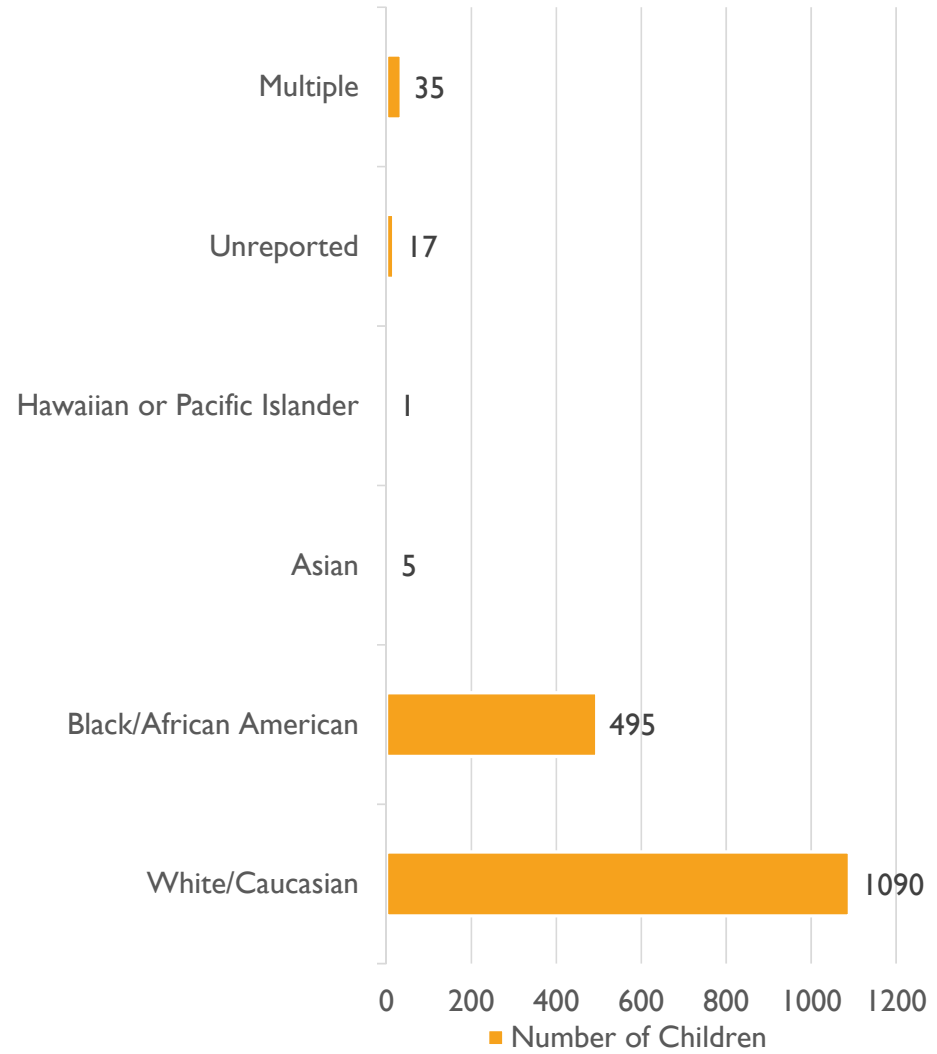


### Buncombe children 0-5 by race, 2020



Hispanic/Latinx population under age 6 = 14.5%

# CHILD CARE SUBSIDY – RACE, FYE 2018



Children in Care		Infants	1 yr olds	2 yr olds	3 yr olds	4 yr olds	5 yr old PS	Total
A	Children in licensed care	199	442	632	1015	1254	637	4,179
B	Total available child population	2574	2526	2449	2516	2647	874	13,586
C	<b>% of all children served (A/B)</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>31%</b>
D	# of children not being served (does not imply need) B-A)	2375	2084	1817	1501	1393	237	9,407



## TYPES OF EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

All care is regulated by NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (NC DCDEE):

- Licensed programs (more than 4 hours)
- Part-day, unlicensed regulated programs (4 hours or less)

Types of licensed programs (ages 0-5):

- Child Care Centers - 83
- Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) – 13

Afterschool only licensed programs (ages 5-12) - 17

Publicly-funded programs that make care more affordable for parents:

- Head Start (3- to 5-year-olds)
- Early Head Start (0- to 2-year-olds)
- NC Pre Kindergarten (4-year-olds)



## RESPONSE TO COVID-19

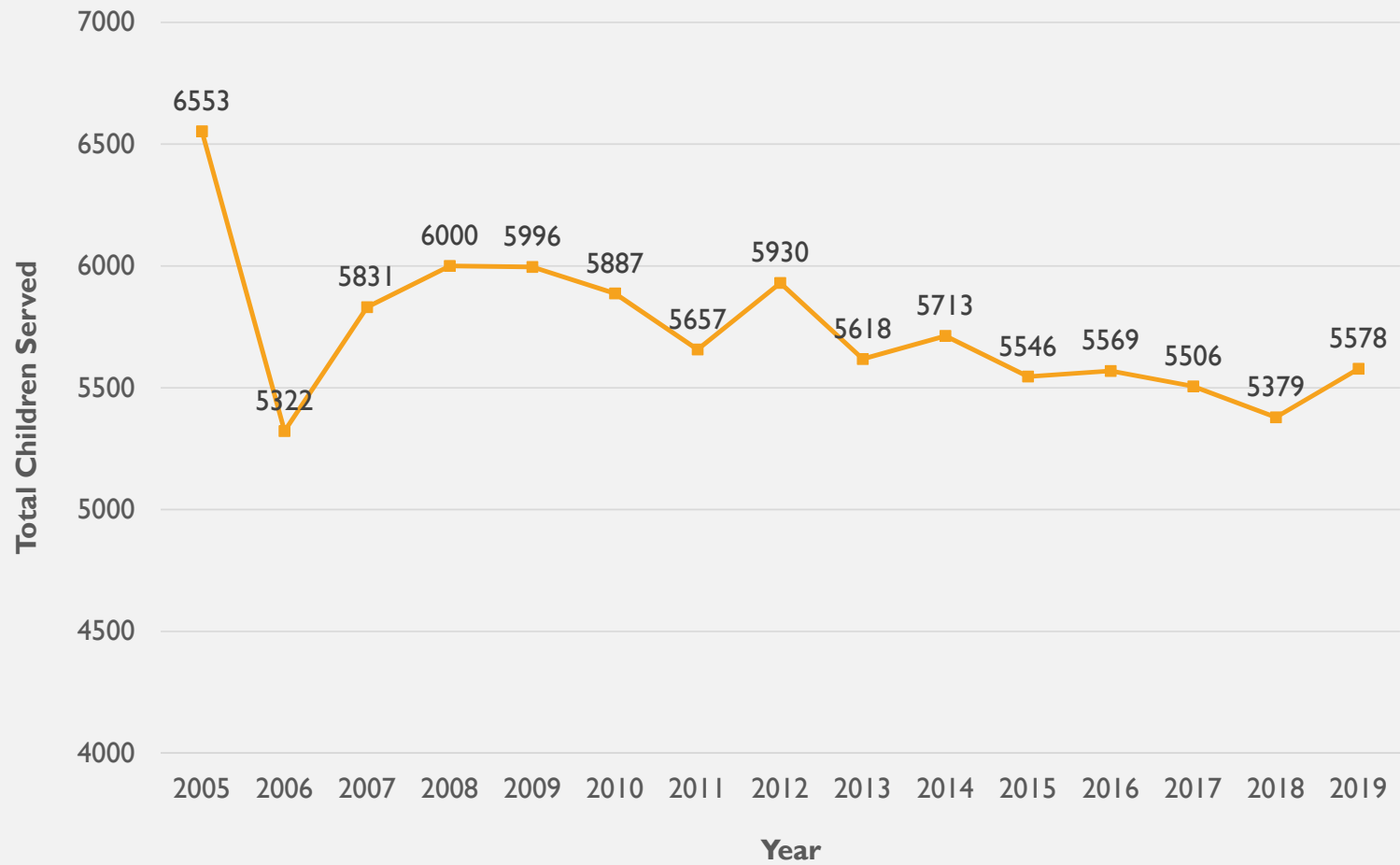


Child care was identified as an essential service under the Stay Home, Stay Safe order.

Centers that wished to remain open and agree to meet updated health, safety and operational guidelines applied to NC DCDEE to remain open or reopen following a short closure.

Facilities must report daily attendance.

## BUNCOMBE ENROLLMENT OVER TIME IN LICENSED FACILITIES (AGES 0-12)



## DAILY ATTENDANCE APRIL - JUNE 2020

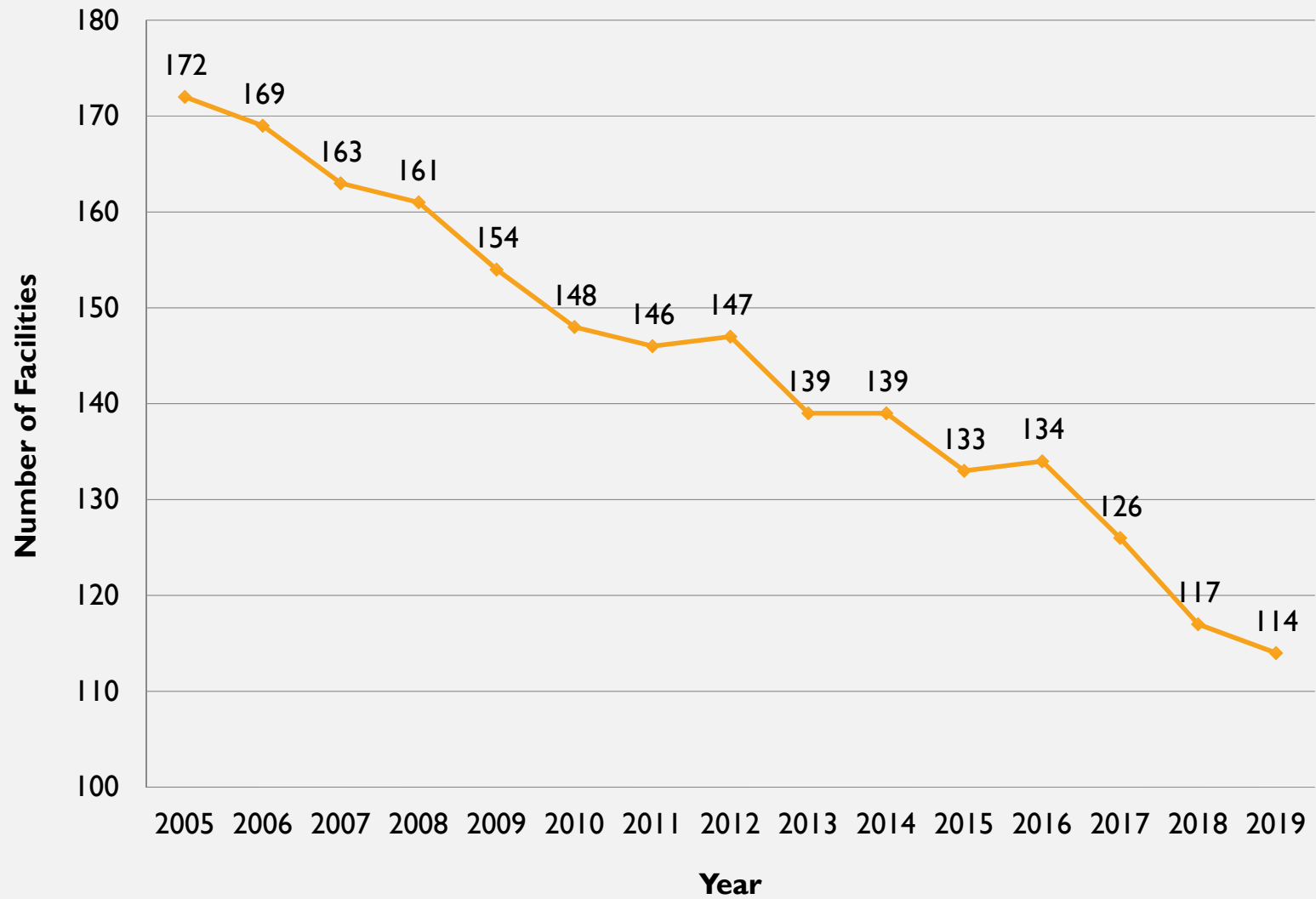
- April 2020 Centers
  - Birth-5: 687
  - School age: 172
- April 2020 FCCHs
  - Birth-5: 33
  - School age: 9
- **April 2020 Totals**
  - **Birth-5: 720**
  - **School age: 181**
- May 2020 Centers
  - Birth-5: 1143
  - School age: 81
- May 2020 FCCHs
  - Birth-5: 42
  - School age: 4
- **May 2020 Totals**
  - **Birth-5: 1185**
  - **School age: 85**
- June 2020 Centers
  - Birth-5: 1589
  - School age: 502
- June 2020 FCCHs
  - Birth-5: 36
  - School age: 11
- **June 2020 Totals**
  - **Birth-5: 1625**
  - **School age: 513**

## ENROLLMENT NUMBERS

- February
- 5473
- May
- 921
- July
- 2292
- October
- 3125



## LICENSED FACILITIES OVERTIME – (AGES 0-12)



## BUNCOMBE COUNTY LICENSED FACILITIES

- February
- 113
- May
- 54
- July
- 69
- October
- 99

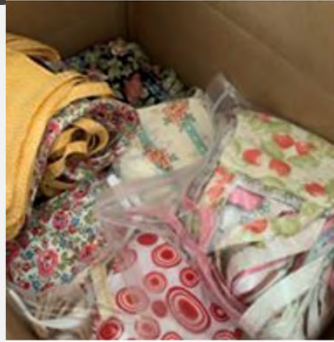
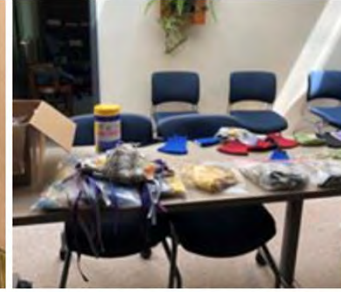
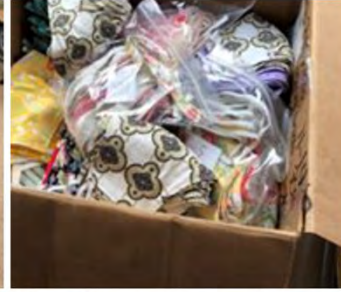




# COVID-19 Resources

We at BPFC know this is a scary time for families and child care programs, so we are working hard to provide the resources & support need during this time.

[Buncombe County Phase I Guidelines](#)





## BUSINESS SUPPORTS FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- Payroll Protection Program
- Other small business loan programs
- Unemployment for some staff
- DCDEE Operational Grants
- Subsidy and NC Pre-K Payments continued using Feb. 2020 attendance
- Sustaining Facility Quality grant payments released early
- PPE and cleaning supplies donated from BPFC and local businesses
- For families, an emergency subsidy system for essential workers with up to 300% of FPL was created; parent fees are being covered by the state
- Additional salary supplements paid to teachers

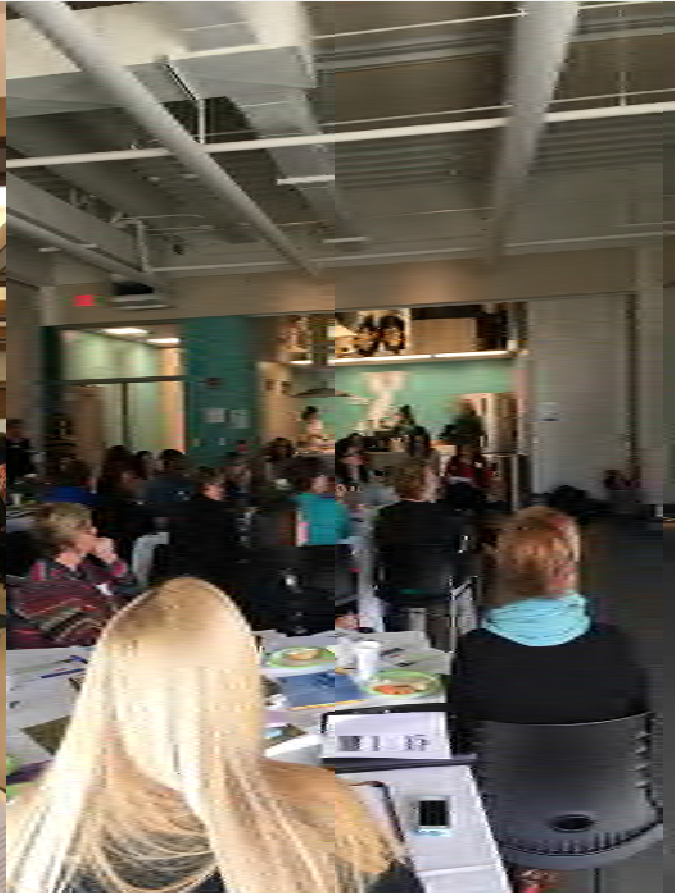
## THE BUNCOMBE WORKFORCE – BY THE NUMBERS

- Number of teachers = 927
- Number of administrators = 132
- Number of support staff = 188
- Center directors - median hourly wage is \$21.59
- Assistant directors - median hourly wage is \$15.30
- Teachers - median hourly wage is \$13 - \$17.05
- Assistant teachers - median hourly wage is \$11.60 - \$13
- WAGE\$ salary supplement program participants = 142 teacher/administrators in 51 facilities
- Turnover rate of WAGE\$ recipients = 20%
- TEACH Early Childhood scholarship program = 79 participants in 33 facilities
- Facilities receiving unrestricted Smart Start grants from Buncombe Partnership for Children to maintain high quality = 58









## HOW TO FIND CARE?

Division of Child  
Development and Early  
Education (DCDEE) website

Mountain Child Care  
Connections

[Buncombepfc.org/COVID19](https://www.buncombepfc.org/COVID19)

Word of mouth/  
recommendations from  
friends and family





*COVID-19: At home learning with virtual Kaleidoscope Play & Learn groups*

## RESOURCES

- <https://buncombepfc.org/reports/>
- [NCDHHS Division of Child Development & Early Education](#)
- [NC Partnership for Children \(Smart Start\)](#)
- [NC Early Childhood Foundation](#)
- [NC Early Education Coalition](#)
- [NC Association for the Education of Young Children](#)
- [NC Childcare Resource & Referral Council:](#)
  - [Southwestern Child Development Commission](#)
  - [Childcare Resources, Inc.](#)
  - [Childcare Services Association](#) (WAGE\$, T.E.A.C.H. & Infant-Toddler Awards Program)
- [Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative](#) (ABPPC)
- [Family-friendly Affordable Buncombe \(FFAB\)](#)

## QUESTIONS?



2229 Riverside Drive, Asheville, NC 28804

[www.buncombepfc.org](http://www.buncombepfc.org)





## North Carolina Early Education Coalition

DEDICATED TO ADVANCING HIGH QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION



# Buncombe Presentation October 6, 2020

**For more information:**

Michele Rivest, [michele@NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org](mailto:michele@NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org)

Elaine Zukerman, [elainez@NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org](mailto:elainez@NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org)



The NC Early Education Coalition is a proud partner in the national ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ campaign and in the Pritzker Children's Initiative's National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.

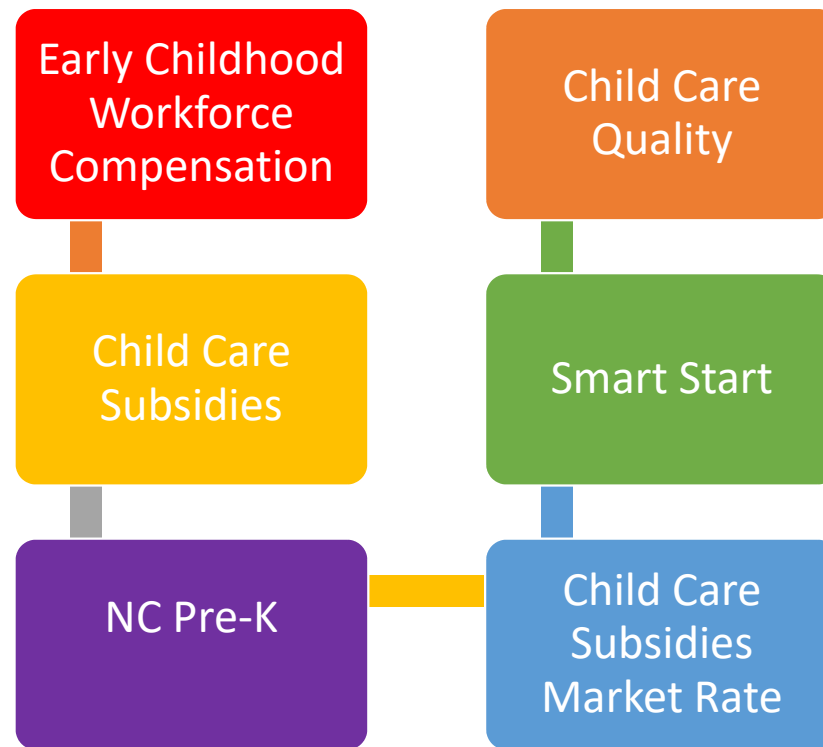
# About the NC Early Education Coalition

## 501 (c)3 Organization and membership association

- **Mission:** to ensure that all children have access to high-quality early care and learning experiences.
- **Our Work:** Highlight the proven power of quality early childhood education by sharing information and resources with parents, professionals and policymakers.
- **Our Focus:** Education, Advocacy, Lobbying
- **Partnership:** Proud partner in the ZTT and Pritzker Children's Initiative Infant Toddler Collaborative



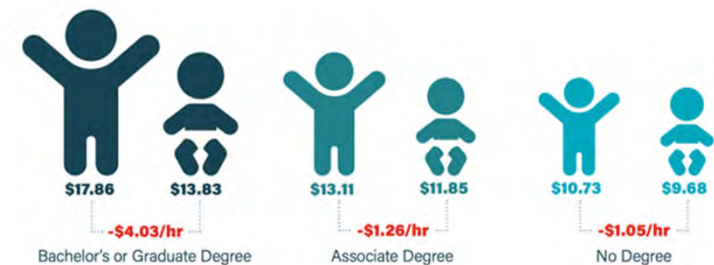
# Longstanding Key Early Childhood Policy Issues



# Issue: Ensure early childhood teachers have education, skills and compensation

Many early childhood teachers lack educational background and all are poorly compensated for the important work they do.

- Even with degrees, teachers earn \$10.50 per hour – almost half rely on some type of public assistance.
- Law: Only one course in early childhood education is required to be early childhood teacher. More than half have at least AA degree.
- Infant toddlers teachers - least education and are paid the least.
- Programs can't attract or retain qualified early educators.
- Turnover – one in three teachers say they will leave the field in 3 years.



# Increase Child Care Subsidy Funding

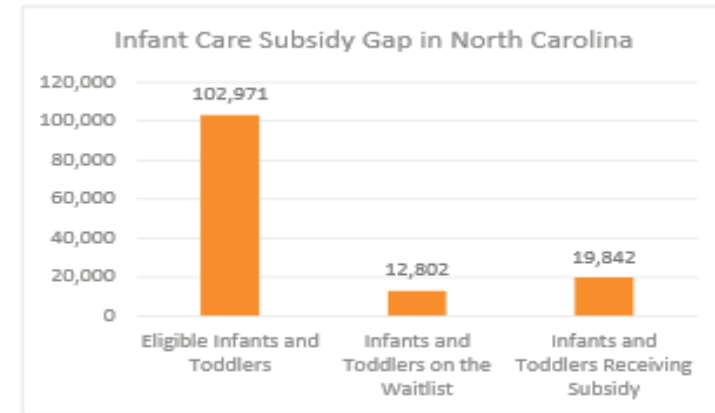
A shortage of child care subsidy funding exists for all age children 0-5, and especially for families of infants and toddlers.

- **Waiting List**

- There are 29,000 children are on the child care subsidy wait list.
- 56% of children under 6 on the subsidy waitlist are infants and toddlers.

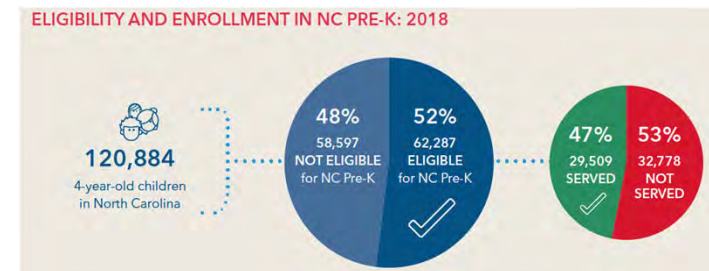
- **Subsidy Eligibility Gap**

- There are over 200,000 children ages 0-5 who are eligible for child care subsidies – but just 44,379 children (22%) received services in 2018.
- Only 19% of all eligible infants and toddlers received subsidy in 2018.
- 97 of North Carolina's 100 counties serve less than one third of eligible infants and toddlers.

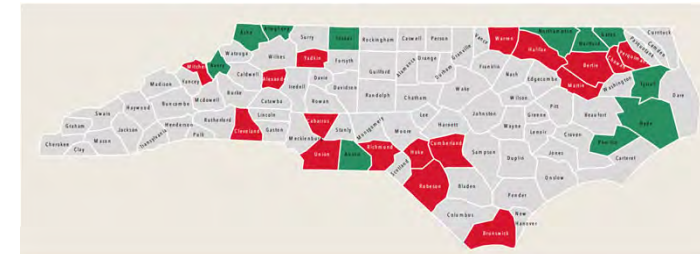


# Expand NC Pre-K and Address Capacity Gaps

- Not serving all eligible children now.
- Waiting list doesn't represent need, not an accurate measure.
- Some counties can't expand and face capacity issues
  - 2017 expansion funding available for **1,750 NC Pre-K "slots" requests from 56 counties for 6,000 slots.**
  - **44 counties** – with thousands of eligible but unserved children – **declined** any expansion dollars.
- **Capacity Challenges –**
  - Stagnant rates + gap between rates and true cost.
  - State funding inadequate – only 60% of program costs, scarce local or other dollars
  - Challenge recruiting and paying for qualified teachers
  - Low administrative rates
  - Rates are reimbursed, no upfront funding



Counties declining expansion funds 2017 and 2018



Red=Counties not serving 75% target  
Green= counties serving 75% or more

# Expand Smart Start Funding



- Provides infrastructure for early childhood services in all 100 counties through 75 partnerships
- Decline in state funding over the years
  - \$231 M in FY 2000-01 to \$147 M in FY 2018-19
- Limited capacity to address community needs and COVID-19 crisis

# Child Care Subsidy Rate

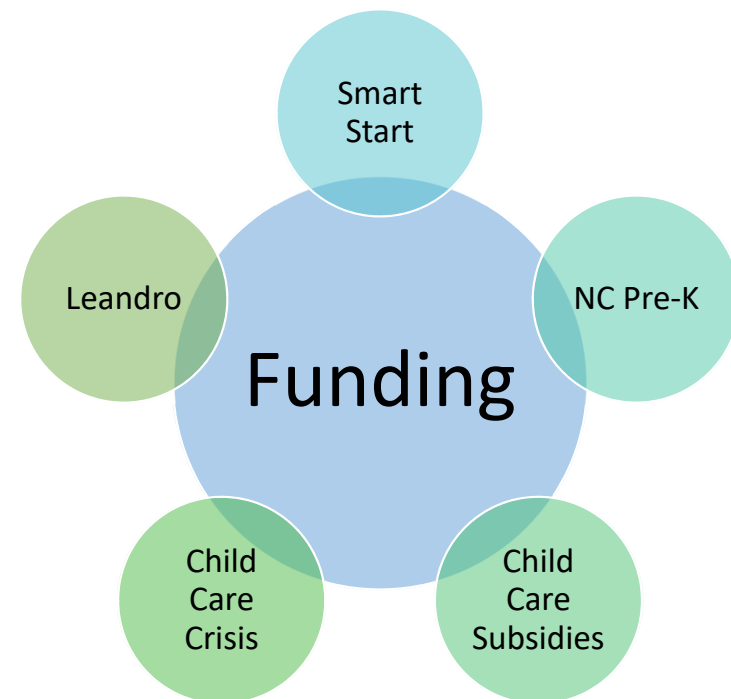
**Child Care Subsidies are primary source of revenue for child care programs.**

- Current approach established 30 years ago
  - 100 county rates, by age (0-2, 3-5 and 6-12 years), and by star system
- Need simplified, more equitable rate setting process that provides state-level base line below which no county will fall
- Challenges –
  - Should be based on the true cost of care, including wages and benefits
  - Expensive to hold rates harmless
  - State studying alternative approaches
  - Federal approval required
  - Implementation 2023?



# ECE Policy Agenda for 2021/2022

- Covid-19 Child Care Crisis – How to rebuild and strengthen child care system
- Maintaining/expanding existing Early Childhood Funding with looming fiscal crisis
- NC PreK program capacity issues
- Leandro Early Childhood priorities



# Overview of Think Babies™ NC



[ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ video](#)

## It's time to #ThinkBabiesNC!

Promoting public awareness and policy solutions for the critical issues facing babies and their families.

# Why Focus on Infants and Toddlers?



- **Early brain science is clear:** Our brains grow faster between the ages of 0 and 3 than at any later point in our lives, building the foundation for all future learning behavior and health.
- **Quality of Relationships:** Babies develop and learn through their relationships with adults in their lives—parents, family members, early educators, and other professionals.
- **Family Conditions:** Being a new parent is stressful and a stretch for all families. Risk factors like poverty, food insecurity, lack of health care, homelessness and others can cause toxic stress that adversely affects brain development and child outcomes.

# Think Babies™ NC Alliance



[MomsRising.org](http://MomsRising.org) | [MamasConPoder.org](http://MamasConPoder.org)



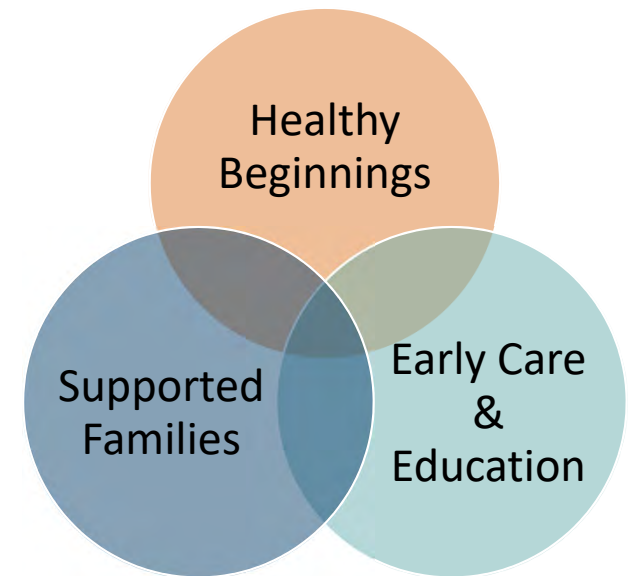
# Policy Buckets & Selection Criteria

## What all babies need to thrive!

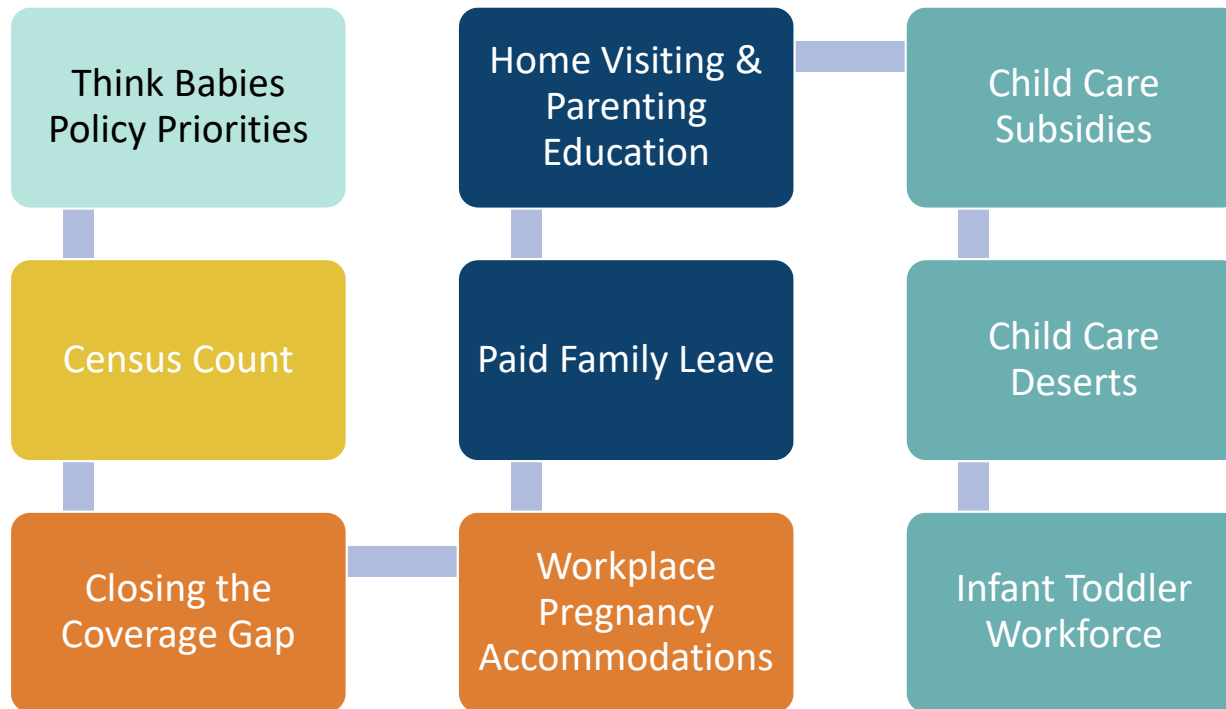
### Policy Selection Criteria

- All three buckets
- Urgent need
- Build on recommendations from existing sources
- Research-based solutions
- Make a difference if enacted
- Actionable – organizations committed to work on these issues
- Adopted by consensus of Leadership Team

Aligned with the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative and the NC Early Childhood Action Plan



# 8 Policy Priorities At a Glance



# Effective Advocacy Strategies & Messaging

- Build Relationships with policymakers
- Lift your voice - Be a resource
  - Use facts and figures, Storytelling, Social Media
- Build Community Public Awareness & Engagement
- Consistent Messaging
  - Child Care is Essential: for child development, for families to return to work, for the state's economic recovery and prosperity
  - Without an effective, well qualified and well compensated early childhood workforce, child care programs will not be able to reopen to support the state's economic recovery.
  - Let's work together to build back a stronger more effective early childhood system for the future of North Carolina's children, families and communities.



# Questions?





# Workforce & Compensation

**“The question is not whether we can afford to invest in every child; it is whether we can afford not to.”**

**– Marian Wright Edleman**



Not all Superheroes wear capes,  
some have Early childhood degrees.



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# Workforce snapshot

## Statewide (2019 workforce data, Child Care Services Association)

- 62% teaching staff have at least an associate degree in any field (vs. 58% in 2015)
  - 40% have these degrees specifically in ECE (vs. 35% in 2015)
- Teacher median hourly wage = \$12.04 (2.3% growth since 2015)
- Assistant teacher median hourly wage = \$11 (2.8% growth)
- Increased pay associated with degree attainment, level of degree and early childhood focus
- Infant-toddler teachers less educated and earn less per hour



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# Workforce snapshot

## Statewide (2019 workforce data, CCSA)

- 20% teaching staff said they plan to leave the field within three years
- 80% said better pay would make it more possible for them to stay
- 38% have accessed public assistance in past three years
- 14% work a second job
- 21% have no health insurance from any source



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# Workforce snapshot

## Buncombe (2019 workforce data, CCSA)

- 68% teaching staff have at least an associate degree in any field
  - 33% have these degrees specifically in ECE
- Teacher median hourly wage = \$13.75
- Assistant teacher median hourly wage = \$12.25
- 24% teaching staff said they plan to leave
- 39% have accessed public assistance
- 20% work a second job
- 21% have no health insurance

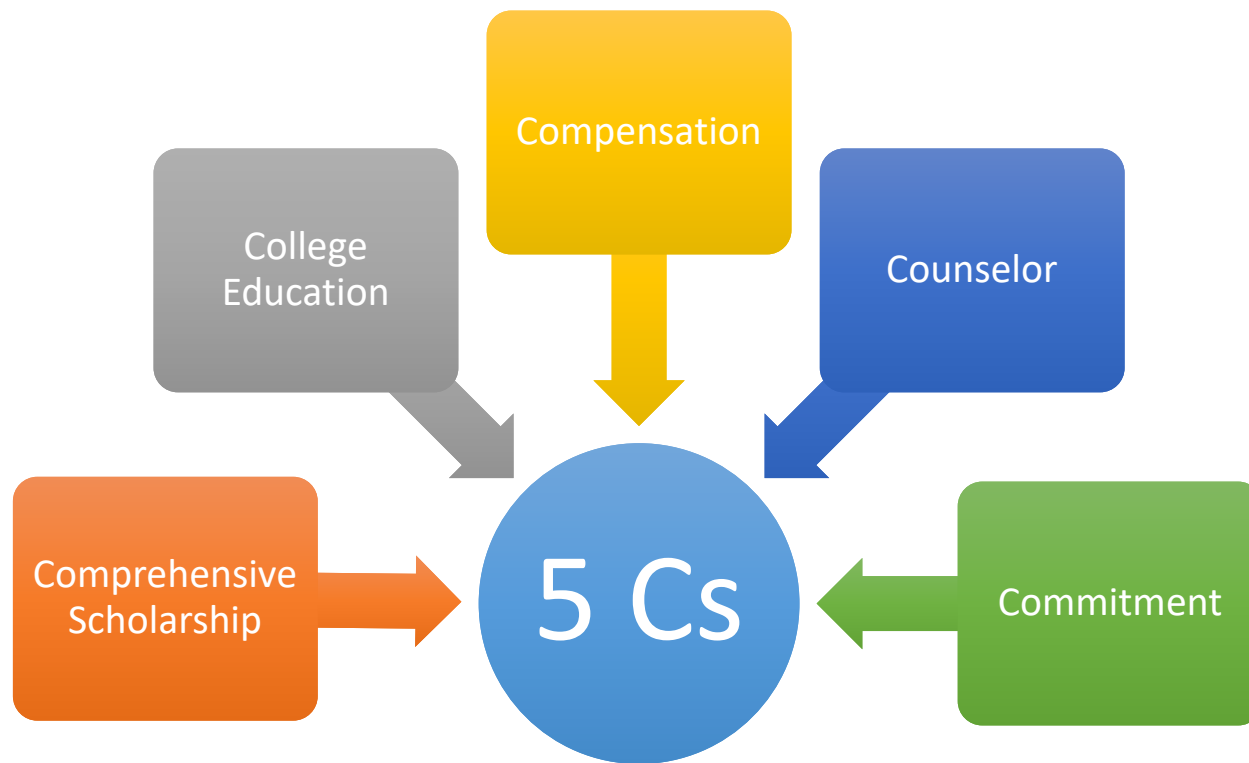


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# Education Opportunity: T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood<sup>®</sup> Scholarship Program



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# Debt-free college education with comprehensive supports for diverse, working early childhood professionals

- Scholarships include a variety of economic supports.
- Most include support for:
  - Tuition and fees,
  - Books,
  - Travel and
  - Paid release time.



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# Compensation Comparison

- Amount needed for one NC employee with one child to meet basic family needs = \$24.73 per hour\* (or \$51,438 for 12 months at full-time)
- Buncombe = \$25.51 per hour\* (or \$53,061 for 12 months at full-time)
- Buncombe County public school kindergarten teacher average earnings = \$24.84 per hour or \$43,030 for 10 months
- Buncombe County early childhood teacher earnings = \$13.75 per hour or \$28,600 for 12 months



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*\*Living Wage Calculator, Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
<http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/37171>*

*[www.childcareservices.org](http://www.childcareservices.org)*

# Early Educator Compensation: Why Does It Matter?

- Economic justice
- Turnover impacts children
- We need an educated workforce
- Classroom and program quality
- Teachers' health & well-being
- Professionalization



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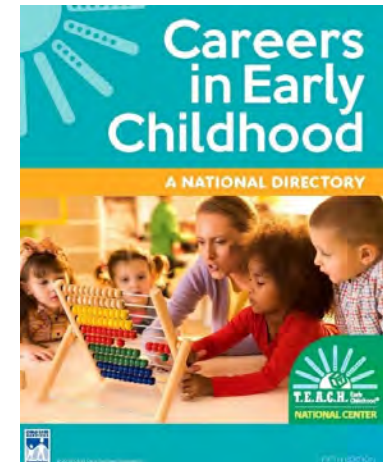


# Compensation Challenges

- Parents cannot afford to pay more
- Little or no public funding or policy is targeted to compensation
- Inadequate funding forces quantity vs. quality when buying ECE
- Lack of compensation makes it difficult for workforce boards, etc. to embrace ECE as a viable career, but it is and has a career ladder



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# Sample Compensation Opportunities

- Voluntary Salary Schedule
- Moving the Needle on Workforce Issues 2020
- Child Care WAGE\$<sup>®</sup> Program
- Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$<sup>®</sup>
- WAGE\$ & AWARD\$ included in NC's Leandro Plan



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# What are WAGE\$ and AWARD\$?

- Evidence-informed education-based salary supplement programs
- Annual financial award issued in two six-month installments
- Supplements encourage education
  - More education = more money



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# WAGE\$ Funding

- Statewide opportunity
  - Funding collaboration between local Smart Start Partnerships and the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)
  - Blended funds, but amount designated by Smart Start goes directly to participants
  - 55 counties FY21 to date



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# WAGE\$ Key Eligibility

- Education from 12 semester hours of ece coursework to four-year and graduate degrees
- Serve children birth to five and awards can be prorated
- 5 tier options for partnerships so awards can always be increased



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# WAGE\$ Participant Voices

- “The program provides much needed financial support for early childhood educators. I was able to pay off bills sooner to avoid interest. It is life changing!” (Buncombe, teacher)
- “The supplement relieves the financial burden, which has meant I have more head space, energy and a willingness to devote more of my time and resources to my children. I want to make sure I am being the best teacher they could possibly have.” (Buncombe, teacher)
- “Without this supplement, it would be almost impossible to stay in this profession due to financial obligations.” (Buncombe, teacher)



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# AWARD\$ Funding & Eligibility

- Funds provided entirely by DCDEE
- Fully statewide; available in every county
- Awards range from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per year
- Work with children birth through age two at least 35 hours per week
- Work in a child care facility with at least three stars
- Have at least the Associate Degree with 24 birth to five focused hours



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*"Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® is important because it allows teachers who have a passion for educating young children to stay at a job that they enjoy by making the job more financially competitive."*

[www.childcareservices.org](http://www.childcareservices.org) (participating teacher)

# Thank you!

Contact information:

Allison Miller

Child Care Services Association

[Allisonm@childcareservices.org](mailto:Allisonm@childcareservices.org)



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# DCDEE Child Care Payment Policies for Providers and Families

## Subsidized Child Care Stabilization

The COVID pandemic further created a fragility in an already unstable child care infrastructure. In order to stabilize the child care industry, DCDEE developed and enacted a Subsidized Child Care Stabilization program. With this stabilization program, all subsidized child care providers regardless of whether the facility was open or closed, received a hold harmless subsidy payment for the April and May Service months. DCDEE continued this practice by making hold harmless subsidy payments to “open” child care providers for the June, July and August service months. By instituting a hold harmless payment, providers could expect to be paid at the same level as their February service month payment. For example, if a provider was serving and paid for 35 children for the February service month but only serving 10 children in June, this provider received the same level of payment as the February service month.

A further enactment of the subsidy stabilization program was to help providers with the loss of parent copay revenues due to low enrollment. Therefore, DCDEE covered the cost of parent copayments for April and May for all child care subsidy providers. DCDEE also covered the cost of parent copayments for “open” child care subsidy providers for June, July and August.

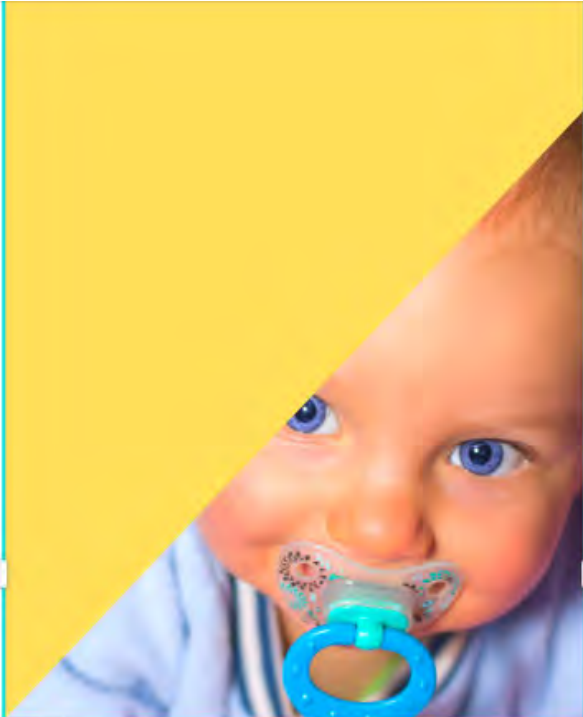


**Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program**

DCDEE created an Emergency Child Care Subsidy Program to provide assistance for child care to parents/primary caregivers who are essential workers as defined by Executive Order 121. Parents/caregivers could receive financial assistance for emergency child care if they are essential workers, had no other safe child care options and had a household income below 300 percent of the poverty line. This program operated for the April and May service months. Providers received an enhanced payment rate for this funding source and parents had no copayments on the Emergency Child Care Subsidy program.

**Emergency Child Care Subsidy Rates:**

Age Group	Child Care Centers	Family Child Care Homes
Infant	\$1200	\$905
2 Years Old	\$1125	\$830
3-5 Years Old	\$1070	\$780
School Age (6+)	\$870	\$645



## **Bonus Payments to Child Care Staff**

All child care employees, teaching and non-teaching staff, that worked on-site at a child care facility that was approved to provide emergency child care in April and May were eligible to receive a bonus for their service during the COVID-19 crisis. Providers also received an additional 10% for bonus payments to cover costs associated with payroll taxes and other administrative/overhead costs. For example, a full-time teacher could have received a total of \$1900 on top of their regular pay during the 2 month period.

### **Bonus Payment Rates:**

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Full-Time Employees</b>	<b>Part-Time Employees</b>
Teaching Staff	\$950 per month	\$475 per month
Non-Teaching Staff	\$525 per month	\$262.50 per month





## Operational Grants

DCDEE provided operational grants to licensed child care facilities that are open for all or part of April, May, June and July. The operational grants were to help providers cover monthly fixed operating costs. Amounts for centers range from \$500 to \$30,000. Amounts for homes range from \$359 to \$2,500. The amount of the grants will vary based on several factors.



### **DCDEE Policy Changes in Support of Families**

- 1) Increased Flexibility in eligibility determinations for families and staff to limit exposure and reduce the spread of the virus. Flexibility in policy is allowing for applications to be taken by mail, phone interview or email as face to face office visits are not being required during this time. There is also flexibility in obtaining signatures for vouchers and obtaining verifications from families as it may be more difficult during this time.
- 2) Recertifications of family's eligibility for Subsidized Child Care due in March, April, May or June 2020, were extended for 12 months to 2021.
- 3) Flexibility in policy for families who are seeking employment or have not been able to return to their employment can receive an extension beyond the 90 day transition timeframe due to COVID. Families will not lose their subsidy assistance if they are unable to work due to the crisis.
- 4) Parent copayments for April and May 2020 were waived and DCDEE paid the costs of these copayments to all subsidized child care providers. Also for June, July and August 2020, parent copayments were waived for children at open subsidized child care providers.

# Discussion

