



# Early Childhood Workforce: Current Landscape

*Presented by*

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Early Childhood Education and Development Committee

September 5, 2023



# ECE Workforce Development Series

**Session 1: Setting the Stage**

August 1, 2023

**Session 2: Current Landscape**

September 5, 2023

**Session 3: Promising Practices**

October 3, 2023

**Session 4: Recommendations**

November 7, 2023



# Recap of Session 1: Setting the Stage

## Defining the Early Childhood Education Workforce Crisis

Drivers	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Low compensation &amp; benefits</li><li>-High expectations (education, standards, licensing rules)</li><li>-High stress environment</li><li>-Higher child and family needs following pandemic</li><li>-Housing costs</li><li>-Transportation</li><li>-Lack of child care slots for own children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Reduced slots due to staffing</li><li>-Reduced child care hours available for families</li><li>-Limited slots for families who use subsidy vouchers, may need to travel farther</li><li>-Fewer providers who can support children with developmental/behavioral needs</li><li>-Less support available, less time out of the classroom for planning/time off, less attention to proactive mental health supports</li><li>-Increased teacher and administrator burnout</li></ul>



# Update on Child Care Stabilization Grants

- DCDEE Stabilization Grants have provided \$17,116,685 to Buncombe County childcare centers
- Centers provided raises to staff, but wages will revert to pre-COVID levels if funding ends
- Current funding ends December 31, 2023

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Follow along with NC Child for child advocacy updates and information, including: policy agenda; legislative alerts; bill tracking & more

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



NC Child  
The Voice for North Carolina's Children



# Session 2: Current Landscape

- What we mean by “workforce development”
- Education requirements for early childhood teachers
- Educational programs
- Financial aid
- Buncombe County Early Childhood Grants
- Workforce Development Panelists



# What do we mean by “Workforce Development”?

**Recruitment**

**Growth**

**Retention**

- Eligibility, Credentials, Certifications & Degrees
- Skill building through ongoing training, education & experience
- Compensation through adequate salary & benefits
- Resiliency support for an attractive, rewarding & sustainable career

*Classroom staff = Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Floaters & Substitutes*





# What does it take to become an early childhood teacher?

## Education Requirements for Child Care Lead Teachers

as set by North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services (NCDHHS), Division of Child Development & Early Education (DCDEE)

All classroom staff must have a high school diploma and pass the DCDEE background check

All child care center lead teachers must have earned the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential (NCECC) or its equivalent

Individuals must enroll within 6 months of being hired and will have 18 months from their date of hire to satisfy the NCECC or equivalency requirements



**NCDHHS**

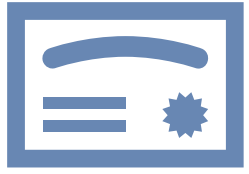
Division of Child Development  
and Early Education



**BUNCOMBE COUNTY**





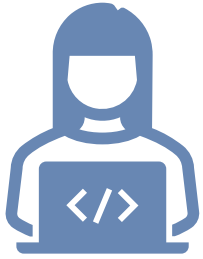


# North Carolina Early Childhood Credential (NCECC)

- Composed of 1 early childhood curriculum credit course - **EDU 119**, "Intro to Early Childhood Education"
- 4 semester credit hours
- Available at community colleges
- Course content:
  - Becoming an Early Childhood Professional
  - Understanding the Young Child - Growth and Development
  - Understanding the Young Child - Individuality, Family and Culture
  - Developmentally Appropriate Practices
  - Positive Guidance
  - Health and Safety







# North Carolina Early Childhood Equivalency Exam

- A new pathway option comparable to a NC Early Childhood Credential (NCECC) created by legislation passed in July 2022
- Applicants who achieve a score of 80% or higher on the exam earn the Equivalency Certificate
- This certificate is equivalent to a NCECC and will qualify the individual to be a lead teacher in an early childhood classroom
- Exam content:
  - Developmentally appropriate
  - Guidance techniques
  - Schedules
  - Teaching strategies





# Career & Technical Education

- Buncombe County Schools offers Early Childhood Development & Services as a career pathway within Family and Consumer Sciences Offers three levels of courses that prepare students to work with children in early education settings
  - Level 1 – Child Development
  - Level 2 - Early Childhood Education I
  - Student Project Portfolio
- Early Childhood Education I is a 2-credit course, and an internship makes up 50% of instructional time
- Internships take place in onsite preschool classrooms at Erwin, North Buncombe, Reynolds and Roberson High Schools
- Students can graduate from high school eligible for NCECC





# NC's Community Colleges

- 58 local community colleges with campuses across North Carolina
  - NC Early Childhood Credential (NCECC)
  - Early Childhood Certificate Programs
  - Associate Degree Programs (AAS in Early Childhood Education)
- Buncombe & neighboring counties community colleges:





# Bachelor's Degree Programs

- **Western Carolina University:** Birth-Kindergarten (BK) Program - B.S. degree with a concentration in either early childhood or professional education as well as North Carolina licensure
- **Appalachian State University:** B.S. Child Development – Birth through Kindergarten (BK) Licensure & online B-K Graduate Certificate
- **UNC Greensboro:** Early Childhood Development & Education B.S. (fully online option)
- **East Tennessee State University:** Department of Early Childhood Education: B.S. Early Care & Education



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA  
**GREENSBORO**



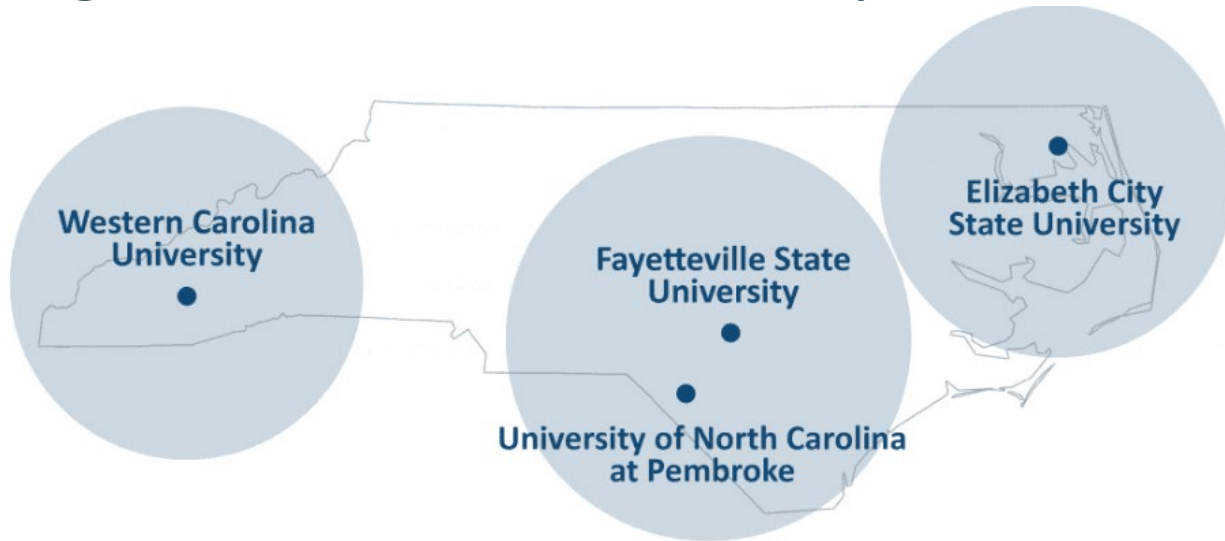
EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY



# NC Promise

Through NC Promise, the state has significantly reduced student tuition cost to \$500 per semester at 4 UNC System institutions

The plan has increased educational access, reduced student debt, and grown the state's economy

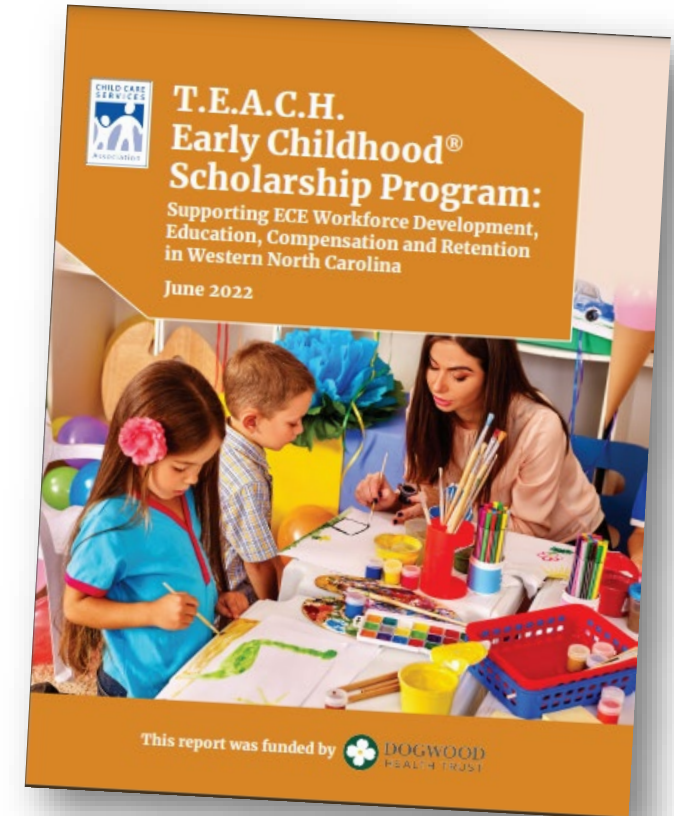




# T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood North Carolina Scholarship



- State-funded program providing educational scholarships to early care professionals
- To qualify for a scholarship, students must:
  - Work 30 or more weekly hours in a NC licensed child care facility
  - Be in a degree-seeking education program
  - Have employer participation





Child Care  
**WAGE\$**<sup>®</sup>  
Program

# WAGE\$



- Supplemental pay program (paid out 2x/year) funded by DCDEE & Smart Start
- Provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children between the ages of birth to age 5 in participating counties (including Buncombe)
- To qualify, professionals must:
  - Earn below the income cap (\$23/hr)
  - Have a level of education on the WAGE\$ scale (may begin earning supplement with 12 semester hours of early childhood coursework)
  - Work at least 6 months in the same child care program
- Wait list to join program based on amount of available funding





# Infant Toddler AWARD\$ Plus

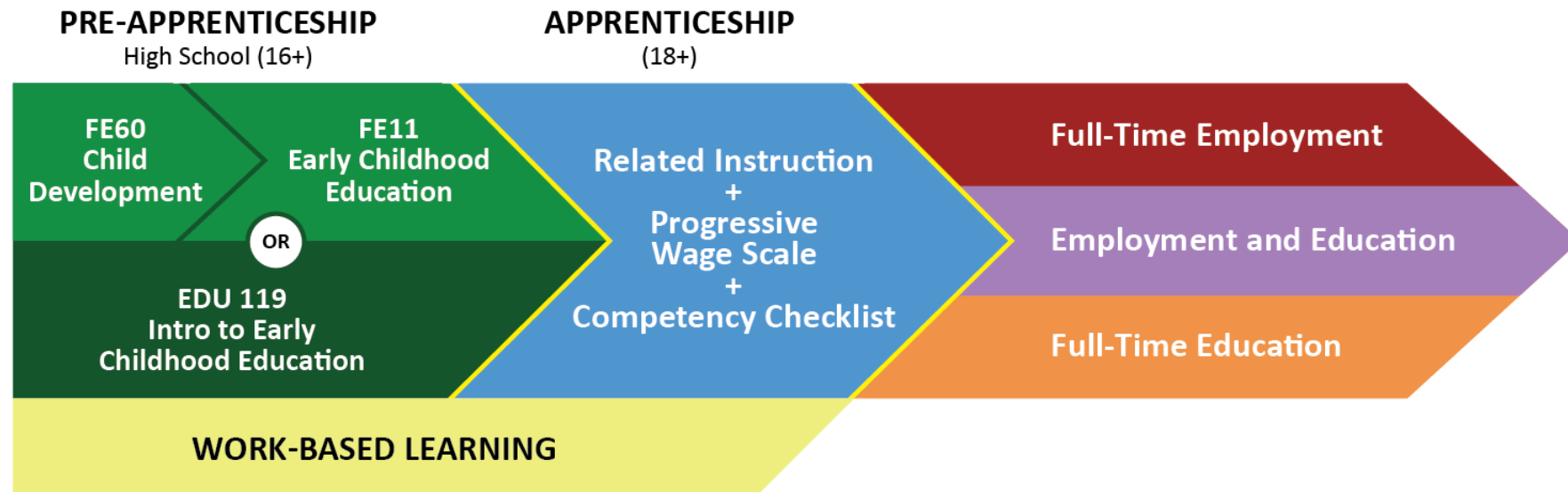


- State-funded program providing education-based salary supplements to low-paid early educators working full-time with children birth to age 2 in NC
- To qualify, professionals must:
  - Work at least 30 weekly hours with infants, ones or twos in a NC licensed child care facility
  - Earn at or below \$20 per hour
  - Have a level of education on the AWARD\$ Plus scale
  - Work at least 6 months in the same child care program



# Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship Program

- State program part of Apprenticeship NC in partnership with community colleges & Building Bright Futures
- Includes a pre-apprenticeship for high school students interested in exploring the field & apprenticeship where students receive progressive pay, certificates & college credit



# Buncombe County's Early Childhood Education & Development Fund (ECEDF)

- Committee has prioritized Workforce Development as a key strategy in its grant guidelines
- FY2024 grants include many that incorporate workforce development aspects to their project, such as:
  - Asheville Jewish Community Center (educator coaching, training & mentoring)
  - Christine Avery Learning Center (living wage increase & continuing education)
  - Community Action Opportunities (education benefit plan)
  - Evolve Early Learning (empowerment education coaching)
  - OnTrack (matched savings program for early educators)
  - YWCA (continuing education & professional development)



# Meet our Panelists:

- **Caitlin Johnson**, Early Childhood Workforce Coordinator, Buncombe County Schools
- **Tamara Reynolds**, Chair of the Education Department, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- **Marcia Whitney**, President and CEO, Verner Center for Early Learning
- **Tasha Lewis**, Director of Workforce Development Program, Buncombe Partnership for Children
- **Deanna LaMotte**, NC Pre-K Expansion Director, Buncombe Partnership for Children



# Early Childhood Workforce: Current Landscape

**Questions  
& Discussion**

