



Funding Strategy Session

Presented by

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Early Childhood Education and Development Committee

October 1, 2024





**Funding
Strategy
Series**

Session 1: Overview

August 6, 2024

A look at early care & education in Buncombe County, including - licensure, quality, data & context

Session 2: Funding

September 3, 2024

How early care & education is paid for and impacts of Buncombe's Early Childhood Fund

Session 3: Considerations

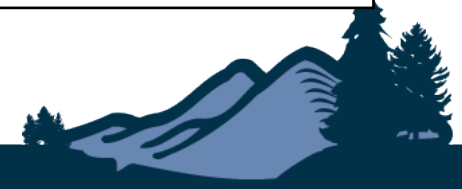
October 1, 2024

A review of various approaches to investing in early learning and impacts associated with each

Session 4: Funding Strategy

November 12, 2024

Discussion of a funding strategy for the Early Childhood Fund going forward



Funding Strategy Series Recap from Last Month

A review of various approaches to investing in early learning and impacts associated with each

We discussed...

- Current funding context
- Cost of care
- Public funding sources
- Buncombe County's Early Childhood Fund



Follow-up from Last Session

Documents in meeting packet:

- Provider Survey Results from September 2024
- ECE Funding Strategy Sessions Q&A -
 - Changes in slots
 - Decline in Family Child Care Homes
 - Licensed slots vs. enrolled slots
 - Infant care availability
 - Developmental Day slots allocation
 - 5-star home rates
 - K-12 education funding local/state/federal
 - County funding for K-12
 - County Comparison over time
 - Counties with local public investment
 - Corporate investments info



Funding Strategy Series

Session 3: Investment Approaches

A review of various approaches to investing in early learning and impacts associated with each

AGENDA

- Current funding strategies
- Key challenges
- Investment approaches and impacts



Funding Strategies

Support early care & education for children birth through kindergarten with an emphasis on pre-kindergarten:

- Develop early childhood **workforce***
- Maintain/enhance existing **slots**
- Increase **slots** for enrollment
- Increase **quality**
- Support **families**
- Enhance effectiveness of overall **system**

**Top priority for FY2025 funding*



Key Challenges

- Lack of availability for child enrollment, long wait lists especially for 0-3
- Rising cost of care for providers and families
- Workforce crisis - teacher pay, recruitment, retention, development/ advancement
- Increased behavioral needs/complexity of services
- Disparities in access and outcomes including kindergarten readiness



THIS vs. THAT

A focused initiative	A variety of projects
Classrooms	Whole-system support
Infant & toddler care	Pre-kindergarten
Operational	Start-up
New projects	Renewal funding



	A focused initiative	A variety of projects
<i>Description</i>	All funds invested in one program with specific services and outcomes	Funds invested in a blend of projects across various priority areas
<i>Example</i>	NC Pre-K Expansion	Current portfolio
<i>Benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper Impact/Easier to see the needle moving • Clear metrics and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps tackle interconnected issues • Adaptability & broader reach
<i>Trade-offs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited scope • Neglects systemic solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diluted Resources • Hard to measure success



	Classrooms	Whole-system support
<i>Description</i>	Funding for organizations who are operating classrooms serving children	Funding for projects that are system focused and not operating classrooms
<i>Example</i>	7 current providers funded	AB Tech Blazing Trails & BPFC Workforce Development, FIRST Sunshine Project
<i>Benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate impact for centers • Addresses operational needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses structural issues • Cross-cutting benefits
<i>Trade-offs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts small number of students • Short term solution without addressing root cause of broader challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slower to see results • Indirect support for children, families and providers



	Infant & Toddler Care	Pre-Kindergarten
<i>Description</i>	Funding for infant and toddler classrooms (0-3)	Funding for preschool/pre-kindergarten (4-5)
<i>Example</i>	Community Action Opportunities (CAO) toddler classroom	CAO Johnston classroom
<i>Benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses most critical need where care is least available • Early brain development • Workforce access for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven benefits for school readiness • Aligned to efforts around universal pre-k
<i>Trade-offs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher costs • Less direct impact on kindergarten readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't address long wait lists for infant & toddler care • First 2,000 days



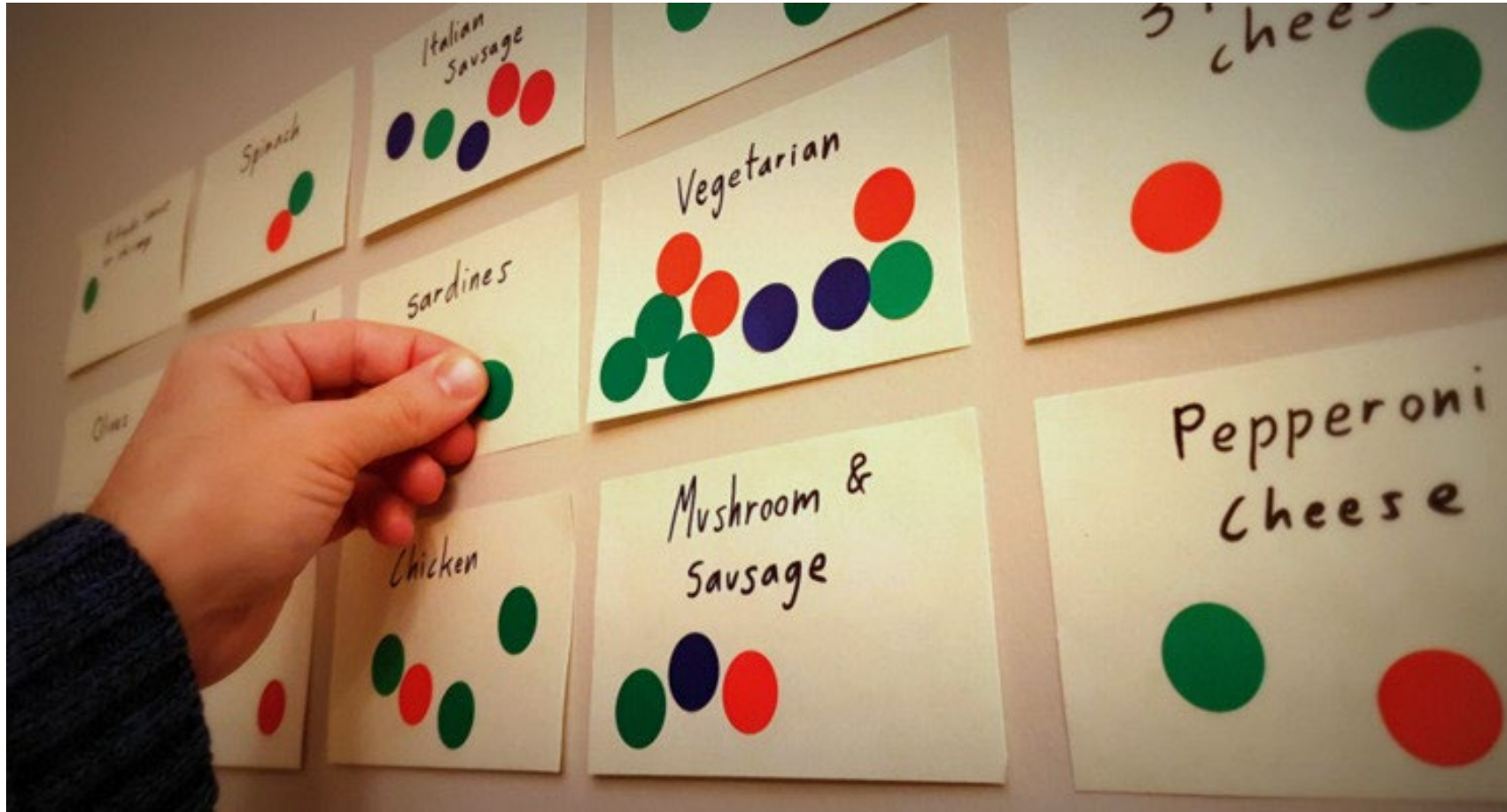
	Operational	Start-Up
<i>Description</i>	Funding to support general operating expenses	Funding to launch a new program or project
<i>Example</i>	Classroom support, Workforce development program	Verner Central expansion
<i>Benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses gaps in operational funding for resource starved system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports growth Funding not locked into recurring grants
<i>Trade-offs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs dependent on county funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of sustainability for programs



	New Projects	Renewal Funding
<i>Description</i>	Fund new projects within the fund cap funding at a certain time limit	Fund renewal projects with no time limit
<i>Example</i>	1 st year of the Early Childhood Fund	FY24 only renewal projects were funded (no new or expansion)
<i>Benefits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation, fresh ideas • Equity and access for a variety of organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven track record • Consistency in services • Stability for the system
<i>Trade-offs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty of success • Disruption of existing projects • Lack of sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited flexibility • Minimized competition, difficulty for other applicants to access funding



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Open Discussion

Reminder of our goal =
Affirm a funding strategy for the Early Childhood Fund
for FY2026 & beyond



Next Steps

- **November 12th** – Adoption of a funding strategy for the Early Childhood Fund for FY2026, Select presenters to County Commissioners
- **December 3rd** – Finalize FY2026 grant guidelines & preview presentation to Commissioners
- **December 3rd** (5pm) – Present to Commissioners
- **December 16th** - Open FY2026 grant applications

