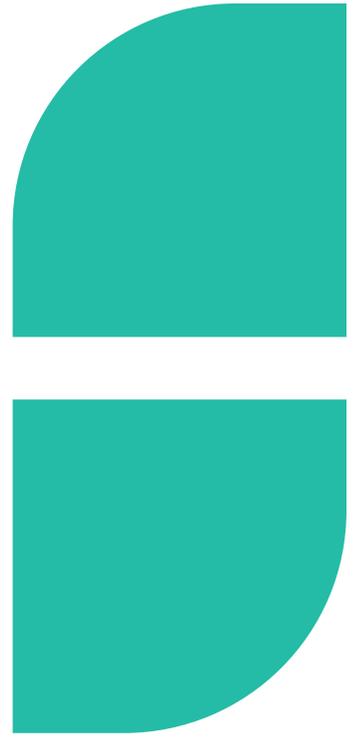


Building What Children Need to Thrive



A Letter from the Early Years President



This past year reminded us — again and again — that early care and education is not a side issue. It is essential infrastructure for children, families and our economy. And it is work that does not pause, even when the rest of the world slows down.

Across North Carolina, young children continue to learn, grow and form the relationships that shape their futures. Families depended on stable child care so they could remain in the workforce. And early educators showed up every day, often under difficult circumstances, to provide safe, nurturing, high-quality care during the most critical years of development. Early Years is honored to have played a role in strengthening these systems.

FY25 was a year of both progress and uncertainty. We saw renewed energy around strengthening the early childhood workforce, including meaningful national conversations sparked by the Early Childhood Workforce Convening led by our TEACH Early Childhood® National Center. At the same time, funding challenges, workforce shortages and policy shifts reminded us how fragile this system remains, and how vital strong leadership and coordination continue to be.

Through it all, Early Years remained focused on our role as a systems leader: strengthening the workforce, supporting families, guiding policy through research and data and helping communities build solutions that last. Whether through our workforce initiatives, family support services, technical assistance or large-scale partnerships, our goal has remained the same — to ensure every child has the opportunity for a strong start in life.

North Carolina has long been recognized as a pioneer in early care and education, and I continue to believe our state is uniquely positioned to lead. Our mixed-delivery system, collaborative partnerships and deep expertise provide a foundation for innovation even in challenging times. But leadership is not something we achieve alone.

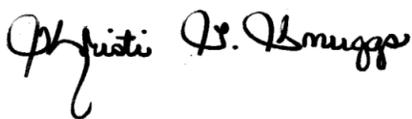
None of this work would be possible without the commitment of our donors, board members, partners and funders. Your support fuels the infrastructure behind the scenes — the research, coordination, workforce strategies and advocacy that allow programs to succeed and children to thrive. You give us the flexibility to respond, to innovate and to lead when the system needs it most.

I am also deeply grateful to the Early Years staff, whose dedication and compassion drive this mission forward every day. Their work often mirrors that of the educators we serve — steady, unseen by many, but transformational in its impact.

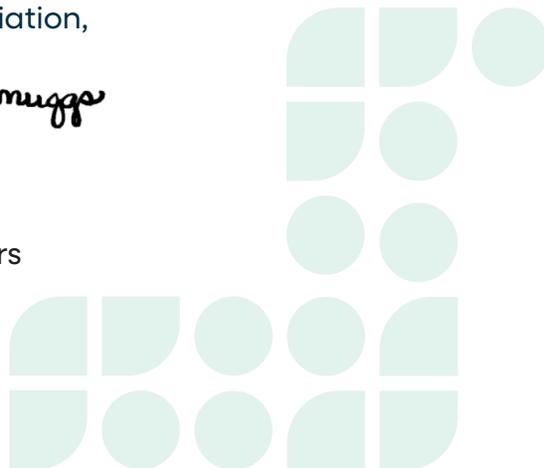
As you read this report, you will see the outcomes of that collective effort: educators advancing in their careers, families finding stability, communities strengthening their child care systems and children benefiting from consistent, high-quality early learning environments. There is still much work ahead. But I remain hopeful — because of what we have built together, and because of partners like you who believe that investing in the earliest years is one of the most powerful ways to shape the future.

Thank you for your trust, your partnership and your continued belief in the mission of Early Years. Together, we are strengthening the system that builds children — and in doing so, building a stronger North Carolina for generations to come.

With sincere appreciation,



Dr. Kristi Snuggs,
President | Early Years



TEACH Early Childhood® North Carolina

The **TEACH Early Childhood® North Carolina** scholarship program provides educational scholarships to early care professionals working in regulated early care centers and family child care homes. The primary goals of the program are to increase the education, compensation and retention of the early care and education workforce, as well as early care program specialists working on behalf of young children, families and the workforce.

Each TEACH NC participant is paired with a dedicated specialist who provides individualized support as they navigate the academic, professional and personal challenges of pursuing higher education while balancing work and family responsibilities. Through this support, educators advance their education, strengthen their professional skills and remain in the field, expanding career opportunities and improving the quality of care and education experienced by the children they serve.



65,438

children were enrolled in a child care program with at least one TEACH NC participant

2,239

TEACH NC scholarship recipients

966

licensed child care facilities had at least one TEACH NC participant

129

TEACH NC participants graduated with an early childhood focused college degree

96

participating North Carolina counties

21%

increase in earnings for participants earning an associate degree

56

NC community colleges and 20 colleges/universities were attended by TEACH NC scholarship recipients

Testimonial



Denyelle Malloy is an early care and education administrator at Trinity Child Care in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Before becoming a TEACH recipient, Denyelle's goal was to build a strong foundation in early childhood education and deepen her understanding of child development, but she didn't have a clear roadmap for how to get there. She believes TEACH provided her with the structure, support and resources to start that journey and gave her the opportunity to earn the credentials she needed to pursue her passion for teaching. Denyelle earned an Associate Degree in General Education, which has given her a solid foundation in child development and teaching strategies.

TEACH has helped her align her career goals with the practical skills and knowledge she needed. It not only reinforced her desire to work with young children but also showed her the importance of continuous learning and professional development. Through TEACH she was able to pursue her certification and gain hands-on experience. "Those moments when everything aligns, when I know I'm doing meaningful work that makes a difference, are what I cherish most."

Denyelle Malloy,
TEACH NC Recipient

TEACH Early Childhood® National Center

The **TEACH Early Childhood® National Center** advocates for improving the education, compensation, career progression and retention of the early childhood workforce. Central to this work is the replication of the TEACH Early Childhood® North Carolina and Child Care WAGE\$® programs across the country through statewide nonprofit organizations.

The TEACH National Center provides wide ranging support and resources to administrative homes in states who are licensed to implement the TEACH Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGE\$® programs respectively. The TEACH program is currently in 22 states; five states operate WAGE\$®. The National Center helps these organizations ensure that early childhood educators earn more, continue their education and stay in the field, with the end goal of building a pipeline of educators for future generations.



Scan to
learn more.

699,814 children benefited from having a better educated teacher

\$849m

total funding leveraged to date

124,911

credit hours completed across the program

19,975

TEACH scholarship recipients were supported

55.8%

of scholarship recipients were first generation higher education graduates in their immediate family

96%

retention rate for associate degree recipients

96%

retention rate for bachelor's degree recipients

Testimonial



“There is a momentum throughout our company that we support employees who want to further their education. TEACH has allowed us to do that. We promote that we have educational support for career development, and it attracts people at all different stages of their careers.

TEACH has brought more professionalism to the field. Now you can make early education your career. I've been at Building Blocks for 21 years. I remember people saying, 'I'm going to get my real job now.' I don't hear that much anymore. They are not just working at a 'day care' center. They are professionals.”

Allison Ritsick,
Director of Programs/Regional Director of
Building Blocks, PA

Child Care WAGES[®] National

The National Center is a leader in the development and implementation of proven workforce strategies. The **Child Care WAGES[®]** national program was created in response to research showing that high turnover rates and inadequate teacher education negatively impact the quality of care children receive. WAGES is an evidence-informed model that advances the education level of early educators, increases their compensation levels and results in the retention of a qualified early care and education workforce.

Why is WAGES needed in every state? Educated, fairly compensated and stable teachers are critical to young children's growth and development. Supplement awards are based on educators' education levels and continuity of care, ensuring children benefit from more consistent, high-quality early learning experiences.



Scan to
learn more.

> \$25M invested in WAGE\$ salary supplements in five states

9,458
early educators
received supplements
in participating states

3,915
early education
programs with
supplement recipients

69%
of active participants
have the AAS ECE or
higher, or have submitted
education during the
year to document
additional coursework

\$1,384
average six-month
supplement

15%
turnover rate for
WAGE\$ participants

Testimonial



“Being a part of the program was kind of like checks and balances for me. I have been sitting on my associate’s for many years, and so with the incentive, it’s pushing me to go ahead and get that bachelor’s degree that I keep putting off. And someone to call and follow up and say, ‘Hey, have you signed up for your classes?’ ‘Where are you at this point?’ That was one of the main incentives that I took from it.”

Kimberly Arnett
Early Educator, Memphis, TN

TEACH Early Childhood® Educator Apprenticeship Network

The **TEACH Early Childhood® National Center** supports states in building strong early childhood apprenticeship programs through the national *TEACH Early Childhood® Educator Apprenticeship Network*. Serving as an industry intermediary, the National Center helps states develop U.S. Department of Labor registered apprenticeship models that align with existing scholarship programs and strengthen the early care and education workforce.

While not all states operate the TEACH scholarship program, the National Center provides technical assistance and support nationwide to identify opportunities to implement the apprenticeship model. The National Center offers individualized guidance to help states design, recruit and implement apprenticeship programs that reflect their unique workforce needs and community contexts. The National Center works with a stakeholder team in each state to create a program that will meet the needs of the early childhood workforce.

National State Data





Arkansas Apprenticeship Graduates

Left to Right: Teacher Cezirae Thomas, Apprenticeship Coordinator Elizabeth Miller, Teacher Kazia Lackey and Teacher Erica Hollins

“Watching these first graduates of the TEACH Arkansas Early Educator Apprenticeship program grow from eager learners to confident educators has been such a rewarding experience. Their journey reminds us that when we invest in teachers, we invest in the future of every child they will teach.”

Elizabeth Miller, Apprenticeship Coordinator
Arkansas Early Childhood Association Certification

Child Care WAGE\$[®] North Carolina

Child Care WAGE\$[®] provides education-based salary supplements to teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children from birth to age 5. The program was created in response to research showing that low compensation and high turnover undermine the quality of care young children receive. By rewarding education and continuity of employment, WAGE\$ helps early educators remain in the field and build stable, nurturing relationships with children.

While recent funding temporarily increased wages, compensation for early educators still lags behind the cost of living. WAGE\$ supplements remain a critical support, helping educators manage financial stress, supporting retention and strengthening the workforce until sustainable wages and benefits are achieved. In North Carolina, WAGE\$ is made possible through collaboration among local Smart Start partnerships, the North Carolina Partnership for Children and the Division of Child Development and Early Education.



85,855

children attended child care programs with at least one WAGES\$ participant

4,075

early childhood educators received a supplement through WAGES\$

1,806

early education programs with supplement recipients

89%

of active participants have the AAS ECE or higher, or have submitted education during the year to document additional coursework

\$1,227

average six-month supplement

13%

turnover rate for WAGES\$ participants

Testimonial



WAGES\$ participant Margaret Simerly is an inspiration, and a wonderful example of perseverance, determination and commitment. She is a passionate lead teacher in Avery County, and after jumping every hurdle in her path, she's a community college graduate. Margaret's early childhood journey began in high school when she was first able to take a child care class. "After I took the class in high school, I realized I was good at this. We are teachers and not just babysitters. You have to have that mindset. We are really able to make a difference for children and that is so rewarding to me. I've been in child care my whole career."

She knew that having a degree was important for her lead teacher role and would help her excel in her chosen field. "Parents want to see that you really are a teacher, not just fly by night," she said. "We know what we are doing. Having both education and experience shows in the classroom, but if I had not had WAGES\$, I might not have finished my degree."

Margaret Simerly,
WAGES\$ Participant

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$[®] Plus

Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$[®] Plus, funded by the Division of Child Development and Early Education, provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers and family child care providers working full-time with children birth through age 2 in North Carolina.

Historically, there has been a significant difference in the quality of care infants and toddlers receive compared to that of children ages 3 to 5. Since a child's brain develops more in their first five years than at any other time in life, it is critical that infants and toddlers are cared for by supportive, stable educators. With increased compensation, AWARD\$ Plus recipients can better afford to stay in the infant-toddler classroom and many are encouraged to continue their coursework.



Scan to
learn more.

21,774 children attended a child care program with at least one AWARD\$ Plus participant

1,588

early childhood educators received supplements

908

early education programs with supplement recipients

77%

of active participants have AAS ECE or higher, or have submitted education during the year to document additional coursework

\$1,132

average six-month supplement

14%

turnover rate for AWARD\$ Plus recipients

Testimonial



AWARD\$ Plus participant Kierston Godfrey graduated with her Birth-Kindergarten Bachelor's Degree in May 2025. "It's been a long time coming," Kierston said. "I'm the first person in my family to receive an associate or a bachelor's degree. I did it for myself, to have that level of education. I wanted to gain knowledge and wisdom about how I can better assist children, mine included. I wanted to learn the basics about how to teach children in the early years. I don't want to do this blindly. I want to know what I'm doing. I wanted to be able to say I have a degree."

"I'm also trying to teach my kids that education is important. I had to sacrifice my fun time to do homework and go to classes. My kids got to see days that were really hard, but mommy kept pushing. When they saw me walk across the stage knowing that I struggled and kept going, that's important. It will get hard for them too, and for my day care kids. If you keep working though, you graduate. You get to reap the harvest of all the effort you put in."

Kierston Godfrey,
AWARD\$ Plus Participant

North Carolina Birth-to-Three Quality Initiative

The **North Carolina Birth-to-Three Quality Initiative** serves teachers and administrators in all 100 counties across North Carolina. Regional birth-to three specialists provide leadership, coaching, training and hands-on support for developing and maintaining high-quality birth-to-three classrooms.

A team of anchor birth-to-three specialists provides virtual cohort-based learning communities for early childhood professionals across the state. The project is rigorously monitored to ensure consistency, equitability and quality of services delivered and its impact is evaluated by several measurable outcomes.



Scan to
learn more.

2,399 educators received professional development through the B-3QI project

1,721

children impacted by those who participated in practice-based coaching

265

teachers and administrators received on-site or virtual practice-based coaching

261

child care professionals serving children birth to 3 invited to participate in peer mentorship

169

classrooms participated in practice-based coaching with project specialists

Testimonial

“The experience with the coach has been very helpful for me because it is my first time working in a certified day care and there are many things about this job that I did not know and I am learning with my coach, such as how to create an appropriate environment in the classroom, etc.”

“[My coach] has been very knowledgeable and helpful in my classroom. She has taught me many strategies to help the classroom transition from one activity to the next smoothly. She has given me so many amazing lesson plan ideas that are developmentally appropriate for 2 year olds. Overall, [my coach] has been an amazing coach who has taught me very valuable skills in all areas of my classroom.”

**Participants,
Birth-to-Three Quality Initiative**



Durham PreK

Durham PreK, managed by Early Years, is Durham County's initiative to expand access to high-quality, publicly funded preschool for 4-year-olds. The program enhances the state-funded NC Pre-K and is designed to grow incrementally to meet community needs for early education.

With evidence that universal preschool can reduce disparities in kindergarten readiness, Durham's policymakers focus on expanding quality programs. This includes teacher coaching, supporting higher wages through increased reimbursement rates and funding new spaces for expanded access. Durham PreK also uses a mixed delivery system, partnering with community-based child care programs and public sites. The program works with Durham Public Schools, Durham's Partnership for Children, NC Pre-K, Durham Head Start and local partners to ensure broad access and high standards.

677

children served in Durham PreK with local funding

540

coaching sessions were completed with instructional staff

134

one-to-one appointments made with families to provide application assistance

41%

of Durham's 4-year-olds can universally enroll in public preschool

42

classrooms for Durham County's 4-year-olds

25

Durham PreK sites



Durham Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship

The **Durham Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship** is a work-based, person-centered program designed to enable educators to learn while they earn through two stackable paths, starting with a Certificate in Early Childhood Education and progressing to an Associate Degree Apprenticeship.

In 2025, we launched the Durham Early Educator Academy to better prepare aspiring educators to gain employment in early childhood, creating a pathway into the apprenticeship for individuals brand new to the field. The pilot of this free, bilingual six-week training program was highly successful, supporting individuals to complete all requirements to get hired in child care and equipping them with essential training to enter the classroom better prepared to support children's development.

53

apprentices
served

24

partnering child
care centers

49

credentials, certificates
and degrees earned

22

mentor teachers

17

academy graduates
prepared to work in early
childhood education



2025 Events

Take Care Documentary Showing

North Carolina community members gathered in Carrboro on March 26, 2025, to view the Take Care documentary and to participate in a discussion on how to create lasting solutions that support children's healthy development, allow parents to work and keep businesses running. Take Care examines North Carolina's child care crisis through the voices and stories of our families, child care providers and teachers, and business and community leaders.



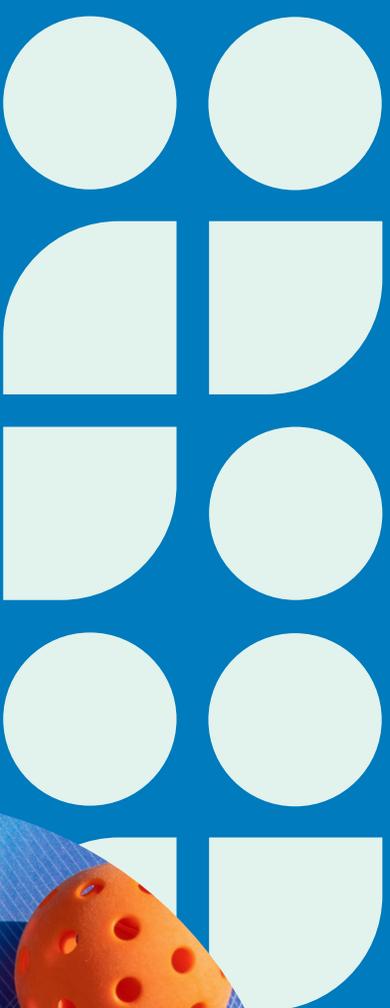
Pictured: Dr. Kristi Snuggs, Sandy Weathersbee, Davina Boldin-Woods, Henrietta Zalkind and Deidre McMahon

Inaugural Pickleball Fundraiser

Early Years' inaugural pickleball fundraiser, Serve & Support: Rally for Early Years, brought together community supporters to raise awareness of the early care and education field. All proceeds went towards supporting our mission of strengthening accessible and affordable high-quality early care and education by providing support for families, communities and the workforce.



Pictured: Dr. Kristi Snuggs, Ximena Franco-Jenkins and Jill Arnold



Upcoming in 2026

A.S.K. Conference

The annual Advancing Skills & Knowledge (A.S.K.) Conference offers impactful workshops to assist teachers in ensuring their classroom practices are aligned with the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning Development Standards (NC FELD).

Triangle Child Care Awards

Every two years, Early Years gathers community leaders, child care providers and advocates to celebrate the dedicated individuals working to ensure the Triangle's children receive the highest quality of early care and education.

National Early Childhood Education Workforce Convening

This annual event brings together professionals nationwide to advance advocacy, policy, funding, strategy and system-building efforts for sustainable early education programs at national, state and community levels.

Learn more about Early Years upcoming events in 2026 and beyond by visiting www.earlyyearsnc.org or subscribe to our newsletter.

Child Care Resource and Referral Division

The **Child Care Resource and Referral Division** provides services locally, regionally and statewide. It is comprised of several different departments, including: Family Support, Technical Assistance, and Professional Development and Support Services.

Early Years delivers comprehensive child care consumer education and referral services through an initiative known as Child Care Referral Central (CCRC). This initiative is a regional collaboration between Early Years and the Alamance, Caswell, Person and Franklin Granville-Vance Partnerships for Children.

Dedicated referral specialists play a vital role in educating families about the key features of high-quality child care, empowering them with knowledge. Through individualized, multimodal delivery — via telephone, online platforms, in-person consultations and referrals, assisted site visits, community fairs and educational seminars — specialists offer structured guidance on care options, quality standards and financial supports to minimize barriers and promote confident, informed family choices. Moreover, specialists curate a tailored list of referrals to child care programs that align with the unique needs of each family.



2,565 children gained access to high-quality child care

1,440
additional users accessed referrals through our online self guided search

1,370
families received consumer education and referral services

688
families received consumer education services

1,212
low-income families received consumer education and referral services

781
families who received referrals were African American

349
families who received referrals were Latinx

North Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral (formerly the Council)

Early Years is one of three lead agencies in the NC Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R), along with Southwestern Child Development Commission in the western part of the state and Child Care Resources Inc. in Charlotte, NC. Together, CCR&R manages child care consumer education and referral services, professional development, technical assistance, data collection and analysis and public awareness activities across NC through a contract with the Division of Child Development and Early Education.

North Carolina's CCR&R system is a national model for high performance, achieved by maintaining strong standards and accountability for outputs and outcomes and evaluated each year through an annual review. CCR&R programs have provided essential services in NC for more than 50 years.

CCR&R agencies are dedicated to improving the quality and availability of child care in North Carolina because it makes a major difference in the economic health and security of families, it lays the foundation for a child's future success and it creates child care jobs, contributing to economic growth.

Early Years Scholarship Program

The **Early Years Scholarship Program** helps families afford high-quality child care, recognizing that cost is often one of the biggest barriers for working parents and caregivers. Early Years provides financial assistance to parents who are working, seeking employment and/or enrolled in school or training programs and need care for children from birth through age 12. The program prioritizes placement in licensed 4- and 5-star programs so children can learn and grow in safe, stable and supportive environments.

Early Years scholarships include:

Smart Start Scholarships:
support for children from birth to 5 living in Durham County.

General Scholarships:
support for children from birth to 5 living in Durham County or Orange County.

UNC Scholarships:
support for children from birth to 12 for students and staff affiliates at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Partner Program Scholarships:
provides support to the PreK and Early Head Start programs in Durham.

Build Babies Durham:
funded through ARPA to support children from birth to 5 years old, with a priority for birth to 2 years old.



1,113 children received scholarships

94%

of children who received scholarships attended 5-star child care programs

50%

of children who received scholarships were African American

41%

of families whose children received scholarships earned less than \$30,000/year

29%

of children who received scholarships were multi-racial

18%

of children served lived in a Spanish-speaking household

Testimonial

Before receiving the Build Babies Durham Child Care Scholarship, one of our families struggled to find reliable child care. The parent relied on relatives while working, but the arrangement was inconsistent and unpredictable, making it difficult to maintain steady employment. Today, her 2-year-old triplets are thriving in a high-quality early learning program aligned with North Carolina's early learning standards. Through daily routines, responsive teaching and play-based learning, they are building strong language, thinking and social skills. They can already count to 20, name colors and communicate in short sentences. The children are also becoming more independent, confident and expressive. They are learning to interact positively with peers and trusted adults, building emotional regulation and social skills.

The family has seen these benefits before. When their oldest child attended the same high-quality center, his vocabulary expanded dramatically, his confidence grew and he was recognized for being especially friendly. These outcomes underscore the importance of fostering relationships and creating nurturing learning environments. For the parent, stable child care has been life-changing. The scholarship allows her to work consistently, earn income and provide for her family without the constant worry of unreliable care. It also supports her mental and emotional well-being by creating time to manage daily responsibilities and recharge, strengthening the entire household. The Build Babies Durham Child Care Scholarship makes it possible for them to remain in high-quality care while allowing the parent to stay employed and focus on building a more secure future.

Length of Scholarship Support: Since 2024

Children Served: Triplets, age 2, and one older sibling, age 5

Funding: Build Babies Durham

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Our **Technical Assistance (TA)** program provides assistance to child care centers and family child care homes as they work to improve program practices and standards in an effort to create and provide high-quality learning environments. Our **Professional Development (PD)** program offers a variety of training opportunities to early childhood educators to improve the quality of early care and education in family child care homes, centers and preschools.

We focus on increasing teacher education and training, promoting developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood settings and improving the accessibility and affordability of professional development necessary to maintain licensure and certification. This program also offers cost-effective options, including workshops, seminars, online classes and continuing education courses. Additionally, Early Years hosts the A.S.K. (Advancing Skills & Knowledge) Conference, a day dedicated to the professional development of early childhood educators.



Scan to
learn more.

2,137 children were taught by teachers or directors that received technical assistance

1,733

teachers and directors employed in licensed facilities received professional development training

658

teachers and directors received on-site TA

95%

teachers and directors that received TA reported improvement in their learning environments

95%

teachers and directors feel confident applying training knowledge and skills

3

child care programs received TA toward national accreditation

Coaching Success

After receiving low scores in Gross Motor and Supervision indicators on an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment, an infant-toddler classroom partnered with an Early Years quality enhancement coach to improve outdoor learning opportunities.

Using donated and existing materials, the team created a gross motor activity cart stocked with open-ended items such as balls, bean bag toss games, rings and frisbees, placed near the playground exit for easy access and consistent use. They also installed a “music wall” using aluminum pots and pans secured to a fence, allowing children to explore sound while engaging in large-muscle movement. The impact was immediate. Teachers reported high levels of engagement, with the music wall quickly becoming a favorite activity. They also noted that the cart made active play easier to initiate and supervise.

With these strategies embedded into daily routines, the site showed measurable improvement in both Gross Motor and Supervision indicators during post-assessment and formal ERS reviews — demonstrating how targeted coaching and low-cost solutions can lead to meaningful, lasting improvements in children’s learning environments.



Child and Adult Care Food Program

Early Years continues to serve as a proud sponsor of the USDA's **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** for family child care homes in Durham, Orange, Vance and Wake counties. This essential program helps ensure that children receive up to three nutritious, well-balanced meals per day.

CACFP provides financial reimbursement to participating providers for offering healthy meals and snacks to children from birth to age 12. As the sponsoring agency, Early Years supports providers through training and administrative support to help them meet federal requirements. Participants benefit from nutrition education, menu planning resources, site monitoring and personalized consultations to enhance the quality of meals served.

Beyond financial support, CACFP helps strengthen child care programs by promoting healthy eating habits, reducing food insecurity and ensuring children receive the nourishment they need to learn and thrive.



133,028

total nutritious meals served

226

children served each month

36

providers supported

spoonFULL

SpoonFULL (Fresh, Unique, Liked and Local) provides high-quality and affordable nutritious meals and snacks daily to children enrolled in participating child care centers in North Carolina's Durham, Wake and Orange counties, keeping children healthy, helping teachers focus on teaching and saving providers money. SpoonFULL reflects our commitment to serving quality, locally grown food when possible and providing children with meals that nourish their bodies and minds.

In FY25, Early Years provided meal services to 22 child care centers, feeding more than 1,400 children across Durham, Orange and Wake counties. Meals are prepared and delivered daily, with lunch, afternoon snacks and breakfast for the next day. SpoonFULL's team of experienced chefs work hard to provide creative meals that are familiar to young children, as well as introduce new foods like baked cod and foods from other cultures like arroz con queso (rice with cheese). Nutrition is part of every early childhood curriculum.



859,497

breakfasts, lunches and snacks served

1,434

children received meals and snacks daily

21

centers participated in spoonFULL

Our Research

Strengthening NC's Early Care and Education System Through Research

Early Years' **Research Division** conducts comprehensive studies, creates, maintains the North Carolina Early Care and Education Data Repository and provides data resources to improve child care, recognizing that information is the first step to improving an early care and education system.

Since the early 1990s, Early Years has researched and reported on topics such as teacher turnover, supply and demand, subsidy, careers in early childhood, child care fees, after school care, child care system issues and more. These studies give policymakers in our state and local governments and stakeholders in our communities the information they need to strengthen early childhood education.

External Studies

In FY25, the Research Department received funds from Alamance Community Foundation to conduct a study to better understand the child care experiences of Alamance families of children under 5. The research department analyzed quantitative data from the Census and the Department of Child Development and Early Education as well as qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with Alamance families.

Program Evaluation

Each year, the Research Department evaluates the Infant-Toddler Educator AWARD\$® and Child Care WAGE\$® programs, as well as the TEACH Early Childhood® program. Each evaluation involves survey design, data collection (online survey, phone survey and/or paper survey), data analysis and reporting.

Internal Support

The Research Department supports Durham PreK as needed, through various projects related to the effectiveness of the program. In 2025, the Research Department:

- **analyzed** Durham PreK children's growth in various child development areas during the 2024/2025 school year, using assessment data from Gold® Teaching Strategies.
- **provided** insights on the Durham PreK apprenticeship program through surveys, interviews and focus groups.
- **surveyed** Durham PreK teaching staff receiving support in mathematics, and collaborated with the Technical Assistance team on an A.S.K. Conference session.

In addition, the Research Department collaborated with the NC Birth-to-Three Qualitative Initiative to assess the experiences of 600 past participants with the program, and with the TEACH Early Childhood® National Center to survey states offering apprenticeship programs.

Conferences

The Research Department presented their work at three conferences: the 2025 National Early Childhood Education Workforce Convening (online, April 24, 2025), the North Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral Institute (Greensboro, NC, March 17, 2025) and the NCAEYC Conference (Raleigh, NC, October 25, 2025).

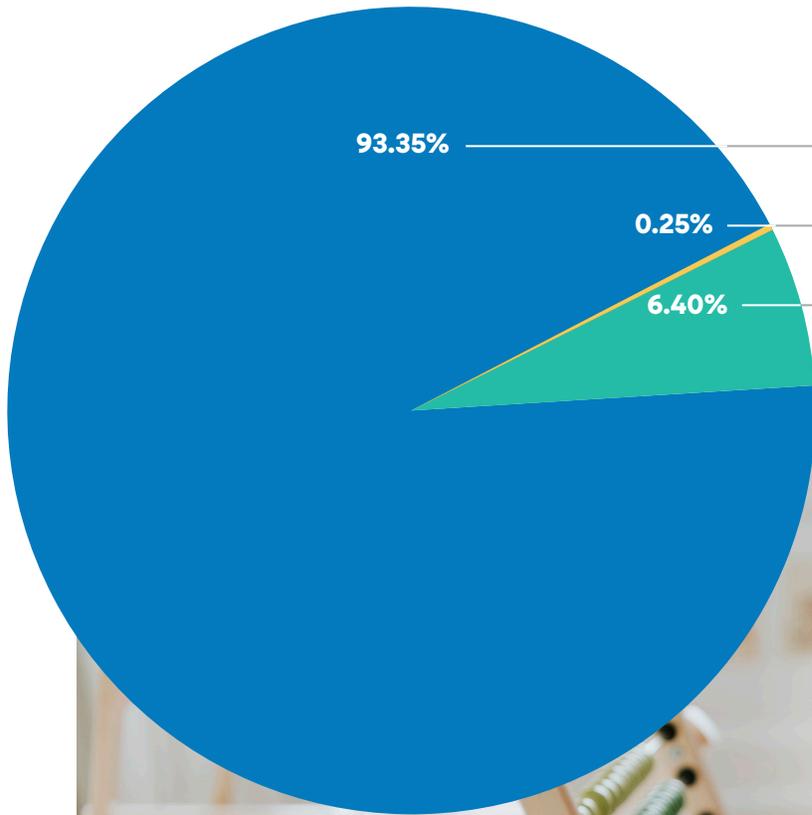
Financials

Statement of Functional Expenses

Grants and Assistance	FY2025	FY2024
Grants and Awards	9,575,657	9,983,273
Scholarships-TEACH	3,821,362	3,174,282
Scholarships-Child Care	8,629,984	8,059,293
Subcontracts	6,468,332	6,884,710
Total Grants and Assistance	28,495,335	28,101,558
Operating Expenses		
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	10,375,877	9,871,345
Program and Office Supplies	945,850	1,026,160
Contracted Services	568,100	433,178
Occupancy	152,490	147,391
Travel and Meetings	329,271	382,356
Depreciation and Amortization	242,363	234,695
Postage and Telephone	98,575	119,363
Printing and Publications	20,932	26,105
Repairs and Maintenance	49,877	29,286
Dues and Subscriptions	226,551	192,788
Interest Expense	48,948	50,933
Insurance	39,509	44,164
Other Expenses	65,138	64,337
Total Operating Expenses	13,163,481	12,622,101
Total Expenses	41,658,816	40,723,659

Fiscal Year 2025

Program Expenses	\$38,889,892
General and Administrative	\$2,664,909
Fundraising	\$104,015
Total Expenses	\$41,658,816



- Program Expenses
- Fundraising
- General and Administrative



Thank You to Our Funding Partners

Individuals

LaTida Adams

Jill Arnold

Francis Bagbey

Brinda Balakumaran

Jenna Barnes

Marsha R. Basloe

Erin Belford

Sheresa Boone Blanchard

Davina L. Boldin-Woods

Brian Boyd

Jeffrey Philip Brown

Matthew Brown

Liz Bruno

Bill Bryant

Donna Bryant

Nimasheena Burns

Richard and Nadine Burton

Danielle Caldwell

Jason Carrow

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Peter Filene

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Kathleen and F. Reed Johnson

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Sheen Klaus

Jennifer Lacewell

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Ana Elisa Sanchez

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Andrew H. Weathersbee

Cynthia Wheeler

Karyn Wilkerson



Chris and Janet Willett

Paul Winterhoff

Frederique Yova

Leigh and Philip Zaleon

Henrietta Zalkind

Foundations

Alamance Community Foundation

Bainum Family Foundation

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina
Foundation

Buffett Early Childhood Fund

Dan Hudgins Summer Child Care Fund of Triangle
Community Foundation

Pledgeling Foundation

Sparling Family Fund of Triangle
Community Foundation

Stranahan Foundation

Tepper Family Fund of Triangle Community
Foundation

Triangle United Way

W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Government

Durham County Government

Louisville Metro Government

North Carolina Department of Health and Human
Services - Division of Child Development and
Early Education

North Carolina Department of Health and Human
Services - Division of Child and Family Well-Being

Town of Carrboro

Town of Cary

Town of Chapel Hill

Colleges and Universities

Duke Office of Durham and
Community Affairs

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Nonprofit Organizations

Black Child Development
Institute, Carolinas

Center for Child and Family Health

The Council for Professional Recognition

Dogwood Health Trust

Durham's Children's Initiative

Durham's Partnership for Children

Early Care & Education Pathways
to Success

Health Federation of Philadelphia

Orange County Partnership for Children

NC State Employees Combined Campaign

National Association for the Education
of Young Children

National Early Care and Education Workforce
Center

North Carolina Business Committee
for Education

St. Thomas More Church

The North Carolina Partnership
for Children

United Way of the Greater Triangle

Wake County Smart Start

ZERO to THREE

Businesses and Corporations

Blackman & Sloop CPAs P.A.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina

Environmental Control Triangle

Fidelity

HH Architecture PA

My Pro Photographer

This list represents charitable gifts and grants made to Early Years between Jul. 1, 2024 to Jun. 30, 2025. While we have made every effort to be accurate and thorough, it is possible to accidentally omit or misspell a name. Please contact the Director of Development and Communication at 919-9967-3272 ext. 1927 with any additions or corrections.



Community Partners

Child Care WAGES® Partner Organizations

Alamance Partnership for Children

Alexander County Partnership for Children

Alleghany Partnership for Children

Alliance for Children (Union County)

Blue Ridge Partnership for Children

Buncombe Partnership for Children, Inc.

Burke County Smart Start, Inc.

Cabarrus County Partnership for Children

Caldwell County Smart Start

Catawba County Partnership for Children

Cleveland County Partnership for Children, Inc.

Columbus County Partnership for Children, Inc.

Craven Smart Start, Inc.

Down East Partnership for Children

Duplin County Partnership for Children

Durham's Partnership for Children

Franklin Granville Vance Smart Start, Inc.

Guilford County Partnership for Children

Halifax-Warren Smart Start Partnership for Children, Inc.

Harnett County Partnership for Children, Inc.

Hertford-Northampton Smart Start Partnership for Children, Inc.

Iredell County Partnership for Young Children, Inc.

Lee County Partnership for Children

Martin-Pitt Partnership for Children, Inc.

Montgomery County Partnership for Children

North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education

North Carolina Partnership for Children

Partners for Children & Families Inc. (Moore County)

Partnership for Children of Johnston County, Inc.

TEACH Early Childhood® National Center Participating State Organizations

Alabama Partnership for Children

Arkansas Early Childhood Association

Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (Colorado)

Children's Forum, Inc. (Florida)

Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children

Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children

Maine Association for the Education of Young Children

Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children

Child Care Aware® of Minnesota

Child Care Aware® of Missouri

Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

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Davina Boldin-Woods | First Presbyterian Child Development

Ximena Franco-Jenkins | Frank Porter Graham Development Institute

Carla Garrett | SERVE UNCG

Muffy Grant | Dress for Success

Michael A. Johnson | Dogwood State Bank

Jennifer Lacewell | White Rock Child Development Center

Michelle Peck | Blue Cross Blue Shield

Eric Powell | M&F Bank

Chris Ratte | F&M Bank

Ellen Reckhow | Community Volunteer

Ana Elisa Sanchez | Casa Club Spanish Immersion Preschool

Sandy Weathersbee | Providence Preparatory School

Chris Willett | Beemer Hadler & Willett, PA

Henrietta Zalkind | Down East Partnership for Children



 **Early Years**

A Comprehensive Approach to
Enhancing Early Care and Education

EarlyYearsNC.org

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