Acknowledgments

The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners, the County Manager, and the Early Childhood Education Executive Committee acknowledge with deep appreciation the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council’s generous financial support of the early childhood education action plan and implementation progress report to advance opportunity for our community’s children ages birth to five and their families.

A Report by the Mecklenburg County Early Childhood Education Executive Committee

February 2019
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Executive Summary

**In Brief**
This implementation report charts progress toward ensuring that all children birth to five in Mecklenburg County have access to high-quality early childhood education to:
- foster equal opportunity among children to learn, grow, and thrive; and
- promote economic opportunity regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or income.

**Background**
The release of a Harvard University/UC Berkeley study\(^1\) in 2014 ranked Charlotte 50th of 50 major cities in terms of economic mobility (i.e., a child born in poverty may dream of upward mobility but is unlikely to achieve it during his or her lifetime). The report was a call to action galvanizing community residents in multiple ways.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force was formed in 2015 to address the findings from the study and issued a report\(^2\) in 2017 identifying three key determinants that have the greatest influence on economic opportunity and upward mobility:\(^3\)

- access to early care and education;
- college and career readiness; and
- child and family stability.

The Opportunity Task Force met for 18 months during which time the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved a resolution supporting access to early childhood education for all children birth to five.

In response, County Manager Dena Diorio assembled a broad array of stakeholders to join an early childhood education (ECE) Executive Committee\(^4\) to explore access to early childhood education within Mecklenburg County, strategies to expand access, and to make financing recommendations. The overall goal was to support pathways to economic opportunity by:

- reducing the child care subsidy waiting list to support parent employment and to ensure that their young children are both safe and in a setting that promotes their early learning while they are at work, and
- expanding access to early childhood education so that all children start school ready to succeed.

The ECE Executive Committee met over a 9-month period and released a 5-point plan in September of 2017.\(^5\) The plan embodied three core strategies combined with an annual program evaluation to ensure accountability for the investment of public dollars. Specifically, the plan called for:

- clearing the child care subsidy waiting list for children from birth to age 5,
- investing in voluntary, universal public pre-k for 4-year-old children,
- implementing talent development strategies to meet ECE workforce needs related to staffing public pre-k and high-quality child care programs,
- developing a strong evaluation component tied to ECE investment, and
- recommending funding strategies to support ECE initiatives.

**Implementation: Progress to Date**

**The Child Care Subsidy Waiting List**
Economic opportunity for families is tied to employment. For low-wage parents, child care is difficult to afford yet workforce participation depends on it. At the same time, for many children, child care serves as their early learning program, which makes the provision of child care assistance a two-generation strategy: supporting children and their families. Because the need for child care assistance exceeds available public funding, there is often a long waiting list for help. Currently in Mecklenburg County, 2,122 children under 5 are on the waiting list.\(^6\)

The Mecklenburg County BOCC approved $6 million in FY18 and FY19 to reduce the child care waiting list.\(^7\) Together with additional federal funding, 340 more children from birth to age 5 are currently receiving child care assistance compared to June of 2017 when the Committee’s initial landscape review was completed.\(^8\)

Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI) manages the administration of child care subsidy in the county, which supports child care assistance for 6,950 children birth through 12 years old in low-wage families.\(^9\)
Expanding Public Pre-K

In June of 2018, as part of the FY19 county budget, the BOCC approved an increase of three-fourths of a penny in the property tax rate to fund the first year of voluntary, universal pre-K (referred to as MECK Pre-K). In the fall of 2018, 33 MECK Pre-K classrooms opened to serve 600 4-year-old children. Since June of 2017, an additional 1,448 4-year-old children now have access to public pre-k through increased state and county dollars:

- 440 additional children are served in Bright Beginnings operated in CMS schools (3,240 children compared to 2,800 in June of 2017),
- 408 additional children are served in NC Pre-K operated in child care programs (1,414 children compared to 1,006 in June of 2017), and
- 600 additional children are served in new MECK Pre-K classrooms operated in child care programs.

For 2018-2019, 5,254 4-year-old children out of about 12,000 throughout the county now have access to public pre-k. With 18 children per classroom, the plan recommends adding 36 MECK Pre-K classrooms next year (FY20 budget) so that 69 classrooms will be operating serving 1,242 children. The ultimate goal is to serve 4,950 children in 275 classrooms operating in year 6 (i.e., about 9,600 children would be participating in public pre-k).

Smart Start of Mecklenburg County manages MECK Pre-K, which currently involves 33 classrooms in 20 child care centers.

Talent Development

To staff MECK Pre-K, 66 teachers were hired and trained on curriculum implementation, ongoing child assessments, and CLASS™ – the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, a professional development tool used to assess and improve teacher interactions with children. Research shows that teachers who engage with CLASS™ interventions improve the quality of their interactions with children, which leads to greater child outcomes (e.g., gains in social, emotional, and cognitive development).

Given the staffing needs for both MECK Pre-K and high-quality child care, the implementation report recommends additional funding for Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) tuition support to provide a pathway for teachers pursuing an AA/AAS, who are often lead teachers in child care or assistant teachers in public pre-k, and UNC Charlotte for teachers pursuing their BA in early childhood working toward a NC B-K license (needed for lead teachers in MECK Pre-K and NC Pre-K).

In 2018, UNC Charlotte completed a program redesign to expedite B-K licensure attainment as well as to reduce costs by offering courses at partnership locations in the evening within the community and providing on-line ECE courses for working professionals. In addition, UNC Charlotte has applied to an external funder for tuition assistance to support MECK Pre-k teachers with a BA in early childhood (or related content) to access coursework needed for B-K licensure.

At the same time, since 2017, CPCC has implemented the new statewide articulation agreement to make it easier to transfer from community college to four-year universities without losing credit for coursework already completed.

Accountability and Outcomes

The County Manager's Office is currently working with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute to conduct program evaluations of MECK Pre-K. The first year evaluation will be related to implementation fidelity to ensure a high-quality program is in place. Future years will focus on the quality of the program as well as child outcomes.

2017-2018 Progress in Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Child Care</th>
<th>Public Pre-K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birth-5</td>
<td>MECK Pre-K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Additional Children Served</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Children Served</td>
<td>4,465</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Data reflects children B-S. The goal is to reduce the wait list of 2,122 children under age 5.</td>
<td>Expand MECK Pre-K to reach about 4,900 4 year-old children resulting in 9,600 children participating in public pre-k (including NC Pre-K and Bright Beginnings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CCRI, data based on B-S child care expenditures in November 2018 compared to June of 2017; Smart Start of Mecklenburg County for MECK Pre-K estimates, December 2018; CMS for Bright Beginnings and NC Pre-K estimates, December 2018. Note: The number of children birth to 5 served under the Mecklenburg County Wait List Reduction Initiative (MCWRI) is 634 based on November 2018 expenditures. While state funding for child care subsidy increased over the time period, child care payment rates were increased for infants and toddlers in October of 2017 and for 3-5 year old children in October of 2018. For that reason, while November 2018 expenditures for MCWRI supported 634 children birth to 5, the overall increase in children birth to 5 served between June of 2017 and November of 2018 is 340, which essentially means that it became more expensive to serve children over the time period. In the absence of the county funding, the overall number of children served birth to 5 would have shown a decline.
Work is underway to develop a public results dashboard for MECK Pre-K which will track:

- Child development growth (aggregate baseline scores in the fall compared to end of year scores across six domains: social-emotional, language, literacy, cognitive, physical, and math),
- CLASS™ scores (fall and spring), and
- Program evaluation results.

The goal is to have a high-quality program with effective interactions between teachers and children that result in greater gains by children than would otherwise be expected. Program evaluation results will help identify areas that need further improvement, more intensive training and mentoring for teachers, or strategies to better support the needs of all children (e.g., children who are dual language learners or children with special needs). A child care compensation and quality pilot is recommended beginning in FY20. Pilot results will also be shared as part of the public dashboard.

Investments to ensure that all children start school ready to succeed are critical given the difficulty and expense related to remediation during the elementary school years. For example, the most recent 3rd grade reading scores for children in Mecklenburg County show improvement, however, large achievement gaps among children continue to exist.

There is no quick fix or magic wand to promote school readiness overall or reading proficiency by 3rd grade. However, through greater access to high-quality child care, MECK Pre-K expansion, and ECE workforce talent development initiatives, efforts are underway to provide all Mecklenburg children from birth to 5 with greater access to opportunities to help them learn, grow, and thrive.

### Conclusion

The ECE Executive Committee has met for two years. During the first year, a 5-point action plan was recommended. Implementation is underway with many more children who now have access to early childhood education. Planning for a public results dashboard is also underway so that transparency with regard to results and public investment is shared broadly with the community.

Going forward, recommendations in this report are made to build on and continue the work of the ECE Executive Committee to monitor progress against the 5-point plan, explore strategies related to the healthy development of children from birth through age three (including identifying key factors that impact early learning and development), and to recommend ways to ensure a coordinated system of supports families need that promote school readiness and success as well as economic opportunity.

Making sure that the most effective and appropriate strategies are in place, components of the plan are sufficiently funded and implemented with fidelity, and program evaluation serves to inform any needed modifications or adjustments, the county is well positioned to ensure that the next generation can have an equal opportunity at upward mobility and economic opportunity.

Additional details about implementation, a projected six-year budget, and several new recommendations are contained in the full report.

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**2017-2018 CMS 3rd Graders Reading Scores on Track for College & Career Readiness**

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017-2018 NC End of Grade and End of Course Assessment Results. [http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/)

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**2017-2018 CMS 3rd Graders Reading Below Grade Level**

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017-2018 NC End of Grade and End of Course Assessment Results. [http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/)
## Birth to Age 5 Expansion Costs of Early Childhood Education Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MECK Pre-K Program Budget (Outyears subject to potential sliding fee scale; negotiations per EESLPD support and FPG program evaluation)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MECK Pre-K Children Served by Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 children</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>2,898</td>
<td>3,924</td>
<td>4,950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net New Children by Year</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>1,026</td>
<td>1,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net New Classrooms by Year</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Classrooms Operating</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>275</td>
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<tr>
<td>MECK Pre-K and ECE Workforce Talent Development and Retention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total MECK Pre-K and Talent Development (assumes sliding fee scale for MECK Pre-K)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$16,803,532</td>
<td>$18,600,720</td>
<td>$24,527,603</td>
<td>$30,178,573</td>
<td>$36,063,030</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total MECK Pre-K and Talent Development (no fees for MECK Pre-K)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$17,083,015</td>
<td>$24,058,900</td>
<td>$36,103,057</td>
<td>$48,281,879</td>
<td>$60,990,656</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care Wait List</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated expenditures for current and projected child care wait list (based on 41% take-up rate) for children B-5 (not yet in kindergarten)</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total MECK Pre-K, Talent Development and Retention, and Child Care Estimates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Estimate (assumes sliding fee scale for MECK Pre-K)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$32,139,614</td>
<td>$33,936,802</td>
<td>$39,863,685</td>
<td>$45,514,655</td>
<td>$51,399,112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Estimate (no fees for MECK Pre-K)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$32,419,097</td>
<td>$39,394,982</td>
<td>$51,439,139</td>
<td>$63,617,961</td>
<td>$76,326,738</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Costs Above Previous Year</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net New Costs (assuming sliding fee scale for MECK Pre-K)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$23,389,614</td>
<td>$1,797,188</td>
<td>$5,926,883</td>
<td>$5,650,971</td>
<td>$5,884,457</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net New Costs (no fees for MECK Pre-K)</td>
<td>$23,669,097</td>
<td>$6,975,885</td>
<td>$12,044,157</td>
<td>$12,178,823</td>
<td>$12,708,777</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Child care estimates are provided by CCRI and reflect the following: children served under the Mecklenburg County Wait List Reduction Initiative (MCWRI) as of November 30, 2018; birth through 2 year-old expenditures are based on a 9 month average (March-November 2018) of actual expenditures; 3-5 year-old expenditures are based on November 2018 expenditures with the new market rate increases effective October 1, 2018. Estimated expenditures for children expected to apply are based on children estimated to be added to the wait list in December 2018 to June 2019. Estimates do not assume any market rate increases that may be put into place by the NC Legislature in the future. Estimates do not reflect children that could be added to the child care wait list after FY20. MECK Pre-K estimates include purchase of care per child, monthly supplemental payments to providers for teacher support (teacher premiums if applicable), health insurance, retirement and life insurance; and bus transportation; start-up costs, training and support for teachers and related costs (such as curriculum, child assessment and teacher assessment), EESLPD support, funds to support children with disabilities, technology, marketing and enrollment support, program evaluation, and administration. EESLPD support and program evaluation are assumed to be negotiated annually. Talent development expenses assume costs related to a recommended child care compensation and quality pilot as well as tuition support for the ECE workforce pursuing ECE coursework at CPCC and UNC Charlotte.
Implementation Report: New Recommendations Summary

## Actions

1. **Early Childhood Education Executive Committee Ongoing Review and Thought Leadership.** The ECE Executive Committee should continue to meet as an advisory and discussion body to monitor progress against the 5-point plan, explore strategies related to the healthy development of children from birth through age 3, and recommend ways to ensure a coordinated system of supports (including a potential expansion of child care assistance to reach a greater percentage of eligible children as well as specific strategies to better support dual language learning children) to promote the ability for all children in the county to learn, grow, and thrive.

2. **Deeper dive to recommend birth through age 3 strategies.** The Executive Committee should identify key factors that lead to healthy development and early learning for children birth through age 3, identify gaps in access to services or supports, and recommend strategies to promote healthy brain development, resiliency, strong social and emotional skills, and language and literacy development to build a foundation for future success.

3. **Early Childhood Investment Fund Creation.** The ECE Executive Committee should recommend a specific funding strategy to create an Early Childhood Investment Fund so that promising strategies to reach children in their earliest years can be expanded or developed.

## Tactics/Next Steps

1. **Convene a Data Work Group.** A county data work group should meet as needed to identify current data, data gaps, and processes needed to promote an integrated data system where aggregate outcomes can be tracked over time in a public results dashboard.

2. **Convene a Higher Education and ECE Workforce Coaching Work Group.** A higher education and ECE coaching work group should meet as needed to promote ongoing communication and coordination related to the high-quality workforce necessary to staff MECK Pre-K, to support pathways to build a bilingual workforce, and to ensure access to higher education and professional development for the child care workforce (including efforts to identify and seek external funding for tuition scholarships).

3. **Develop a Community Index of B-3 Initiatives.** Develop a coordinated, comprehensive community index of all county and philanthropic funding geared toward reaching children birth through age 3, their families, and the programs in which they participate to identify gaps and to better understand the reach of current initiatives.
In Brief

This report reaffirms the Executive Committee’s support for the 5-point plan, includes a progress update on year 1 implementation, incorporates revised cost estimates informed through year 1 experience, discusses changes that have been made within Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) and UNC Charlotte to broaden the pipeline of early childhood educators within Mecklenburg County, and contains several recommendations in moving forward to ensure that children birth to age five have an equal opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in Mecklenburg County.

Introduction

Following the release of a national study that ranked Charlotte 50th out of 50 major cities in terms of economic mobility (i.e., a child born in poverty has little chance of upward mobility over his or her lifetime), an Opportunity Task Force was formed in 2015 that subsequently issued a report in 2017 that identified access to early care and education as one of three key determinants influencing economic opportunity and upward mobility.

Prior to the release of the Opportunity Task Force report, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted a resolution in 2016 supporting access to early childhood education. County Manager Dena Diorio assembled an early childhood education (ECE) Executive Committee to explore access to early childhood education within Mecklenburg County, strategies to expand access, and to make financing recommendations.

In September of 2017, the ECE Executive Committee released a 5-point plan recommending an integrated strategy to expand access to early childhood education (ECE) for all children in the county from birth to age five.

The 2017 ECE 5-point plan recommended:

- Clearing the child care subsidy waiting list for children under age five,
- Implementing a six-year phase-in for voluntary, universal public pre-k for all 4 year-old children,
- Implementing ECE workforce talent development and retention strategies to meet ECE workforce needs related to high-quality child care programs and an expansion of public pre-k in child care programs,
- Developing a strong evaluation component tied to ECE investment, and
- Options for the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to review to raise sufficient revenue to expand access to early learning for children from birth to age five.

Following the release of the 5-point plan, the ECE Executive Committee met 12 times, including six half-day retreats, in 2018. Presentations and discussions helped inform and shape implementation in year 1 and related recommendations made in this report. The following topics were explored:

- Access and ECE workforce challenges related to child care and public pre-k;
- ECE workforce access to higher education (CPCC and UNC Charlotte);
- ECE workforce strategies to promote language and literacy;
- ECE workforce strategies to strengthen interactions between early childhood educators and children (using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, CLASS™, a professional development tool based on classroom teacher observations),
- Statewide evaluation of NC Pre-K;
- The role of the Early Educator Support, Licensure & Professional Development (EESLPD) unit within the NC Division of Child Development & Early Education (DCDEE);
- Challenges in addressing the needs of dual language learning children including ways to increase the number of bilingual early educators;
- Strategies related to reducing implicit bias within the ECE workforce;
- Current initiatives to reach children from birth to age 3; and
- Monthly updates with regard to the implementation of MECK Pre-K.
ECE Executive Committee members also had the opportunity to participate in 7 webinars to review the current landscape, challenges, and opportunities related to higher education, onsite technical assistance in child care and NC Pre-K, program evaluation, and program monitoring.

During the course of the year, an online mapping tool was developed to provide data visualization related to supporting the review and selection of MECK Pre-K classroom sites and targeted strategies to promote high-quality child care. The mapping tool will continue to evolve as data is updated and new variables are added.

A survey of NC Pre-K lead teachers was conducted to better understand pre-k lead teacher qualifications and pathways to higher education and B-K licensure. The survey of 66 NC Pre-K lead teachers yielded a response rate of 75.7%, which found:

- 64% of lead teachers have been in the field for 10+ years;
- 68% have been a NC Pre-K lead teacher in their current center for 5 years or less;
- 26.5% currently have a lateral or provisional teacher license (working toward a B-K teacher license);
- 38.4% of first year lead teachers are lateral entry (working toward their B-K license);
- 81.6% did not obtain their BA/B-K license at the same time (e.g., they returned to college to add the B-K license);
- 50% took 1-2 years to obtain their B-K license (the remainder took up to 3 years to obtain their B-K license or were in the process of obtaining it);
- 65.3% of those who obtained a B-K license obtained it at UNC Charlotte; and
- 65.3% of lead teachers are graduates from Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs).

Conference calls were held with an array of administrators of local public pre-k initiatives to gain insight about challenges and successes in the implementation of pre-k programs across the country. In addition, county staff and project consultants traveled to Seattle to meet with city administrators to discuss lessons learned with regard to the implementation and operation of the Seattle Preschool Program now in its 4th year.

On June 19, 2018, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners approved a budget for FY19 that included $6 million to continue efforts to reduce the child care subsidy waiting list for children under age five and an increase in the property tax of three-fourths of a penny yielding 59 million to implement the first year of voluntary, universal public pre-k for 4 year-old children throughout the county. The county funding to expand public pre-k supports 33 new pre-k classrooms (called MECK Pre-K) that opened in child care classrooms in the fall of 2018 to serve 600 children. MECK Pre-K is administered locally by Smart Start of Mecklenburg County.

In addition, the state legislature increased funding for the NC Pre-K program for 2018-2019, which for Mecklenburg County led to an additional 13 NC Pre-K classrooms serving 234 more children. Therefore, for the 2018-2019 school year, Mecklenburg County has an additional 46 public pre-k classrooms serving 834 additional children through NC Pre-K and MECK Pre-K combined.
# 2017-2018 Progress at a Glance Against 5-Point Plan Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>#2</th>
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<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Child Care Subsidy Wait List Birth-5</td>
<td>Voluntary, Universal Public Pre-K</td>
<td>ECE Workforce Talent Development Strategies</td>
<td>Strong Program Evaluation</td>
<td>Financing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed or In Progress Toward Completion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **#1:** Reduce Child Care Subsidy Wait List Birth-5
  - June 2017 and June 2018: Mecklenburg BOCC approved $6 million in the FY18 budget to reduce the child care subsidy waiting list, which was maintained in the FY19 budget. Over 600 children under age 5 receive child care assistance through this funding.
  - 20 providers were selected through a competitive process to operate 33 MECK Pre-K classrooms, which opened in the Fall of 2018.
  - Online mapping tool developed to support site selection and related strategies to support high-quality B-5 early childhood education.
  - Marketing, recruitment and enrollment of about 600 children.
  - Pre-K lead teacher survey to inform strategies related to higher education need and access was completed.
  - MECK Pre-K related curriculum training and professional development (related to CLASS™, a professional development tool to improve interactions between teachers and children) as well as implementation of Creative Curriculum™ and Teaching Strategies Gold™ (an ongoing child assessment tool).
  - Success Coaches to support classroom staff: in the process of on-boarding.
  - UNC Charlotte Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development (EESLPD): in the process of determining teacher support needs (e.g., pursuit of a NC B-K license, support as part of the Beginning Teacher Support Program to comply with the NC Board of Education requirements).
  - MECK Pre-K online enrollment, provider portal, budgeting and payment system demos and discussions held, RFP issued January 2019.
  - Policies, processes and forms developed for: child attendance, serving children with special needs (inclusion and behavioral supports), program payments, supports for transportation, and teacher compensation.

- **#2:** Voluntary, Universal Public Pre-K
  - 20 providers were selected through a competitive process to operate 33 MECK Pre-K classrooms, which opened in the Fall of 2018.

- **#3:** ECE Workforce Talent Development Strategies
  - Scope of work negotiated with the Frank Porter Graham Institute at UNC for an annual program evaluation of MECK Pre-K.

- **#4:** Strong Program Evaluation
  - June 2018: Mecklenburg BOCC approved 3/4s of a penny increase in the property tax rate to support year 1 of voluntary, universal public pre-k for 4-year old children.

- **#5:** Financing
  - June 2017 and June 2018: Mecklenburg BOCC approved $6 million in the FY18 budget to reduce the child care subsidy waiting list, which was maintained in the FY19 budget. Over 600 children under age 5 receive child care assistance through this funding.

### Implementation Work in Progress & Support for 5-Point Plan Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional funding to reduce the child care subsidy wait list (current and projected children birth to 5) for FY20 and beyond</th>
<th>Outyear expansion to support voluntary, universal public pre-k (36 new classrooms recommended for 2019-2020) • 640 new children • 1,242 total children in MECK Pre-K/year 2</th>
<th>Child Care Pay Comparability &amp; Quality Pilot recommended for implementation in 2019-2020</th>
<th>Continued review by BOCC of financing needed for 0-5 initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vendor to be selected for online enrollment and management system; components to be added by module beginning Spring 2019</td>
<td>Tuition and related support recommended to expand access to ECE coursework at CPCC and UNC Charlotte over next 5 years</td>
<td>Additional staffing recommended to support CPCC’s efforts to expand enrollment from the current ECE workforce (1 position to be bilingual)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Closer Look: 
5-Point Action Plan Implementation Progress and Budget Estimates

2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan

Recommendation 1: Reduce the child care subsidy waiting list for children under age five.

For most families, the pathway to economic opportunity is dependent upon employment. For families with young children, employment is not possible without access to reliable and affordable child care. While the cost of quality child care is a significant expense for all families, for low-wage families, work is not affordable without access to child care financial aid (subsidy). Access to high-quality child care is not only important to support parents (to obtain and retain employment, or participate in job training or education), but also to ensure that children are in settings to promote their healthy development. This makes child care assistance a two-generation strategy: support for parents to earn income sufficient to raise their families and support for children to ensure their safety, development, and growth.

Assistance to help families afford the cost of child care is funded through a mix of federal and state dollars, Smart Start of Mecklenburg County, and Mecklenburg County funding.

Because the number of children in families who qualify for assistance exceeds the available funding, Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI), the private, nonprofit organization that administers child care subsidy funds throughout Mecklenburg County, retains a waiting list of eligible children.

The child care subsidy waiting list is a snapshot in time. It represents at any given time, the number of children by age who are eligible for assistance and whose parents have chosen to place their children on a waiting list for subsidy. The waiting list frequently changes as families are added, removed because they receive assistance or they moved out of county, lost a job, or otherwise became ineligible.

In June of 2017, the child care subsidy waiting list had 3,905 children under age 5. Estimates by CCRI projected an annual cost of $28.2 million to clear ALL children under 5 from the waiting list, which was built into the initial budget for the 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan and carried forward over six years.

The Mecklenburg County Wait List Reduction Initiative.

The Board of County Commissioners recognized the important role that child care assistance plays for families and their children. In June of 2017, the Mecklenburg County FY18 budget included $6 million that was allocated to CCRI to provide child care assistance to children under age 5 on the waiting list at that time. This funding is referred to as the Mecklenburg County Wait List Reduction Initiative (MCWRI). In FY19, $6 million was included in the county budget to continue support for wait list children. (See table on page 15.)

About 634 children receive support through MCWRI funding. This report recommends continuing assistance for these children (if they remain eligible) to avoid disruption in their continuity of care, which could potentially impact children’s development as well as the employment of their parents.

During the fall of 2017 and 2018, the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) increased subsidy rates to better reflect the most recent child care market rate survey. As a result, monthly rates increased for certain age groups (e.g., infants and toddlers in the fall of 2017 and preschool-age children in the fall of 2018), which means that the county’s $6 million investment will no longer support the same number of children in FY20. To maintain assistance in FY20 for the MCWRI supported children, an additional $280,834 is needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>1-5 Star Average Price</th>
<th>3 Star Centers</th>
<th>4 Star Centers</th>
<th>5 Star Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>$12,688</td>
<td>$10,192</td>
<td>$12,324</td>
<td>$13,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddlers</td>
<td>$12,428</td>
<td>$9,984</td>
<td>$12,064</td>
<td>$13,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Year Olds</td>
<td>$11,856</td>
<td>$9,724</td>
<td>$11,492</td>
<td>$12,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Year Olds</td>
<td>$11,024</td>
<td>$9,360</td>
<td>$10,608</td>
<td>$11,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year Olds</td>
<td>$10,868</td>
<td>$9,152</td>
<td>$10,504</td>
<td>$11,440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CCRI, November 30, 2018. Cost data based on centers reporting their cost of care by age to Child Care Resources Inc. Weighted averages. NC state legislation requires providers who care for children receiving a subsidy to have a minimum of 3 stars. 
The current child care subsidy waiting list (through November 30, 2018) includes 2,122 children under age 5 (or age 5 but not yet in kindergarten). The take-up rate for child care subsidy receipt (the percentage of children on the waiting list whose families are eligible for a subsidy and who ultimately receive a subsidy) from children on the waiting list is estimated by CCRI based on their experience since inception of the MCWRI:

- The take-up rate for child care subsidy among children from the subsidy waiting list is currently about 41 percent, and
- About 219 children are added to the waiting list every month

Factors that play a role in the take-up rate for subsidy may include: changing circumstances such as whether parents are still employed and the income level earned, families may move out of county, families may have found other care arrangements and not want to change, the ability to place siblings together in a program, how long the child has been on the waiting list, and a variety of other factors.

The goal in the 5-point plan was to clear the child care subsidy waiting list. Since the list is constantly changing (i.e., it’s a point in time reference), the Executive Committee recommended reducing the list rather than clearing it, given its constantly changing nature.

To determine the baseline estimate to support recommendation 1 related to reducing the subsidy waiting list, the Executive Committee discussed the current waiting list and the average number of children under age 5 estimated to join the waiting list each month through June of 2019 (about 219 children per month). With the current take-up rate of children on the waiting list who will likely receive subsidy at 41%, the consensus among Executive Committee members was to support a recommendation to reduce the subsidy waiting list for both current children and the estimated number of additional children who could be added during the next year (at a 41% take-up rate).

### Estimated Mecklenburg County Wait List Reduction Initiative (MCWRI) Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of children served through MCWRI</th>
<th>Total average monthly expenditure per child</th>
<th>Total estimated 12 month expenditure</th>
<th>Number of children served through MCWRI</th>
<th>Total average monthly expenditure per child</th>
<th>Total estimated 12 month expenditure</th>
<th>Total estimated 12 month expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to 1</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>$769</td>
<td>$9,228</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>$823</td>
<td>$9,876</td>
<td>$809,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>$796</td>
<td>$9,552</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>$835</td>
<td>$10,020</td>
<td>$1,292,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 2</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>$799</td>
<td>$9,588</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>$832</td>
<td>$9,984</td>
<td>$1,417,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>$739</td>
<td>$8,868</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>$766</td>
<td>$9,192</td>
<td>$1,296,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total B-3</td>
<td>494</td>
<td></td>
<td>$9,515</td>
<td>494</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,816,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5PS</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>$690</td>
<td>$8,280</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>$728</td>
<td>$8,736</td>
<td>$1,223,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total B-5PS</td>
<td>634</td>
<td></td>
<td>$9,898</td>
<td>634</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$6,039,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$240,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$241,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$6,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$6,280,834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CCRI, December 2018. Note: With regard to the July 2018-June 2019 expenditure table, data reflects children served under the Mecklenburg County Wait List Reduction Initiative (MCWRI) as of November 30, 2018. Birth through 2 year-old expenditures are based on an 8-month average (March-October 2018) of actual expenditures; 3-5 year-old expenditures are based on October 2018 expenditures with the new market rate increases effective October 1, 2018. Estimates do not assume any further market rate increases that may be put into place by the NC Legislature in FY19. Some children will be moved out of MCWRI funding into state funding as available for them based on their place on the state wait list. With regard to the July 2019-June 2020 expenditure table, data reflects children served under MCWRI as of November 30, 2018. Birth through 2 year-old expenditures are based on a 5 month average (July-Nov 2018) of actual expenditures; 3-5 year-old expenditures are based on November 2018 expenditures with the new market rate increases effective October 1, 2018. Estimates do not assume any further market rate increases that may be put into place by the NC Legislature in FY19 or FY20. Some children will be moved out of MCWRI funding into state funding as available for them based on their place on the state wait list. Administrative costs are 4% of subsidy expenditures.
The combined cost of maintaining assistance for the MCWRI supported children (which includes a current projected gap of $280,834 to maintain current services based on the FY19 budget of $6 million) and the cost of reducing the current and projected child care subsidy waiting list for children under age 5 (assuming a 41% take-up rate) is $15.3 million for FY20 ($15.05 million plus $280,834).

These estimates assume that child care subsidy funding for FY20-FY24 remains flat (not adjusted for rate increases that could be applied by NC DCDEE or adjusted for children who are added to the wait list in years beyond FY20). It is not possible at this time to predict whether or not funding increases will be approved between FY20 and FY24 by the NC State Legislature or DCDEE.

Child care market rate surveys are currently required every three years. Historically, upon completion of a market rate survey, rates have increased. It is not possible with any type of precision to predict the future market rates for child care that may be in place several years from now. While child care prices are likely to increase, they may or may not increase by the rate of inflation (or a greater amount) because prices for care are based on many variables.

Given that currently about 219 children per month are added to the child care subsidy waiting list (representing children who are in families eligible for assistance whose families choose to join the waiting list), it is not possible to precisely predict the number of children in future years who will be added to the waiting list on average every month (e.g., 219 children each month currently join the waiting list, however, the number of children added to the list could potentially rise by a much higher number as families hear about additional funding available for subsidy).

In addition, the current take-up rate of those on the wait list who receive subsidy is 41%. It is also possible that as the waiting list is reduced and the length of time families spend on the wait list is shorter, that the take-up rate for subsidy use could increase (e.g., as families are served closer in time to when they join the list, more of the families on the list may still be eligible for subsidy or may choose to use subsidy when funding is available to help them).

For these reasons, the Executive Committee recommends that the child care subsidy landscape (including the waiting list for subsidy) be reviewed annually so that beyond FY20, the level of child care assistance recommended can be more directly aligned with the most current market rates and waiting list data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Waiting List Number of Children (11/30/18)</th>
<th>Current Waiting List Number of Children at 41% Take-up Rate</th>
<th>Projected Additional Children at 41% Take-up Rate</th>
<th>Current &amp; Projected Children at 41% Take-up Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to 1</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 2</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total B-3</td>
<td>1,823</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>1,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5PS</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total B-5</td>
<td>2,122</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>1,499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CCRI, December 2018. The current waiting list reflects children on the list as of November 30, 2018. The projected wait list represents the number of children whose families can be expected to add children between December 2018 and June 2019 based on CCRI’s experience.
The table below reflects flat subsidy funding to support reducing the child care subsidy waiting list, plus sufficient funds to adjust the MCWRI to cover rate increases that went into effect in October of 2018. The estimates do not include projections to serve additional children who may be added to the waiting list in years beyond FY20 since the intent is to review the child care landscape annually to reflect the most recent data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th># of children to be added to the waiting list in FY19</th>
<th>Total average monthly expenditure per child</th>
<th>Total estimated 12 month expenditure per child</th>
<th>Total estimated 12 month expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to 1</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>$823</td>
<td>$9,876</td>
<td>$4,049,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>$835</td>
<td>$10,020</td>
<td>$3,466,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 2</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>$832</td>
<td>$9,984</td>
<td>$2,765,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>$766</td>
<td>$9,192</td>
<td>$2,491,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total B-3</td>
<td>1,304</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$12,772,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5PS</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>$728</td>
<td>$8,736</td>
<td>$1,703,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total B-5</td>
<td>1,499</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$14,476,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Cost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$579,048.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$15,055,248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CCRI, December 2018. The current waiting list reflects children on the list as of November 30, 2018. The projected wait list represents the number of children whose families can be expected to add children between December 2018 and June 2019 based on CCRI’s experience.
2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan

Recommendation 2: Implement a six-year phase-in for voluntary, universal public pre-k for all 4-year-old children.

With county funding, in June of 2018, Smart Start of Mecklenburg County began implementing the first year of voluntary, universal public pre-k. Smart Start followed the guidelines of the NC Pre-K program with a few variations designed to strengthen teacher-child interactions to promote school readiness. While the NC Pre-K program requirements provided helpful guidance, the entire infrastructure to implement a service delivery program as well as child care provider and vendor contracts, parent and provider forms, invoices and payment system processes, and program policies needed to be developed. Marketing and outreach to families to enroll children occurred on a parallel path as child care centers applied for MECK Pre-K classrooms, classroom sites were selected, teachers were hired and trained, and curriculum, furniture and related materials were ordered. During the fall of 2018, 33 MECK Pre-K classrooms opened in three phases.

Site selection. Smart Start organized a team that was trained by DCDEE on the NC Pre-K scoring rubric to support site selection for MECK Pre-K classrooms in August. The rubric was used in conjunction with a county mapping tool so that selections could be informed by the rubric as well as proximity to low performing elementary schools, areas underserved by public pre-k (NC Pre-K, Bright Beginnings, and potential sites for MECK Pre-K) with an overlay for poverty gradations by zip code. For 2018-2019, 20 sites were selected to house 33 classrooms. For future years, the mapping tool will need to be updated by county staff to ensure that all variables include the latest data.

Marketing, Recruitment and Enrollment of Children. While many community partners were helpful in disseminating information about MECK Pre-K, Viridian Marketing led the communications plan and on-the-ground strategies to promote child enrollment. Marketing design and materials, web site development, outreach toolkits, flyers, enrollment applications, posters, banners, press kits, billboards, newsletters, street teams with door hangers, social media, radio spots, television interviews, and “Meet & Eats” all helped support public awareness and enrollment.

Through January 18, 2019, 800 applications for MECK Pre-K were received, of which 600 were from families with eligible children (i.e., 545 children are currently enrolled with placements for remaining children underway). A waiting list will be maintained once all applications are reviewed and available spaces are filled.

Curriculum and Professional Development. Creative Curriculum™ and related materials were purchased for 33 classrooms and curriculum implementation trainings were held throughout September, October, and December 2018 with additional trainings scheduled in the Spring of 2019. Trainings to support teachers in using Teaching Strategies Gold™ (used for ongoing child assessments aligned with the Creative Curriculum™) are scheduled for early 2019 with ongoing training throughout the spring to support implementation fidelity.

At the core of MECK Pre-K professional development is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™), an observational tool that measures the interactions that happen between teachers and children in the classroom. CLASS™ provides a proven methodology for observing and coding classroom interactions that can then be paired with specific strategies to help teachers improve their interactions with children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 20 &amp; 21, 2018</td>
<td>Creative Curriculum for Phase I Classrooms</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1 &amp; 3, 2018</td>
<td>Creative Curriculum for Phase II Classrooms</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16 &amp; 18, 2018</td>
<td>Creative Curriculum for Phase III Classrooms</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20, 2018</td>
<td>CLASS Primer Training (for teachers and directors)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31, 2018</td>
<td>Brigance Screening</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 19, 2018</td>
<td>Social-Emotional Development</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trainings Planned for 2019 to complete the 2018-2019 school year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Guiding Behaviors Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Success Coaches Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February - June 2019</td>
<td>TS Gold™ and Creative Curriculum™ Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>CLASS™ Observation Training for Coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2019</td>
<td>CLASS™ Coaches Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLASS™ primer training for teachers and directors was held in the fall of 2018 and Pre-K CLASS™ certified observer training is scheduled for early 2019. Initial classroom observations using CLASS™ were conducted by Teachstone\(^{14}\) staff in December.

Staff from Smart Start, Teaching Strategies\(^{15}\), Teachstone, Mecklenburg County, and the ECE Executive Committee project consultants held biweekly conference calls to ensure that training on Creative Curriculum™, TS Gold™, and CLASS™ were introduced and supported in an integrated manner with staff from Teaching Strategies and Teachstone attending both companies’ trainings. Once on board, coaches (who will work with classroom teachers on an ongoing basis throughout the year) will participate as well.

In addition, Brigance Early Childhood Developmental Screening Kits were ordered and a training held for teachers to ensure that all MECK Pre-K children are screened within 90 days of enrollment.

Three Success Coaches who each have CLASS™ certification for preschool and experience with Creative Curriculum™ and TS Gold™ will support classroom teachers (both the lead teacher and assistant teacher) in implementing Creative Curriculum™ and TS Gold™ with fidelity. Also, they will craft professional development plans for each classroom team based on a certified observer’s CLASS™ score (which will determine content, dosage, and frequency).

In addition to curriculum implementation, ongoing child assessments, and CLASS™ support to promote strong interactions between MECK Pre-K classroom teachers and children, the NC State Board of Education requires lead teachers holding less than the SP II license to be supported by the DCDEE Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development (EESLPD) Office. In Mecklenburg County, staff at UNC Charlotte administer EESLPD services to support lead teachers working in non-public school settings through the B-K licensure process.

EESLPD services make it possible for early childhood lead teachers in non-public schools to attain and maintain a B-K Standard Professional II License (BK SP II), required for all NC Pre-K and MECK Pre-K lead teachers regardless of setting. Services include the Beginning Teacher Support Program for initially licensed teachers, the Lateral Entry Teacher Program primarily for teachers who have a B.A. who are pursuing their B-K license, and licensure renewal for teachers holding the SP II license.\(^{16}\) A table that describes the pathways for eligible lead teachers in both MECK Pre-K and the NC Pre-K program is contained in the appendix.

The cost of EESLPD services for lead teachers is free, however, the EESLPD unit within UNC Charlotte contracts with Smart Start to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the office to fully support MECK Pre-K teachers in meeting the requirements of the NC State Board of Education. For school year 2018-2019, the cost of EESLPD services is $250,939, which will need to be negotiated each year based on the number of lead teachers to be supported and the level of support needed.

The total cost for year 1 implementation for curriculum and professional development is expected to be about $705,703. A table showing the costs for each of the components related to Curriculum and Professional Development is contained in the appendix.

**Systems Support.** The current NC Pre-K system is based on paper transactions (paper enrollment and invoice submission through a paper process transmitted through email and excel documents). The NC Pre-K online attendance system is not open to use by non-NC Pre-K programs. Data within the system is difficult to retrieve (such as attendance tracking) and there is no public dashboard to chart child progress or pre-k classroom quality.

Staff from Smart Start, Mecklenburg County, and ECE Executive Committee project consultants viewed several demonstrations of software involving online enrollment (through phones, tablets, or computers), which include a provider portal for all related provider submissions and attendance, a coaching portal for tracking onsite coaching visits and support, as well as integrated modules to track payments, invoices, and expenses. County procurement staff issued an RFP in January 2019. Technology development and implementation is likely to be phased-in with stacked modules.

The goal is for the online enrollment and the provider portal to go live in Spring 2019 so that next year’s process can run smoothly. The cost to build out an online enrollment and integrated budgeting system (including a provider portal to upload and submit required documentation and invoices) is expected to be about $300,000. To the extent other counties are interested in joining, the cost could be reduced.

In addition, the county assembled a data working group that met on November 19, 2018 to identify current data gaps and data needed to develop a public results dashboard in the spring of 2019 to show progress made in reducing the school readiness gap among children and to track over time aggregate student performance data (end of year test scores) against public pre-k participation (initially MECK Pre-K, but ideally all public pre-k programs and Head Start over time).

Owners of each current data set will be identified. Recommendations for Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or other data sharing agreements will be compiled. Cost estimates will be developed. The end result will lead to greater transparency in data and accountability for public pre-k investments based on data tracking. Data about specific individual children will not be made public.
The goal is to be able to query the data for public pre-k by gender, race, ethnicity, income (poverty or free/reduced price lunch eligibility), home language (and which language is most frequently spoken in the home — English, Spanish, etc.), and prior organized early learning experiences, and then to track progress over time as children age through elementary school years.

The public results dashboard will include aggregate TS Gold™ child growth scores (fall and spring assessments) across six domains (social-emotional, language, literacy, cognitive, physical, and math), CLASS™ scores (fall and spring), program evaluation scores (through an annual external evaluation), and other data to be determined. Interrater reliability on assessment tools will be tracked.

The cost for the data dashboard will require further review by the data workgroup. It’s possible that the dashboard can be developed by county IT staff once the data has been determined.

**Children with Disabilities**. Staff from Smart Start, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ NC Pre-K, Bright Beginnings, and Special Education (referred to as the “Exceptional Children” program in North Carolina), and county project consultants met in October to discuss the process to coordinate and support children with disabilities in MECK Pre-K classrooms.

Federal law requires children to be served in “the least restrictive environment,” which for purposes of the MECK Pre-K program means providing services in classrooms located in child care centers.

While the 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan estimated that 6.8% of each year’s MECK Pre-K students may be identified as needing special education services, CMS staff advised that Smart Start staff should plan for 10% requiring special education services. It was agreed that CMS staff would meet with Smart Start and county staff monthly to coordinate on all aspects of public pre-k, including serving children with disabilities. The cost to serve 10% of children with disabilities is $117,120 in year 1 rising to $966,240 in year 6.

**Classroom Supports & Supplemental Payments for Teachers and Transportation**

NC Pre-K pays full reimbursement per slot for children attending 50% of the time. During the first and last months of the operating year (August/September, May/June), NC Pre-K requires attendance of at least one day to be reimbursed for the entire month. For all other months, payment rates are paid proportionately for children with less frequent attendance. NC Pre-K provider contracts are based on a per slot reimburse ment with the total amount paid “not to exceed” a calculation of a set rate multiplied by the number of children to be served. The “not to exceed” language reflects the NC Pre-K policy that actual payments will vary based on child attendance (at least 50% of enrolled days for a child’s slot to be fully reimbursed). There is also an asterisk in the contract that refers to monthly supplemental payments, which are in addition to the provider’s slot contract, however, the exact amount provided through supplemental payments (reflecting health insurance, life insurance, retirement, teacher premiums (if applicable), and transportation scholarships) are not further defined in the contract.

**MECK Pre-K Payment Policy:**

- MECK Pre-K will contract with providers based on a classroom contract price (which reflects a per slot rate for 18 children, unless a classroom’s licensing capacity is less).

- A written monthly supplemental payment policy will be referenced in provider contracts to provide public transparency and uniformity in how monthly supplemental payments are paid (such payments will reflect $200 per month for health insurance, up to $10 per month for life insurance, 3% for retirement, teacher premiums (if applicable), and transportation). Transportation payments will be tied to individual children to support their scholarship need, but will not be reduced if a child has an excused absence (as defined in NC Pre-K Requirements and Guidance).

- Centers will report attendance weekly (by classrooms reflecting each child’s enrolled days, attendance, and percent of enrolled days attended). A classroom average will also be reported. The goal for MECK Pre-K attendance is for every child to attend at least 90% of enrolled days (with 100% attendance to the extent possible).

- The classroom payment policy will be reviewed at the end of each year to determine average child enrollment and average attendance meeting a target of at least 90% of enrolled days on a monthly basis. Flexibility during the first and last months of the year will apply as historically attendance/enrollment has fluctuated during those months.

The MECK Pre-K program requires a ratio of 1:9 for staff to children through the employment of a lead and assistant teacher. The maximum class size is 18 children. Whether a classroom has 12 children or 18 children, the staffing requirements are the same. Classroom teachers are required to use the Creative Curriculum™ and conduct ongoing child assessments through the Teaching Strategies Gold™ assessment tool (to both gauge growth and better target approaches to individual children). In addition, classroom staff are assessed using CLASS™, which informs professional development strategies to optimize effective teacher interactions with children. Every effort will be made to place 18 children in each classroom. Payments to operators of MECK Pre-K classrooms are based on a per classroom construct to ensure sufficient and stable funding to operate classrooms that promote early learning with high child attendance and early learning expectations supported by high-quality staff.

The base payment originally recommended in the 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan was based on $771 per child,
MECK Pre-K was implemented, the base payment was increased to $800 per child in recognition that a center’s participation in CLASS™ involved some extra time and effort compared to NC Pre-K, which does not use CLASS™. The base payment for each classroom assumes an inflation adjustment for providers in outyears 2-6.14

Another revision to the 2017 estimates occurred with regard to supplemental payments for lead teachers. The original estimate assumed pre-k lead teacher salary supplemental payments (an effort to achieve pay parity with public school salaries) at the same level as the supplements paid by the NC Pre-K program. For the 2018-2019 school year, the NC Pre-K Committee increased the lead teacher salary supplement by 5%, therefore, the MECK Pre-K salary supplement calculation was revised to pay at the same rate. Supplemental payments are made to child care programs operating public pre-k so that lead teachers can be paid based on the pay scale used by CMS. Such payments are an incentive for child care programs to participate and also an incentive for lead teachers to work in public pre-k programs outside of the public school system.

Lead teacher premiums for MECK Pre-K in the outyears (based on qualifications and years of experience) will equal CMS pay rates (e.g., the model eliminates the current formula whereby a monthly supplement supports payments based on 80% of a base rate for CMS teachers that is currently used to support NC Pre-K classroom lead teachers). The difference is that the salary for lead teachers will be supported by MECK Pre-K payments without requiring child care programs to fill the gap between public pre-k payments to programs and required teacher salaries on the CMS pay scale.

For the 2018-2019 school year, transportation scholarships were paid at the same rate as NC Pre-K ($20 per week) for five children per classroom. Going forward, the estimate for bus service is based on 80% ridership at the rate paid per rider for CMS bus transportation (which assumes similarly to public school attendance that not every child requires bus transportation).

The 2017 estimate was $9.6 million in year 1 (which includes start-up costs, bus transportation, and supplemental payments for teachers) rising to $65.7 million in year 6. The revised estimate is $8.7 million in year 1 increasing to $59 million in year 6.

### MECK Pre-K Expansion Capacity

Additional information will be needed to project with accuracy classroom expansion capacity over time. Currently, with regard to child care centers serving children birth to 5, much of the open capacity (the gap between “desired capacity” and enrollment is related to unfilled slots for younger children birth through 3 (e.g., the desired capacity for 3-year-old children is 4,196, with 980 unfilled slots) or school-age children (e.g., the desired capacity for school-age children is 5,415, with 2,698 unfilled slots). It is possible that center directors could convert unfilled school-age classrooms or 3-year-old classrooms for use by pre-k students as funding is made available for pre-k. A survey of center directors would need to be conducted each year as public pre-k classroom expansion is planned to gather additional insight as to center directors’ willingness to convert and the feasibility of converting unfilled space for pre-k expansion use and the timeframe necessary for conversation. Beyond FY20, a facilities expansion strategy may be needed to ensure that in future years, sufficient space is available.

Source: CCRI, January 10, 2019

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### MECK Pre-K Expansion (FY19-FY24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MECK Pre-K Program Budget (Outyears subject to negotiations per EESLPD support and FPG program evaluation)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MECK Pre-K Children Served by Year</td>
<td>600 children</td>
<td>1,242 children</td>
<td>1,890 children</td>
<td>2,898 children</td>
<td>3,924 children</td>
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<td>Net New Children by Year</td>
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<td>648</td>
<td>1,008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net New Classrooms by Year</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Classrooms Operating</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>275</td>
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<tr>
<td>MECK Pre-K Total Expenses</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$15,603,775</td>
<td>$22,523,205</td>
<td>$34,379,590</td>
<td>$46,494,609</td>
<td>$59,065,675</td>
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</table>

Note: Expenses include purchase of care per child, monthly supplemental payments to providers for teacher support (teacher premiums if applicable), health insurance, retirement and life insurance, and bus transportation; start-up costs, training and support for teachers and related costs (such as curriculum, child assessment and teacher assessment), EESLPD support, funds to support children with disabilities, technology, marketing and enrollment support, program evaluation, and administration. Potential revenue from a sliding fee scale is not reflected in this table. Funds for EESLPD teacher support will be negotiated annually based on lead teacher credentials, experience, and level of support needed.
**2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan**

**Recommendation 3. Implement ECE workforce talent development and retention strategies to meet ECE workforce needs related to high-quality child care programs and an expansion of public pre-k in child care programs.**

**Pay Comparability**

**MECK Pre-K Pay Comparability with CMS Teachers.** In Year 1, MECK Pre-K will provide a monthly salary supplement equal to 80% of the difference between the lead teacher’s years of experience and the base year (e.g., on the CMS 2018-2019 salary table for all teachers with 3 or more years of experience). This policy is based on the rates of reimbursement paid by CMS for NC Pre-K lead teachers, which reflects an increase from past years of 75% to 80% of the difference between a teacher’s years of experience and the base year. After year 1, MECK Pre-K will match public school salaries for lead teachers based on credentials and years of experience (rather than paying 80% of the difference between the base year and the teacher’s years of experience).

**Child Care Pay Comparability & Quality Pilot.** The 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan included a recommendation to fund a pilot designed to pair participation in CLASS™ professional development and assessment with a significant pay increase.

In recognition that staff working with children birth to age three often have less education and are paid lower wages than staff working with preschool-age children (which can lead to employee stress and greater turnover among staff—both of which have an impact on the children served), the compensation pilot is geared toward the early educator workforce in classrooms serving children from birth through age three (with a priority for teachers in classrooms serving infants and toddlers).

Program directors would be required to apply on behalf of classroom teachers with an AA/AAS degree who volunteer for the pilot and who work in a classroom with children receiving a child care subsidy. The pilot will be annually evaluated to determine CLASS™ score changes, teacher turnover rates, and growth in children’s development.

The intent is to show that more effective interactions with children by staff who receive ongoing coaching and support will lead to higher quality classrooms, reduced turnover in teaching staff, and greater growth in child development than might otherwise be expected (based on nationally normed assessments). Staff will be trained to implement the Creative Curriculum™ for Infants, Toddlers, 2- or 3-year-olds (depending upon the age group of the children in the classroom), administer TS Gold™ on-going child assessments, and receive coaching support based on CLASS™ scores.

Teachers with an AA/AAS degree in early childhood (or a related field) will receive up to an additional $9,836 upon participating—the gap between $22,880 and $32,716, the median wage for individuals with an AA/AAS in Mecklenburg County outside of the ECE field, which would be maintained over the life of the pilot. The initial salary gap payment will be adjusted annually based on Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data for employment of individuals with an AA/AAS in the county.

The pilot will involve 10 classrooms with an AA/AAS lead teacher increasing to 30 classrooms in year five. Applicants will be selected based on the star level of the program and the percentage of children served receiving child care subsidy within proposed pilot classrooms. Administration of the pilot would be subject to an RFP. Data will be incorporated in the public results dashboard. Costs are estimated at $229,145 in year one increasing to $622,632 in year five of the pilot.
The WAGE$ Program

Since the 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan recommendations were released, the NC WAGE$ program has been greatly expanded to support modest wage increases based on educational attainment.

The Child Care WAGE$® Program is administered by Child Care Services Association (CCSA) in Chapel Hill and is a collaboration between local Smart Start partnerships and the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). Smart Start of Mecklenburg County has allocated $1 million to the WAGE$ program to be used to provide education-based salary supplements to low wage Mecklenburg County ECE teachers, directors, and family child care providers working in licensed 3-, 4-, and 5-star child care programs serving children under 5.

As of January 4, 2019, 68 infant and toddler teachers from Mecklenburg County have been approved to participate in the AWARD$ program.

Both the WAGE$ and the AWARD$ program have rolling admissions for participation. At this time, given the WAGE$ funding and new AWARD$ initiative, a recommendation is not made with regard to the annual retention grants for pre-k lead teachers and child care teachers with an AA/ AAS degree as originally recommended in the 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan. The wage initiatives should be reviewed to see how they fare compared to the need and demand in Mecklenburg County and also how they compare to results shown in the Mecklenburg County child care pay comparability pilot.

Access to Higher Education

To broaden the pipeline for potential B-K licensed MECK Pre-K teachers and to support higher education access and success for those who are working in child care programs, the 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan recommended scholarships. Since the 2017 report, UNC Charlotte has made a number of revisions to make coursework more workforce friendly.

UNC Charlotte Program Redesign to Promote Talent Development within the ECE Workforce

Faculty in the Child and Family Development (CHFD) Program at the Cato College of Education have been working to promote talent development and to assist in the preparation of early childhood licensed teachers to support MECK Pre-K programs.
UNC Charlotte Program Redesign

Under the direction of Dean Ellen McIntyre, the Cato College has undertaken the redesign of several graduate teacher preparation programs that respond to the changing workforce needs of schools and agencies serving children and students. The CHFD faculty are redesigning the graduate certificate to better accommodate the needs of teachers seeking a NC Birth to Kindergarten (B-K) license.

The Residency Model (RM) program (i.e., Graduate Certificate program for Birth-Kindergarten licensure) has reduced the number of credits from 27 credit hours (9 courses) to 18 credit hours (6 courses). Although shortened, the program will be of high-quality and embed content that supports diverse learners including children with special needs, dual language learners, and culturally diverse children and families. It will also address issues of social emotional development and educator professionalism.

The six courses in the RM program include: (a) Child Development, (b) Observation and Authentic Assessment, (c) Family/Professional Partnership, (d) Language, Literacy, and Mathematical Knowledge, (e) Early Childhood Curriculum, and (f) Student Teaching. The courses taken in the RM program are also applicable to the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, should teachers want to complete a graduate degree.

Teacher-Friendly Course Delivery

Faculty in the CHFD department understand that a number of the MECK Pre-K teachers will need to enroll in college courses to earn a B-K teaching license. These teachers, who hold a Bachelor’s degree in a related field (e.g., Child and Family Studies, Psychology) but need the coursework to be successful teachers and to obtain a NC B-K license, would mostly be recruited from the staff of the child care centers where the MECK Pre-K classrooms are operating.

Coursework will be provided at partnership locations off-campus to facilitate teachers’ participation and to lower tuition costs. Delivering courses at times and places that are accessible to teachers will be critical. Students will be supported by university faculty and an advisor, as well as a coach/mentor from the Early Educator Support, Licensure, and Professional Development (EESLPD) Unit at UNC Charlotte during their program of study.

In spring 2019, faculty plan to teach one course on-line and another through a hybrid format at the Howard Levine Child Development Center (HLCDC) in the evenings (which would also enable staff with young children to access child care support if needed).

Reduced Cost of Tuition and Fees at UNC Charlotte

New teacher-friendly courses will be offered in the evenings, on-line, and at an off-campus location that will be more cost-effective. The 2018-2019 distance education tuition is $1,465.75 for 6 credits per semester (2 courses) compared to the on-campus rate of $2,777.20.

Grants and Scholarships for Early Childhood Teachers

Dean McIntyre and faculty in the CHFD department also submitted a proposal to an external funder to support teachers in MECK Pre-K by providing scholarships and personal stipends. If awarded, these scholarships will enable educators to complete the coursework necessary for NC B-K licensure. The scholarships will support approximately 25 teachers per year (ramping up to 50 per year) who will be needed as voluntary, universal pre-k expands to reach all eligible children.

The proposal seeks funding to provide students with scholarships to complete the 18 credit graduate certificate (residency model) program, which leads to the NC B-K teaching license. Additionally, a small amount of money will be set aside to cover the cost of books and related materials, defray family care expenses (such as child care or elder care) and provide a stipend for transportation costs, and/or to pay for occasional substitutes in classrooms so that students can attend classes and/or complete clinical experiences outside their own classroom.

CHFD faculty are working with Child Care Services Association (CCSA), the agency that administers Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) scholarships to ensure that the UNC Charlotte program is highlighted to enhance the program’s visibility among multiple options for scholarships.

Continued Workforce Considerations

CHFD faculty will continue to evaluate ways to make the undergraduate Bachelor’s degree program workforce friendly. The undergraduate program addresses the addition of new B-K teachers and transfer students from community colleges. Additionally, close collaboration with EESLPD staff is critical to ensure a seamless system of professional development for teachers seeking their B-K license. Last, CHFD faculty are investigating college and state policies that can support teachers who need to remain in their own classrooms during student teaching.

Several routes to preparation and a NC B-K license are available. See the following table.
Mecklenburg County Action Plan for Early Childhood Education, Update 2019

Routes to Preparation of B-K Licensed Teachers at the University of North Carolina Charlotte

**B.A. in Child and Family Development**
(120 credit hours)

**Freshman and Sophomore Years at UNCC or other 4 year college**
(60 Credits Earned)

**Admission Requirements**
- Minimum of 2.7 GPA requirement
- Passing scores on all three parts of the Praxis Core or acceptable alternatives (SAT or ACT scores)
- Application for admission to CHFD after a student has earned at least 45 credit hours of coursework.

**Junior Year: 30 credits**
**Senior Year: 30 Credits**
including a year long Internship (i.e., Student Teaching)

- Option to Complete a Minor in Teaching English as a Second Language

**Exit with a NC B-K License**

**New Residency Model (Graduate Certificate)**
(18 credit hours)
Pending College Approval

**Transfer 2+2 Articulation with NC Community Colleges**
(60 Credits Earned)

**Admission Requirements**
- Hold an AAS degree in Early Childhood Education or similar title with curriculum acceptable to the department.
- Have completed satisfactorily the prerequisite background courses for the program (a limited number of such background courses may be made up by taking them at UNC Charlotte).
- Minimum Grades/GPA: 2.7 For Admission
- Passing scores on all three parts of the Praxis Core or acceptable alternatives (SAT or ACT scores)

**18 Credits**
- Child Development
- Authentic Assessment
- Family/Professional Partnership
- Language, Literacy and Mathematical Understanding
- Student Teaching

**Admission Requirements**
- An undergraduate degree in a related field from a regionally accredited four-year institution
- A cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.75
- Three recommendations from persons knowledgeable of the applicant’s interaction with children and families
- A statement of purpose
- A clear criminal background check

Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) Revisions

Since the 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan report, the Early Childhood Education Division (ECED) at CPCC has worked to implement the new statewide articulation agreement to make it easier to transfer from community colleges to four-year universities.

Currently, about 47% of the students in ECE coursework at CPCC have indicated that they are likely to transfer to a four-year program.

Under the new articulation agreement, there are now three pathways for an AAS degree.

- **Early Childhood AAS – Terminal Degree** (This degree is for individuals who do not intend to transfer to a four-year degree program. They can transfer, however, if they do, they will need to take additional coursework either at CPCC or in the four-year program).

- **Early Childhood AAS Transfer – Non-Licensure Degree** (This degree is for individuals who want to pursue a four-year degree upon completion of their AAS at CPCC, but who do not envision obtaining a B-K license).

- **Early Childhood AAS Transfer – B-K Licensure Degree** (This degree is for individuals who want to pursue a four-year degree upon their completion of their AAS at CPCC and who also want to pursue a B-K license).

Additional information about each of the degrees can be obtained through CPCC’s Early Childhood Education Program web page. The two transfer AAS degrees are based on the new state-wide articulation agreement between NC’s 58 community colleges and the following four-year state universities (in the chart below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) Higher Education Pathways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer Degree – BK Licensure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Appalachian State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. East Carolina University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Elizabeth City State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. University of North Carolina - Greensboro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. University of North Carolina - Pembroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. University of North Carolina - Wilmington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Western Carolina University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Winston-Salem State University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) appear in bold.
**National Accreditation.** CPCC is beginning an internal self-study for re-accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which sets a standard of excellence to guide coursework and practicum experiences at the associate degree level. The re-accreditation process will occur in Spring 2019, as well as the entire 2019-2020 academic year.

**Course Review.** Faculty are also in the process of reviewing and revamping all courses in the ECE program in order to keep them relevant and in line with the needs of the community. ECED staff will review the entire program by the end of this academic year. This will include any updates on fieldwork requirements, community partnerships, etc.

**Early Childhood Communities Learning Together (EC-CLT).** In 2018, Smart Start provided a grant of $143,962 to support ECE teacher education, which includes funding for an ECE recruiter to support individuals employed in the ECE workforce to access and succeed in community college coursework.

The grant also supports the Early Childhood Communities Learning Together (EC-CLT) initiative that uses data to identify clusters of child care programs that have low points on the education section of their child care license (e.g., there are a maximum of 7 education points that can be earned based on the educational levels of staff, which are used to support star level ratings). CPCC staff reach out to programs in a cluster to join a cohort to advance the education levels of staff. Courses are scheduled to begin in satellite campuses in the Spring of 2019.

**T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship Program in Mecklenburg County**

The Child Care Services Association created the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® Scholarship Program in 1990 to address both access to higher education by the child care workforce and also to provide a modest increase in wages upon completion.²⁹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2018 Mecklenburg County T.E.A.C.H. Participants</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Administration Credential</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Associate Degree</td>
<td>222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birth-Kindergarten Licensure</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDA Assessment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Leadership Master’s Degree</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>267</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Child Care Services Association, TEACH Overview Webinar to the Mecklenburg County ECE Executive Committee, May 2018.

In FY2018, T.E.A.C.H. supported 267 lead teachers, assistant teachers, and program directors in 108 programs (serving more than 8,000 children) throughout Mecklenburg County.

**Recommendations for Talent Development Scholarships and Support**

While the 2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan did not provide an estimate for scholarships and support, the following recommendations are made as part of implementation of talent development initiatives:

- County endorsement for UNC Charlotte’s proposal for external funding for scholarships and related support for MECK Pre-K lead teachers to pursue B-K licensure. A modest amount of funding ($46,380 per year initially rising to $96,625 in the outyears) is recommended to share the cost of child care for those students who potentially may need evening care to ensure that they can attend classes. Funds would be available on an as needed basis in recognition of the high cost of child care and the goal to reduce barriers to obtaining a B-K license for those working full-time while pursuing a teacher license.

- $355,595 per year for the Child and Family Development Program (CHFD) at UNC Charlotte to support teachers pursuing a BA in early childhood (or a related program). Funding is expected to support 71 students. Support for transportation, books, and child care (for those who need assistance) is built into the estimate.³¹

- $660,039 per year for the Early Childhood Education Division (ECED) at CPCC to support teachers pursuing an AA/AAS in early childhood primarily from the child care field. Funding is expected to support 274 teachers. Support for transportation, books, and child care (for those who need assistance) is built into the estimate.³²

- $140,000 per year to supplement Smart Start’s grant to CPCC to add two additional ECE recruiters (life navigators), one of whom will be bilingual to better support pathways in ECE credentials and education attainment among those whose first language is not English.

In total, the recommendation is for $1.25 million initially, rising to $1.3 million in each of years 2-6 for scholarships and support to create a pipeline of early educators for both MECK Pre-K and high-quality child care programs throughout the county.
# Talent Development Scholarships and Support

## Higher Education Tuition, Fees and Related Support to Promote Access and Degree Completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1 (FY19)</th>
<th>Year 2 (FY20)</th>
<th>Year 3 (FY21)</th>
<th>Year 4 (FY22)</th>
<th>Year 5 (FY23)</th>
<th>Year 6 (FY24)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNCC B-K Support</strong></td>
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<td>UNCC Child Care Assistance</td>
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<td>BA Support*</td>
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<td>Early Childhood Communities Learning Together (funded by Smart Start)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: UNC Charlotte applied for a grant from an external funder to support coursework and related materials for MECK Pre-K lead teachers pursuing NC B-K licensure. BA support assumes $3,500 per grant per year for 15 credits of study toward a BA degree in early childhood or a related field. AA/AAS support assumes $3,500 per year for 12 credits of study toward an AA/AAS in early childhood. For AA and BA support, funds are recommended to support child care costs for 10 months (part-time) at a 5-star family child care home at $3,865 for half the teachers expected to participate (based on an estimate of ECE workforce participation with young children), and $2,000 for transportation and $1,250 for books annually for all participants (on an as needed basis). UNC Charlotte support for B-K licensure includes child care/family care only for half of participants annually (based on an assumption that half of participants may have family care needs). Child care costs vary by age of the child. For this model, part-time care for a 2 year-old child in family child care (FCC) home care has been used for cost estimates (since care may be needed during evening hours and FCC care is more likely to operate during non-traditional work hours). The ECE recruiter funds would add two additional life navigator positions at CPCC to support recruitment of early educators from the ECE workforce to access higher education and to complete course requirements. One of the positions is for an individual who is bilingual to better support recruitment among those whose first language is not English. Administrative costs are estimated at 4% for CPCC and UNC Charlotte. The estimate assumes that Smart Start continues to support the Early Childhood Communities Learning Together project at CPCC at current funding levels.
2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan

Recommendation 4. Develop a strong evaluation component tied to ECE investment.

Negotiations are currently underway with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at UNC to conduct two different types of program evaluations (short-term and long-term).

The first evaluation would occur in the spring of 2019 to evaluate implementation to ensure that the basic components of MECK Pre-K are in place and that the program is operating as intended. Parents, teachers, and directors will be surveyed. Parents will be asked about whether MECK Pre-K has made a difference in their children and what changes they’ve seen, while teachers and directors will be asked about the content and dosage of training and supports (such as coaching).

A random sample of classroom observations will be conducted to serve as a baseline for year 1 interactions between teachers and children (e.g., external validation of CLASS scores). Child outcomes will not be part of the 1st year evaluation due to the phased-in opening of classrooms throughout the fall, however, the evaluation will inform about the quality of the classrooms and make recommendations for improvements that will increase the likelihood for greater child outcomes. (e.g., Is the curriculum being implemented with fidelity? Are teachers conducting ongoing assessments and using the assessment tool with fidelity? Is the content and dosage for current teacher trainings about right or do trainings need to be tweaked in some way?) The purpose of the first year evaluation will be to make sure that a high-quality program is in place and to identify any improvements needed.

The second year evaluation (2019-2020 and beyond) will examine the characteristics and quality of the program as well as outcomes for children (through fall and spring child assessments). The program evaluation will answer the following questions:

- What are the outcomes of children attending MECK Pre-K and what factors are associated with better outcomes?
- What are the quality of MECK Pre-K classrooms attended by children and what factors are associated with better quality?
- What are the key characteristics of MECK Pre-K classrooms?
- What areas of instruction need improvement or greater emphasis or what subgroups of children may need more tailored approaches to attain greater gains (e.g., are dual language children making gains at the same rate as children whose first language is English)?

As with year 1, a random sample will be conducted, including a sample of dual language learning children to ensure that MECK Pre-K classrooms promote healthy development and gains across domains for all children. Information will be gathered from multiple sources, including individual assessments of children’s outcomes, observations of classroom quality, parent and teacher surveys, and administrative data. Children will be assessed at the beginning and end of the program year to examine gains in language, literacy, math, general knowledge, and behavior skills. Children whose first language is not English will be assessed in their home language (primarily Spanish).

Over the years, the intent is to track MECK Pre-K participating children through elementary school to determine how children perform over time (e.g., at the end of kindergarten, 3rd grade, 5th grade, and whether children participating in MECK Pre-K are less likely to be retained in grade or referred to the Exceptional Children’s program (special education)).

2017 Early Childhood Education Action Plan

Recommendation 5. The Board of County Commissioners should consider a revenue increase, restrict its use to ECE expansion, and subject the expansion initiative to evaluation for continuous quality improvement.

In June 2018, as part of the FY19 county budget, the BOCC approved an increase of three-fourths of a penny in the property tax rate to fund the first year of voluntary, universal pre-k. The Board also allocated $6 million to help reduce the child care subsidy waiting list for children under age 5 and $700,000 for a child care initiative related to parents in job training. Future year funding will be determined by BOCC decisions. The ECE Committee strongly recommends that the BOCC fund the 5-point plan as reflected in the following table, which covers costs related to:

- reducing the child care subsidy waiting list,
- phasing-in voluntary, universal public pre-k for 4-year-old children,
- implementing talent development initiatives to ensure that Mecklenburg County will develop the pipeline of early educators needed to staff MECK Pre-K and high-quality child care programs, and
- conducting external annual program evaluations.
# MECK Pre-K Expansion (FY19-FY24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MECK Pre-K Program Budget (Outyears subject to potential sliding fee scale; negotiations per EESLPD support and FPG program evaluation)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPK Program Participation (number of children)</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>2,898</td>
<td>3,924</td>
<td>4,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net New Classrooms</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Classrooms</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>275</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchase of Care</td>
<td>$4,800,000</td>
<td>$10,164,528</td>
<td>$15,838,986</td>
<td>$24,893,559</td>
<td>$34,549,437</td>
<td>$44,628,756</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal Supplemental Payments (Teacher premiums, health insurance, retirement, life insurance)</td>
<td>$476,320</td>
<td>$914,808</td>
<td>$1,425,509</td>
<td>$2,240,420</td>
<td>$3,109,449</td>
<td>$4,016,588</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus Transportation MPK (Shifting from $400 per classroom in year 1 to 80% ridership)</td>
<td>$132,000</td>
<td>$667,699</td>
<td>$1,016,064</td>
<td>$1,557,965</td>
<td>$2,109,542</td>
<td>$2,661,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start-Up New MPK Classrooms (Includes Technology/laptops &amp; tablets)</td>
<td>$660,000</td>
<td>$720,000</td>
<td>$720,000</td>
<td>$1,120,000</td>
<td>$1,140,000</td>
<td>$1,140,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-federal costs for children with disabilities (at 10% enrollment MPK)</td>
<td>$117,120</td>
<td>$242,438</td>
<td>$368,928</td>
<td>$565,690</td>
<td>$765,965</td>
<td>$966,240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal: Curriculum, Training, Professional Development, Classroom Support (CLASS, Creative Curriculum, TS Gold, Brigance Screening, EESLPD, and Success Coach support)</td>
<td>$705,703</td>
<td>$796,957</td>
<td>$886,997</td>
<td>$1,263,611</td>
<td>$1,599,988</td>
<td>$1,933,001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provider Program Support: Program Director, Program Specialist (&amp; PD Coordinator), 2 Program Assistants (Intake, Registration, &amp; Enrollment), 2 Social Workers, Finance Support, Site Director Support Specialist, Contract for Psychology Services, Office Assistant, Assistant Director (Out years), and Translation Services.</td>
<td>$593,755</td>
<td>$677,200</td>
<td>$780,444</td>
<td>$796,053</td>
<td>$811,974</td>
<td>$828,213</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal: Technology (system data base, temporary system modifications, data dashboard*)</td>
<td>$301,500</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal: Outreach, Marketing, &amp; Enrollment Support</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frank Porter Graham Institute Annual Evaluation</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal: Expenses</td>
<td>$8,400,000</td>
<td>$15,003,630</td>
<td>$21,656,928</td>
<td>$33,057,298</td>
<td>$44,706,355</td>
<td>$56,793,919</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smart Start Administrative Expenses @4% (equipment rental, MPK office supplies and related technology, mailings, overhead, rent, temporary contracts, misc. classroom expenses, substitutes, site selection committee expenses, travel, phones, fax lines, misc. administrative costs)</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>$600,145</td>
<td>$866,277</td>
<td>$1,322,292</td>
<td>$1,788,254</td>
<td>$2,271,757</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal: Expenses plus Administrative Expenses</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$15,603,775</td>
<td>$22,523,205</td>
<td>$34,379,590</td>
<td>$46,494,609</td>
<td>$59,065,675</td>
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</table>

*Continued on next page*
### MECK Pre-K Expansion (FY19-FY24) (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenues from sliding fee scale (10%, 25%, 50% and 100%) of MECK Pre-K annual tuition estimate</td>
<td>$279,483</td>
<td>$5,458,180</td>
<td>$11,575,454</td>
<td>$18,103,306</td>
<td>$24,927,626</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted MECK Pre-K Budget</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$15,324,292</td>
<td>$17,065,025</td>
<td>$22,804,136</td>
<td>$28,391,303</td>
<td>$34,138,049</td>
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</table>

### ECE Talent Development and Retention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
<th>FY21</th>
<th>FY22</th>
<th>FY23</th>
<th>FY24</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Pay Comparability Pilot</td>
<td>$229,145</td>
<td>$285,600</td>
<td>$421,118</td>
<td>$484,921</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher Education Scholarships and Support</td>
<td>$1,250,095</td>
<td>$1,250,095</td>
<td>$1,302,349</td>
<td>$1,302,349</td>
<td>$1,302,349</td>
<td>$1,302,349</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Talent Development and Retention</td>
<td>$1,479,240</td>
<td>$1,535,695</td>
<td>$1,723,467</td>
<td>$1,787,270</td>
<td>$1,924,981</td>
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</table>

### MECK Pre-K Program Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
<th>FY21</th>
<th>FY22</th>
<th>FY23</th>
<th>FY24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total MECK Pre-K and Talent Development (assumes sliding fee scale for tuition)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$16,803,532</td>
<td>$18,600,720</td>
<td>$24,527,603</td>
<td>$30,178,573</td>
<td>$36,063,030</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total MECK Pre-K and Talent Development (no sliding fee scale)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$17,083,015</td>
<td>$24,058,900</td>
<td>$36,103,057</td>
<td>$48,281,879</td>
<td>$60,990,656</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Child Care Wait List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated expenditures for current and projected child care wait list (based on 41% take-up rate) for children B-5 (not yet in kindergarten)*</th>
<th>$15,055,248</th>
<th>$15,055,248</th>
<th>$15,055,248</th>
<th>$15,055,248</th>
<th>$15,055,248</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mecklenburg County Wait List Reduction Initiative (MCWRI) adjustment to maintain current services post October 2018 rate increase</td>
<td>$280,834</td>
<td>$280,834</td>
<td>$280,834</td>
<td>$280,834</td>
<td>$280,834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Child Care</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
<td>$15,336,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Child Care Combined &amp; MECK Pre-K Total (no fees)</td>
<td>$8,750,000</td>
<td>$32,419,097</td>
<td>$39,394,982</td>
<td>$51,439,139</td>
<td>$63,617,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Child Care Combined &amp; MECK Pre-K Total (fees)</td>
<td>$32,139,614</td>
<td>$33,936,802</td>
<td>$39,863,685</td>
<td>$45,514,655</td>
<td>$51,399,112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The integrated data system for online enrollment, provider portal, and budget will be subject to an RFP. The public results dashboard will be built by county staff. Costs for EESLPD support services will vary based on the number of classrooms and number of teachers needing support (subject to negotiation). The program evaluation estimate is a projection with details about the evaluation to be negotiated with the Frank Porter Graham Institute at UNC. Child care estimates are provided by CCRI and reflect the following: children served under the Mecklenburg County Wait List Reduction Initiative (MCWRI) as of November 30, 2018, birth through 2-year-old expenditures are based on a 9 month average (March-November 2018) of actual expenditures; 3-5 year-old expenditures are based on November 2018 expenditures with the new market rate increases effective October 1, 2018. Estimated expenditures for children expected to apply are based on children estimated to be added to the wait list in December 2018 to June 2019. Estimates do not assume any market rate increases that may be put into place by the NC Legislature in the future. Estimates do not reflect children that could be added to the child care subsidy wait list after FY20.
Conclusion and New Recommendations

The Mecklenburg County Early Childhood Education Executive Committee met for two years. During the first year, a report producing a 5-point plan with related recommendations was submitted to the BOCC for review. In Phase 2, the implementation report covers implementation of year 1 of MECK Pre-K, revised cost estimates related to MECK Pre-K, additional budget estimates involving staffing and the structure of a child care compensation and quality pilot, and several recommendations moving forward to ensure that children birth to age five have an equal opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in Mecklenburg County.

In view of the need to annually review the ECE landscape, make adjustments where needed for strategies related to access to early childhood education, and explore strategies in more depth related to approaches to better support the healthy development of children from birth through age 3 (including coordination and expansion of current services), the County ECE Executive Committee should continue to meet to assume advisory and oversight responsibilities of MECK Pre-K and to develop a coordinated strategy to support the healthy development of the county’s youngest children.

The 5-point plan from 2017 is a point in time. It should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the landscape. The Executive Committee’s broad expertise lends itself to a more formal ongoing working committee well positioned to:

- Monitor progress against the recommendations in the 5-point plan and the implementation report;
- Annually update cost estimates;
- Identify challenges and develop options to address such challenges;
- Review higher education pathways and access;
- Identify new opportunities/strategies;
- Review capacity as MECK Pre-K expands and capacity expansion strategies;
- Review MECK Pre-K and child care pilot evaluations and make future recommendations;
- Explore specific strategies to expand, develop, or improve initiatives for children birth through age 3, and
- Identify benchmarks for a public results dashboard.
In addition, two sub-workgroups are recommended (which could involve some individuals from the ECE Executive Committee, but could also involve others based on expertise and experience):

- **Data workgroup** – to identify data ownership, data sharing agreements, and to develop an integrated data strategy to ensure that children participating in county-funded early childhood education programs can be tracked over time for progress through elementary school grades (e.g., staff from Smart Start, Mecklenburg County, CMS’ Office of Accountability, NC Pre-K, Bright Beginnings and Early Intervention, the Bethlehem Center Head Start, the Child Care Resources Inc., the Institute for Social Capital, and others).

- **Higher education workgroup** – to regularly meet and coordinate with regard to ECE workforce professional development, higher education, and coaching to:
  - Support MECK Pre-K operations and expansion,
  - Support pathways to build a bilingual workforce (within MECK Pre-K and child care), and
  - Support high-quality child care for children birth-5.

For example, staff from UNC Charlotte CHFD Programs, CPCC ECE Programs, Smart Start, Teaching Strategies, Teachstone, EESLPD, Mecklenburg County, Child Care Resources Inc., Charlotte Bilingual Preschool, and the Bethlehem Center Head Start should work in a coordinated manner with a collaborative approach to identify higher education access and coursework/workforce initiative implementation challenges to be addressed, including supports necessary to build a bilingual early childhood workforce, as well as the identification of potential external funders for tuition scholarships, including funders to support higher education access for individuals who qualify under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

As the Executive Committee continues to meet, other areas for exploration include an intentional strategy to expand access to child care financial assistance to serve a greater percentage of eligible children with low-wage working parents (e.g., a strategy based on reaching a percentage of eligible children rather than based on a waiting list, which may or may not truly reflect need given that some families may not choose to join a waiting list when they are informed of its length).

The most recent Census Bureau data shows that 58,953 children under age 6 in Mecklenburg County have working parents. Of those children, about 32,621 (55.3%) live in households with income below 200% of the federal poverty level. Fewer than 20% of eligible children under age 5 receive child care assistance. Given the link between economic opportunity and employment, and the need for child care financial assistance to support more low-wage parents’ participation in the workforce, additional consideration of policy strategies and related costs should be reviewed.

Another area to be explored involves best practices for dual language learning children. About 3,000 Latinx children throughout the county enter kindergarten every year (about one-quarter of incoming kindergarten students). Many of these children do not speak English as their first language. Currently, only 128 children are enrolled at the Charlotte Bilingual Preschool with another 298 children on the waiting list.

While the Executive Committee identified talent development strategies in this report to broaden the pathway to expand the number of bilingual teachers working with young children, more needs to be done to expand public pre-k opportunities for dual language learning children.

The Committee should explore additional strategies such as expanding the Charlotte Bilingual Preschool model, dual immersion programs where children whose first language is English and those whose first language is Spanish learn together (such as those programs operating in New York City, Chicago, Albuquerque, and other communities), and two-generation approaches that involve families and their children. The Committee recommends further review of strategies specifically focused on children from birth through age three.

During the past year, much attention was focused on implementation of MECK Pre-K and related strategies to promote talent development of the ECE workforce to support both MECK Pre-K and high-quality child care. While some discussions were held with regard to better meeting the needs of children birth through 3, a deeper dive is necessary to better understand what families need and the factors that best impact healthy development and early learning among children in the youngest age range.
The neuroscience research shows a link to future social, emotional, cognitive and physical development based on the initial foundation formed during a child’s earliest years. Yet, reaching children during these earliest years is challenging because of the variety of settings in which they spend time (e.g., some children may be in licensed child care, some may be home with a parent, some may be with a grandparent or other relative, or maybe an informal setting such as with a neighbor).

Related, is the purpose behind each strategy (e.g., promoting language and pre-literacy, social and emotional growth and development – such as building resilience for children in families facing trauma or in crises such as families and children affected by adverse childhood experiences (ACES), expanding developmental screening to identify children who may need early intervention, etc.). There are many strategies, they each have different purposes, and in a perfect world, each could be undertaken with fidelity at scale and promote optimum results for every child (regardless of setting).

Throughout the county, there are many programs currently underway to reach targeted populations of children through a variety of strategies. None are funded in a manner to reach all children who may be eligible or need support, which includes an array of county-funded services and private sector initiatives funded with public dollars or through philanthropic grants.

Some of these programs are geared toward children, some are geared toward parents or families, and others are geared toward strengthening the quality of programs in which children participate (e.g., supporting child care licensure, program star rating, or professional development of early learning directors and staff). The Early Childhood Funders Collaborative has recently released a nationwide Early Childhood Care and Education database, which will provide a useful start to a more comprehensive list of county and private/philanthropy funded initiatives targeted toward families with children from birth through age 3, including the universe of children targeted, reached, and impacted.

Understanding current funding available, the reach of individual initiatives, the impact or evaluation of current initiatives, and opportunities for further coordination of programs and services is an important step as the county and philanthropic community consider ways in which to better support infants and toddlers and the families in which they reside.

The Executive Committee views the 5-point plan and phased-in implementation and related discussion as an ongoing journey. What is important is to continue making progress, evaluate what is working and what may need to be strengthened, and to continue discussions to review progress toward benchmarks, expand or develop additional strategies, and ensure that ultimately, all children from birth to 5 have access to early childhood education and related services to promote their healthy development. Our future depends on it.

**Recommendations related to ongoing review and thought leadership to increase access to early childhood education**

- **Early Childhood Education Executive Committee Ongoing Review and Thought Leadership.** The ECE Executive Committee should continue to meet as an advisory and discussion body to monitor progress against the 5 point-plan, explore strategies related to the healthy development of children from birth through age 3, and recommend ways to ensure a coordinated system of supports (including a potential expansion of child care assistance to reach a greater percentage of eligible children as well as specific strategies to better support dual language learning children) to promote the ability for all children in the county to learn, grow, and thrive.

- **Early Childhood Investment Fund Creation.** The ECE Executive Committee should recommend a specific funding strategy to create an Early Childhood Investment Fund so that promising strategies to reach children in their earliest years can be expanded or developed.

- **Convene a Data Work Group.** A county data work group should meet as needed to identify current data, data gaps, and processes needed to promote an integrated data system where aggregate outcomes can be tracked over time in a public results dashboard.

- **Convene a Higher Education and ECE Workforce Coaching Work Group.** A higher education and coaching work group should meet as needed to promote ongoing communication and coordination related to the high-quality workforce necessary to staff MECK Pre-K, support pathways to build a bilingual workforce, support coaching that helps translate knowledge to practice, and to ensure access to higher education and professional development for the child care workforce (including efforts to identify and seek external funding for tuition scholarships).

**Recommendations related to strengthening access to early childhood education for children from birth through age 3**

- **Deeper dive to recommend birth through age 3 strategies.** The Executive Committee should identify key factors that lead to healthy development and early learning for children birth through age 3, identify gaps in access to services or supports, and recommend strategies to promote healthy brain development, resiliency, and strong social-emotional skills, and language and literacy development to build a solid foundation for children’s future success.

- **Develop a Community Index of B-3 Initiatives.** Develop a coordinated, comprehensive community index of all county and philanthropic funding geared toward reaching children birth through age 3, their families, and the programs in which they participate to identify gaps and better understand the reach of current initiatives.
### Implementation Report: New Recommendations Summary

**Actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Early Childhood Education Executive Committee Ongoing Review and Thought Leadership. The ECE Executive Committee should continue to meet as an advisory and discussion body to monitor progress against the 5-point plan, explore strategies related to the healthy development of children from birth through age 3, and recommend ways to ensure a coordinated system of supports (including a potential expansion of child care assistance to reach a greater percentage of eligible children as well as specific strategies to better support dual language learning children) to promote the ability for all children in the county to learn, grow, and thrive.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deeper dive to recommend birth through age 3 strategies. The Executive Committee should identify key factors that lead to healthy development and early learning for children birth through age 3, identify gaps in access to services or supports, and recommend strategies to promote healthy brain development, resiliency, strong social and emotional skills, and language and literacy development to build a foundation for future success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Early Childhood Investment Fund Creation. The ECE Executive Committee should recommend a specific funding strategy to create an Early Childhood Investment Fund so that promising strategies to reach children in their earliest years can be expanded or developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tactics/Next Steps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Convene a Data Work Group. A county data work group should meet as needed to identify current data, data gaps, and processes needed to promote an integrated data system where aggregate outcomes can be tracked over time in a public results dashboard.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Convene a Higher Education and ECE Workforce Coaching Work Group. A higher education and ECE coaching work group should meet as needed to promote ongoing communication and coordination related to the high-quality workforce necessary to staff MECK Pre-K, to support pathways to build a bilingual workforce, and to ensure access to higher education and professional development for the child care workforce (including efforts to identify and seek external funding for tuition scholarships).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop a Community Index of B-3 Initiatives. Develop a coordinated, comprehensive community index of all county and philanthropic funding geared toward reaching children birth through age 3, their families, and the programs in which they participate to identify gaps and to better understand the reach of current initiatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3 | }
Appendix I

2018-2019 MECK Pre-K Sites by Zip Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Site Name and Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Site Name and Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28078</td>
<td>Gateway Academy Kenton</td>
<td>704-655-7336</td>
<td>28215</td>
<td>Pee Wee’s Little People 5747 Joyce Drive, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-566-0440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28105</td>
<td>Smart Kids Child Development Center #7 1208 Sam Newell Road, Matthews, NC</td>
<td>980-339-5387</td>
<td>28216</td>
<td>Marizetta Kerry Child Development Center 3301 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-391-3871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28206</td>
<td>Bethlehem Center-Oaklawn Education Center 1920 Stroud Park Court, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-266-8226</td>
<td>28216</td>
<td>Gateway Academy Northlake 9206 Reames Road, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-596-0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28208</td>
<td>Bright Future Learning Center 2815 Greenland Avenue, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-393-8001</td>
<td>28217</td>
<td>Child Care Network #53 5017 South Boulevard, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-405-1024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28208</td>
<td>Dixon Academy of Charlotte, Inc. 2608 West Boulevard, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-405-1024</td>
<td>28227</td>
<td>Child Care Network #91 7207 Lawyers Road, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-531-2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28209</td>
<td>Child Care Network #97 651 Woodlawn Road, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-523-9295</td>
<td>28227</td>
<td>Sunshine House 5825 Phyliss Lane, Mint Hill, NC</td>
<td>704-573-9595</td>
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<tr>
<td>28210</td>
<td>Child Care Network #55 6418 Park South Drive, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-551-1041</td>
<td>28262</td>
<td>Pal-A-Roo’s Child Development Center 9215 Mallard Creek Road, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-548-8076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28211</td>
<td>Bethlehem Center-McAlpine Education Center 8310 McAlpine Park Drive, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-266-8226</td>
<td>28269</td>
<td>Mallard Creek Learning Center 8765 Browne Road, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-948-2046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28213</td>
<td>Nana’s Place University LLC 1825 Back Creek Drive, Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-597-3900</td>
<td>28273</td>
<td>Smart Kids Child Development Center #9 13210 South Point Boulevard Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>980-236-8378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28215</td>
<td>ABC Academy 4821 East W.T. Harris Boulevard Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-567-1655</td>
<td>28277</td>
<td>Gateway Academy Ballantyne 14325 Ballantyne Meadows Parkway Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>704-544-1187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend

- MECK Pre-K Sites Selected for 2018-2019

Source: Smart Start of Mecklenburg County

Percent of households – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients

- 0-9
- 10-21
- 22-34
- 35-50
- 51-75

Source: Quality of Life Explorer, 2016
## Appendix II

### FY19 Curriculum, Training, and Classroom Support for MECK Pre-K

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachstone:</strong> Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™); &quot;myTeachstone&quot; teacher subscriptions, CLASS™ primer training (10/20), Pre-K CLASS observation training</td>
<td>$27,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachstone:</strong> CLASS observations 12/18, Observer training 2/19, MMCI June 2019</td>
<td>$37,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Strategies:</strong> Creative Curriculum Kits</td>
<td>$97,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Strategies:</strong> Training &amp; Professional Development sessions (9/20, 9/21, 10/1, 10/3, 10/16, 10/18)</td>
<td>$16,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Strategies:</strong> Digital Resources (GOLD ongoing child assessments)</td>
<td>$15,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Strategies:</strong> Trainings December 2018 – June 2019 (12/10, 12/11, 12/12, January – June 2019 TS Gold)</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigance curriculum and training (10/31)</td>
<td>$29,065.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development (EESLPD) by UNC Charlotte</td>
<td>$250,939.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success Coaches (3)</td>
<td>$205,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit Bias Training/Workshop</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$705,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Teachstone/CLASS</strong></td>
<td>$64,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Teaching Strategies/Creative Curriculum, TS Gold, Trainings</strong></td>
<td>$151,839</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal:
Teacher holds NC BK Continuing License (SPII) and enters into 5 year renewal cycle

Lead teachers must first enroll by submitting an enrollment packet and all required documentation

Teacher holds BA/BS degree & no B-K license & is eligible for Lateral Entry (LE) License (3 year license)
- Teacher selects accredited IHE B-K “licensure only” teacher education program for admission requirements
- Teacher obtains Plan of Study (POS) from B-K advisor and LE license is requested
- License is issued while teacher completes prescribed POS
- Teacher clears LE license through IHE, gaining Initial (SPI) licensure
- Teacher completes BTSP and is recommended for Continuing (SPII) BK license

Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) runs concurrently
- Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for mentoring and evaluation support and professional development

Teacher holds Initial (SPI) BK license (3 year license)
- Teacher holds a clear Initial (SPI) or Continuing (SPII) NC BK license
- Teacher Support Program (TSP)
  - Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for evaluation support and professional development

Teacher holds Continuing (SPII) BK License (5 year license)
- Teacher meets licensure renewal requirements (CEU and performance criteria) and license is renewed

Teacher does not hold clear Initial (SPI) or Continuing (SPII) BK/Pre-K Add-on Licensure Area
- Teacher selects accredited IHE B-K “licensure only” program, obtains POS from advisor, Add-on is requested
- License is issued while teacher completes prescribed POS, once coursework is complete IHE clears Add-on
- BTSP (SPI) or TSP (SPII) runs concurrently – Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for mentoring and/or evaluation support and professional development

Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for mentoring and/or evaluation support and professional development
- If SPI Add-on: Teacher completes BTSP and is recommended for Continuing (SPII) BK license
- If SPII Add-on: Teacher meets licensure renewal requirements (CEU and performance criteria) and license is renewed

Teacher holds clear Initial (SPI) or Continuing (SPII) license in unrelated area (e.g. K-6)
- Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for mentoring and evaluation support and professional growth and development
- Teacher meets licensure renewal requirements (CEU and performance criteria) and license is renewed

Teacher holds clear Initial (SPI) or Continuing (SPII) NC BK license
- BTSP
  - Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for mentoring and evaluation support and professional development

Teacher holds Initial (SPI) BK license (3 year license)
- Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP)
  - Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for mentoring and evaluation support and professional development

Teacher holds a clear Initial (SPI) or Continuing (SPII) NC BK license
- Teacher completes BTSP and is recommended for Continuing (SPII) BK license
- Teacher Support Program (TSP)
  - Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for evaluation support and professional development

Teacher holds clear Initial (SPI) or Continuing (SPII) BK/Pre-K Add-on Licensure Area
- Teacher enters the EESLPD Office at UNC Charlotte for mentoring and evaluation support and professional development

Goal:
Teacher holds NC BK Continuing License (SPII) and enters into 5 year renewal cycle

Source: UNC Charlotte, EESLPD Unit, 1/19.
Appendix IV

Early Childhood Education Executive Committee

Mecklenburg County
Dena Diorio, Chair  Mecklenburg County
Anthony Trotman  Mecklenburg County
Tameika Leslie  Mecklenburg County

Business Leaders
Shawn Heath  Duke Energy
George Beckwith  National Gypsum

Early Childhood Education Support Organizations
Janet Singerman  Child Care Resources Inc.
Nancy Hughes  Smart Start of Mecklenburg County

Higher Education
Vivian Correa  UNCC
Pamela McIntyre  UNCC
Susan Butler Staub  CPCC

Community Organizations
Marili Alvarado  Latin Americans Working for Achievement (LAWA)
Previous Executive Director
Peter Blair  Levine Jewish Community Center
Laura Clark  United Way of Central Carolinas
Molly Shaw  Communities In Schools
Munro Richardson  Read Charlotte
Yuly Rodriguez  Leading On Opportunity
Todd Tibbits  YMCA of Greater Charlotte

Early Care & Education Providers
Jared Keaton  Bethlehem Center Head Start
Banu Valladares  Charlotte Bilingual Preschool
Roslyn Dixon  Dixon Academy
Carmen Morrison  Marizetta Kerry Child Development Center

Community Volunteers
Anna Spangler Nelson  Spangler Companies, Inc.
Claire Tate  Community Advocate
Susan Patterson  Community Advocate

Philanthropic Organizations
Brian Collier  Foundation For The Carolinas

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools
Dr. Clayton Wilcox  Superintendent
Melody Greenhouse  NC Pre-K Director
Julie Babb  Past Bright Beginnings and NC Pre-K Director

Faith Community
Dr. Ricky Woods  First Baptist Church West

Board of County Commissioners
Ella Scarborough  Mecklenburg County- Commissioner At Large
Trevor Fuller  Mecklenburg County- Commissioner At Large
Dumont Clarke  Mecklenburg County- Former Commissioner, District 4

Facilitators
Grace Reef  Early Learning Policy Group, LLC
Cindy Cisneros  Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board
### Appendix V

#### Charlotte Executive Leadership Council (CELC) Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brian Moynihan, Chair</td>
<td>Bank of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Alvarado</td>
<td>Marand Builders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Armato</td>
<td>Novant Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wil Brooks</td>
<td>State Farm Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ned Curran</td>
<td>Northwood Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Pamela Davies</td>
<td>Queens University of Charlotte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kandi Deitemeyer</td>
<td>Central Piedmont Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan DeVore</td>
<td>Premier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theresa Drew</td>
<td>Deloitte &amp; Touche LLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Doheny</td>
<td>Sealed Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phil Dubois</td>
<td>UNC Charlotte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frank Emory</td>
<td>Hunton Andrews Kurth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Finke</td>
<td>Barings LLC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynn Good</td>
<td>Duke Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frank Harrison</td>
<td>Coca-Cola Consolidated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Kissam</td>
<td>Albemarle Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Lamach</td>
<td>Ingersoll Rand Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Mack</td>
<td>Wells Fargo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Mitchell</td>
<td>Moore and Van Allen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fritz Nauck</td>
<td>McKinsey &amp; Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Nelson</td>
<td>National Gypsum Co.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Pappas</td>
<td>Pappas Properties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pat Riley</td>
<td>Allen Tate Company</td>
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<td>Pat Rodgers</td>
<td>Rodgers Builders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eric Steigerwalt</td>
<td>Brighthouse Financial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Whitfield</td>
<td>Charlotte Hornets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gene Woods</td>
<td>Carolinas Healthcare System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucia Zapata-Griffith</td>
<td>Metro Landmarks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes

Executive Summary

1 Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States.
3 Ibid.
4 A list of ECE Executive Committee members is contained in the appendix of the full report.
8 Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI). November 2018 expenditures.
9 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 SMART Start of Mecklenburg County, December 2018
14 SMART Start of Mecklenburg County, December 2018
17 U.S. Census Bureau, Table S2001, Earnings in the Past 12 Months (Mecklenburg County, NC) https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_3YR_S2001&prodType=table
19 Child Care Services Association, January 4, 2019
21 Child Care Services Association, Infant-Toddler AWARDS Program, October 2018. https://www.childcareservices.org/aWARDS/faq/
22 Child Care Services Association, January 4, 2019
23 The Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) scholarship program was created in 1990 by the Child Care Services Association. https://www.childcareservices.org/teach-nc/
24 Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC). Early Childhood Programs. http://www.cpcc.edu/ec
27 CCR December 2018 estimates for 10 months of child care are based on part-time rates for 5-star rated family child care homes at a cost of $3,865 for the school-year for those students who need child care/family care support in order to attend class. Estimates for transportation and books are based on Charlotte’s 2018-2019 cost of attendance table. https://ncincenternal.unc.edu/financial-aid-loans/aid-basics/estimating-costs/undergraduate-cost-attendance
28 Ibid.
29 Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at UNC, https://fgp.unc.edu/
32 U.S. Census Bureau, Table B23008, Age of Own Children Under 18 Years in Families and Subfamilies by Living Arrangements and Employment Status of Parents- Mecklenburg County, 2017 American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_1YR_B23008&prodType=table
33 U.S. Census Bureau, Table B17024, Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months- Mecklenburg County, 2017 American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_1YR_B17024&prodType=table
34 Child Care Resources Inc., December 2018
35 Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, 2018
36 Charlotte Bilingual Preschool, December 2018
37 https://www.ecfunders.org/funding-landscape/#resources-page-deep-dives
For more information contact:

Tameika Leslie
Project Manager, Early Childhood Education Initiatives
Mecklenburg County Manager’s Office
Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center
600 E. 4th Street, Charlotte, NC 28202
980.314.2900  MecklenburgCountyNC.gov
https://www.mecknc.gov/CountyManagersOffice/Pages/Home.aspx