

THE PRE·K PRIORITY

The Pre-K Priority Talking Points

1

Why is Pre-K so important? Will children really learn that much?

Pre-K matters. The earlier a child starts learning, the more positive their outcomes. Studies show that beginning as soon as preschool, students who start behind academically are more likely to stay behind, and this gap only increases over time. This can have negative effects on their educational, personal, and professional future.

2

What is meant by high-quality Pre-K, and what are the benefits of high-quality Pre-K for all 4-year-olds in Forsyth County?

High quality Pre-K incorporates sufficient time (full-day) in a high-quality environment for learning, with well-prepared and supported teachers, small class sizes, low student-teacher ratios, research-based curricula, continual parental engagement, and academic, social, and physical assessments that ensure progress. High-quality Pre-K has shown the following benefits:

- + **STUDENTS** – nurtures academic, social, and emotional development; increases self-sufficiency; and increases the likelihood of achievement, graduation, and employment
- + **FAMILIES** – lowers the financial burden while allowing families to pursue and hold employment knowing their children are safe and receiving high-quality care
- + **COMMUNITY** – reduces the tax burden associated with special education programs, educational remediation, social supports, and criminal justice; closes learning achievement gaps; and contributes to a better prepared workforce



3

How does Forsyth County compare to other counties both in NC and across the country?

- + Nationwide fewer than one-third of all 4-year-olds are enrolled in high-quality preschool programs.
- + Current Pre-K programs in Forsyth County exist in a mixed system, including public schools, Head Start, and community-based/private childcare centers, but that doesn't necessarily mean they meet the standards of high-quality Pre-K and are accessible for every child.
- + There are 4,500 four-year-olds in Forsyth County, of which 2700 are enrolled in licensed Pre-K programs. However, only 1,500 of those are considered high-quality and are funded publicly.

WE HAVE TO DO BETTER.

4

What is currently being done in Forsyth County to ensure high-quality Pre-K for all?

The Pre-K Priority is a coalition of community individuals and organizations convened by Family Services that has worked over the last 5+ years to advance the reality of Pre-K for all 4-year old children in Forsyth County. Our goal is to expand our mixed system of Pre-K providers, building on existing programs to ensure greater access, affordability, and quality for all families who want to enroll their child. We have published extensive research toward that end (Building the Foundation for the Future of Forsyth County - reports.PreKPriority.org). Family Services is also currently overseeing a community-wide engagement campaign and viability study being conducted by Forsyth Futures that will be finished in December 2019.

A blend (mixed system) of federal, state and private funds and resources designated through agencies, initiatives, and non-profits (ex. DSS, Head Start, Smart Start, NC Pre-K, Title I, Imprints, Child Care Resource Center, etc.) contributes to Pre-K in our community. Project Impact, a private individual/corporate led initiative, has pledged \$45M over six years toward moving the needle on achievement gaps from Pre-K through 3rd grade. Part of this is designated for Pre-K, but these resources are not sustainable long term.



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What will it take to make high-quality Pre-K a reality in Forsyth County?

We have work to do and are establishing a path forward. We are grateful to the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, who has provided significant funding for the work to date of The Pre-K Priority.

Financing a broad, high-quality Pre-K system will include existing funding streams in addition to new revenue sources. New public and private sources, as yet to be determined, will depend upon the support of the public and our elected officials. Additional funding from a combination of local, state, and federal government along with philanthropic support will be needed.

With proper funding, expanding high-quality Pre-K for all children in Forsyth County will require improvements in quality; additional facilities; more qualified and better compensated teachers; and the establishment of an administrative structure to ensure uniform practices, effective evaluation, and positive outcomes.

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What can residents of Forsyth County do to help?

We need the support of citizens, parents, educators, elected officials, business leaders, faith communities, and local activists to help.

Spread the word about the benefits of Pre-K for children, families, and our community via social media and with your circle of influence utilizing The Pre-K Priority Communications Toolkit.

ADVOCATE FOR PRE-K ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL 4-YEAR-OLDS BY:

- + **SIGNING** the Pre-K Pledge - PreKPriority.org/#get-involved
- + **VOLUNTEERING** at events
- + **WRITING LETTERS** to the editor of local newspapers and magazines
- + **WRITING** local and state legislators

Find more information by visiting PreKPriority.org
Engage with us now!

