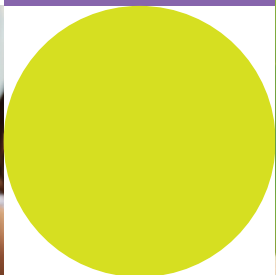
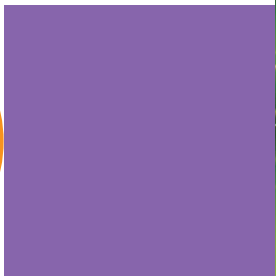
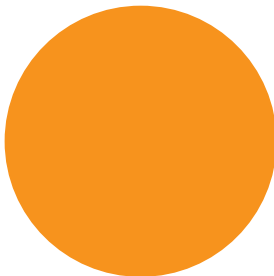


Building the Foundation for the Future of Forsyth County

THE PRE•K PRIORITY

Summary of Findings



ALL CHILDREN IN FORSYTH COUNTY DESERVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER SCHOOL READY TO LEARN.
IT'S TIME TO MAKE HIGH-QUALITY PRE-K EDUCATION A TOP PRIORITY IN OUR COMMUNITY.

THE PRE-K PRIORITY

Quality Early Education for
Every 4-Year-Old in Forsyth County

All children in Forsyth County deserve the opportunity to succeed in school and in life. Brain science has confirmed what most parents already know, namely, that the first five years of life are a time of tremendous physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. These years are especially critical for the construction of a child's developing brain.

Unfortunately, too many children in Forsyth County are not reaching their full potential. Nearly half are not proficient in reading by third grade. From there, it's hard to catch up. A Harvard University study ranks Forsyth County as the 5th worst out of 2,873 counties in the nation for helping poor children move up the economic ladder.

Fortunately, there are proven ways to help children enter kindergarten ready to achieve socially, emotionally, and academically. Extensive research over the past forty years shows that high-quality Pre-K programs are a wise investment that close educational achievement gaps and improve health and well-being far into adulthood.

Forsyth County is poised to provide all families with the opportunity to enroll their four-year-old children in affordable, high-quality Pre-K programs. We can build on the solid standards and best practices of current programs funded by the North Carolina Pre-K Program (NC Pre-K) and provided in classrooms in the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools, at Family Services Head Start program, and in private community childcare centers.

There's still much work to do. Any expansion of the current system will require improvements in quality, additional facilities, more qualified and better compensated teachers, and the establishment of an administrative structure to ensure uniform practices and positive outcomes.

We know what needs to be done and how to do it. But to make this vision a reality, support is needed from elected officials, business and civic leaders, and everyday people committed to the well-being of our community. The time has come for Forsyth County to take this step on behalf of its youngest children — our future workers, parents, citizens, and leaders. Because if not now, when?

KEY COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRE-K PROGRAMS INCLUDE:



**EQUITABLE TEACHER
COMPENSATION
AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**



**TEACHERS HAVE
DEGREES AND
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EXPERTISE**



**MINIMUM
OF 6.5 HOURS OF
INSTRUCTION FOR
CHILDREN**



**FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**



**EVIDENCE-BASED
CURRICULA WITH A
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
EMPHASIS**



**CONTINUOUS
PROGRAM
EVALUATION**



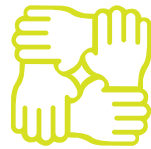
**MAXIMUM CLASS SIZE
OF 20 WITH A 10:1
CHILD TO STAFF RATIO**



**LICENSED SETTINGS
WITH A 4- TO 5-STAR
QUALITY RATING**



**HEALTH
SCREENINGS
AND HEALTHY
MEALS**



**TRANSITION SUPPORT
UPON ENTERING
PRE-K AND MOVING
TO KINDERGARTEN**



WHO IS INVOLVED?

The Pre-K Priority was formed in 2014 by a group of early childhood professionals to explore how to improve the quality and number of early childhood programs available to all four-year-olds.

Visit us online at **reports.PreKPriority.org** for a full list of community organizations involved in the coalition and more comprehensive reports.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDING HIGH-QUALITY PRE-K PROGRAMS IN FORSYTH COUNTY

The following recommendations are drawn from a more extensive list that provides a pathway to establishing a high-quality Pre-K system in Forsyth County.

Quality

- Establish standardized education credentials and requirements for all Pre-K teachers and administrators.
- Utilize curricula and teaching tools that address the whole child, with special attention to social-emotional development and methods to support dual language learners and children with special needs.
- Provide consistent methods of support during transitions during entry to Pre-K and from Pre-K into Kindergarten to promote successful adjustments for children and families.
- Actively involve parents/families in their child's learning experience and provide information about community resources that increase family well-being.

(Teacher) Compensation

- Ensure that compensation for teachers is appropriate and comparable across the various organizations that provide Pre-K programs.

Workforce Development & Training

- Encourage high school and college students to enter the early childhood education field through coordinated efforts between the public schools, community colleges, and universities.
- Provide incentives and decrease barriers for current early childhood professionals to obtain academic degrees and increase professional credentials.

Increase the Number of High-Quality Classrooms

- Conduct a feasibility study and develop a plan to incrementally expand Pre-K capacity to meet demand by building out a uniform system that enables current and new Pre-K providers to meet high-quality standards.

Funding

- Establish a timeline and plan for increasing local and state financial support of high-quality Pre-K.

System Implementation, Administration, & Evaluation

- Determine the most effective model for administering, managing and evaluating an expanded Pre-K system to ensure positive outcomes for children and a return on investment for the community.

The involvement of Forsyth County elected officials, civic leaders, and concerned citizens is needed to activate these recommendations. Together we can make high-quality Pre-K a Priority for Forsyth County and give every child the opportunity to reach their full potential.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

4,500

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS IN
FORSYTH COUNTY

2,700

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED
IN ANY PRE-KINDERGARTEN
LICENSED SETTING
REGARDLESS OF QUALITY

1,500

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED
IN HIGH-QUALITY PUBLICLY-
FUNDED PRE-K PROGRAMS

1,400

FOUR-YEAR-OLDS ELIGIBLE
FOR PUBLICLY-FUNDED
PROGRAMS WHO ARE NOT
CURRENTLY ENROLLED



HOW ARE PRE-K PROGRAMS FUNDED?

- **PRIVATE FUNDS**

Families paying tuition, corporate and foundation support

- **FEDERAL DOLLARS**

Head Start, Title 1, Special Education

- **STATE FUNDS**

NC general budget appropriations and NC Lottery set aside

- **LOCAL FUNDS**

Some cities and counties set aside general budget funds and/or implement a sales tax or property tax to help support early education.

BENEFITS OF PRE-K

HIGH-QUALITY, EARLY LEARNING THROUGH PRE-K HELPS CHILDREN ENTER KINDERGARTEN READY TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND LIFE.



Nurtures a child's brain during the critical, early years of life — academically, socially, and emotionally



Helps close the achievement gap, and increases test scores, high school graduation rates, and college attendance



Fewer children require **special education programs which cost nearly twice** as much as regular classroom education



Benefits all children and has even **greater impact on economically disadvantaged students**



Allows families to pursue employment knowing their children are safe and receiving high-quality care



Increases self-sufficiency in the future with a full-time job and home ownership



Children will become adults who are well-prepared for the workforce and military



Every \$1 invested yields **\$7 in long-term economic savings**

THE PRE-K PRIORITY is a coalition of community organizations convened by Family Services.
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familyservicesforsyth.org • facebook.com/FamilyServices
PreKPriority.org • facebook.com/PreKPriority

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All other inquiries should be directed to:
Michelle Spears, CFRE Chief Development and Public Relations Officer at mspeas@familyservicesforsyth.org



A Community of Solutions