

Expanded Access to Childcare in Buncombe County

The benefits of ensuring a high-quality preschool experience accrue not only to individual children, but to their families, communities and the economy in our area.

In Buncombe County, access to childcare and Pre-K programs is limited based on availability and affordability. Some families face additional barriers such as low income, complex behavioral and health care needs, individual/family/community trauma, and fragmented support systems.

That is why Buncombe County is partnering with the community to expand access to childcare.

We are excited to announce that Buncombe County has funded a new preschool classroom at Johnston Elementary that will serve an additional 18 children in the 2017-18 school year. The classroom will be operated by Community Action Opportunities in an onsite Buncombe County Schools facility. Families served will meet Head Start eligibility requirements, including people who experience low income, engagement with the foster care system, are homeless, or receive public assistance. Transportation will be provided from the Deaverview neighborhood.

In addition, Buncombe County is providing in-kind use of a child care facility on Compton Drive to Eliada Homes, allowing that organization to provide child care to an additional 60 children starting in the 2017-18 school year.

These investments are aligned with the work of Asheville-Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative, a group working to expand access to high quality preschool in Asheville and Buncombe County.

Background

Early childhood education and development have a clear impact on the economic vitality and safety of our community. Ensuring that children have access to high quality and affordable early childhood programs can help children prepare for school and succeed in later life while strengthening parents' workforce access, advance their career, and increase their earning potential. Research shows that money spent on young children is an effective investment, yielding benefits immediately to parents and for many decades to come for the children. Participants in high quality early childhood programs go on to have more educational success, higher earnings and are less likely to rely on government assistance. Pre-K provides school readiness and helps improve their ability to succeed in math and language skills assessments. It improves their social and emotional skills and other necessary skills that contribute to their school readiness and ability to succeed. Those children who enrolled in pre-K are more likely to graduate high school and attend a four-year college, showing the lasting impacts of this investment.

To learn more:

Why preschool is imperative, the current need and climate, and opportunities to expand access, contact the Asheville-Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative at <https://www.abppc.org/>

Buncombe County's work with community partners, contact Rachael Nygaard, Director of Strategic Partnerships at 828-250-6536