



**TRANSYLVANIA**  
— **COUNTY** —  
N O R T H C A R O L I N A

THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IN TC

March 20, 2018



# State of the Young Child in Transylvania County

*December 2015*

*A population that does not take care of the elderly and of children and the young has no future, because it abuses both its memory and its promise.*

— Pope Francis

*There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children*

—Nelson Mandela

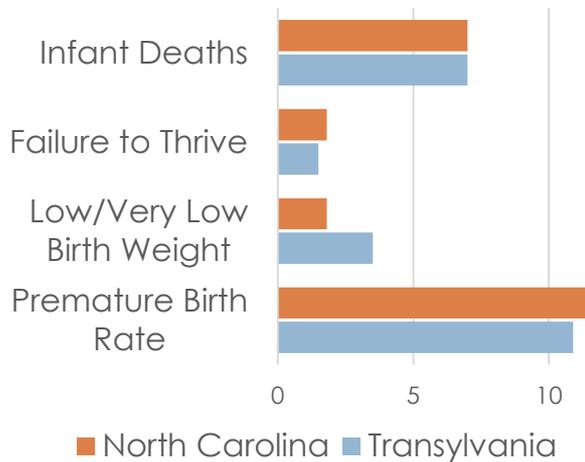
- There is a 16% return on investment with 80% going to benefit the general public. In other words, there is an \$8 return for every \$1 invested with \$6.5 for public benefit (Federal Reserve Minneapolis)
- Dowell Myers, Director of the Population Dynamics Research Group at the University of Southern California says the declining nationwide birthrate is creating an imbalance in the economy, with a growing gap between working age populations that fund social programs and populations that are dependent on those programs

# Engagement Structure

- May 2015: Kick off meeting
  - Open invitation to stakeholders from commissioners
  - Facilitated discussion on issues facing 0-5, developed discussion topics
- Summer/Fall 2015: Monthly focus meetings
  - Encouraged bringing data around topics to show issues
  - Vetted data in the meeting
  - Live screen documentation of key points, data sources
  - Topics: Health/Mental Health, Education and Child Care, Family Life and Poverty, Recreation
- Winter 2015: Report Issued
  - Commissioner meeting
  - Press Release/Social media release
  - Community Presentations begin

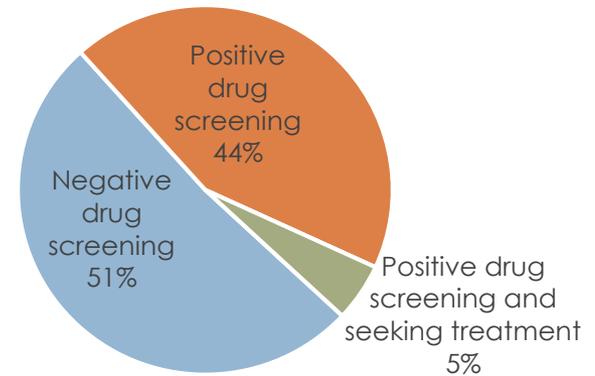
# Highlights of the Data- Getting on the Same Page

Birth and Infant Health Outcomes, per 1,000 births

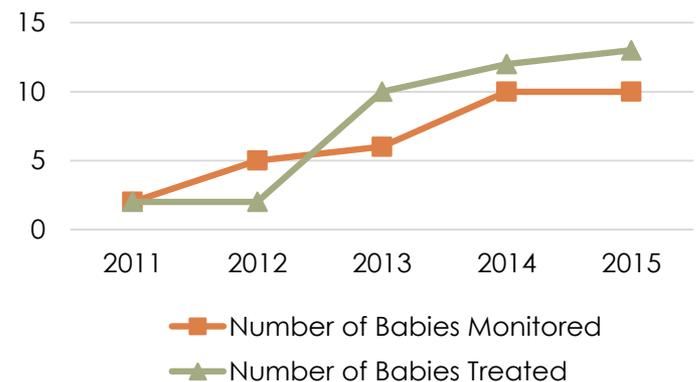


- 17 out of 35 infants enrolled in Care Coordination for Children were undergoing treatment for opiate withdrawal symptoms
- That is a rate of 4,560 per 100,000 births, more than 7 times the statewide average of 620 per 100,000 births

Drug Screening Results Among Pregnancy Care Management Clients



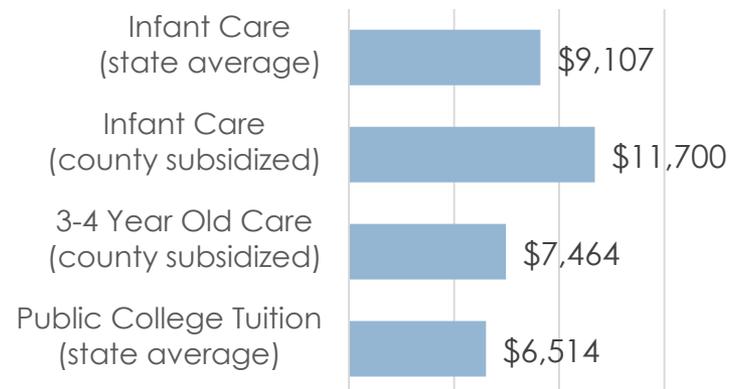
Babies Monitored and Treated for Neonatal Substance Addiction by Year, 2011-2015



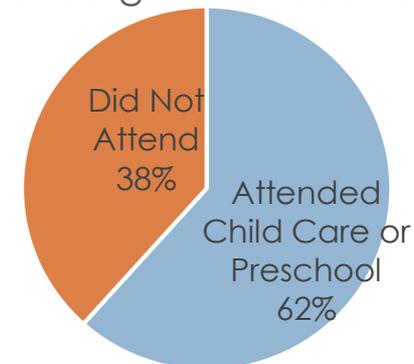
# Highlights- Early Education and Child Care

- Transylvania County is 6<sup>th</sup> highest in the state in child care rates
- It costs almost double to send an infant for care in our county than to send a child to a public college in NC
- The average two income household can expect to spend 27.8% of their income on one child in care and **over half** for two children
- 78% of kindergartners tested below or far below proficiency at the beginning of the 2015 school year.
- 274 FT Slots, 255 PT, 80 Headstart

Annual Child Care Costs



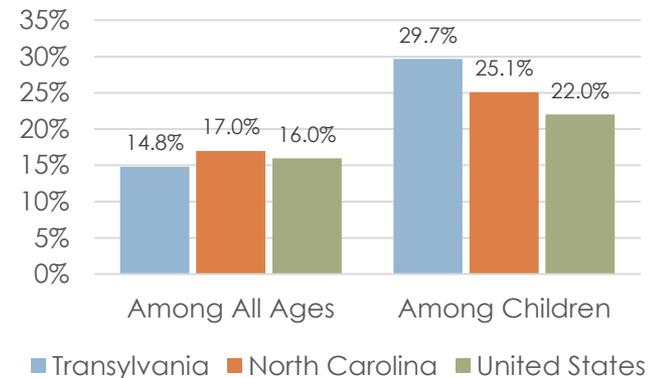
Child Care or Preschool Attendance by 2015-2016 Kindergarten Students



# Highlights- Family Life and Poverty

- A child is more likely to be living in poverty in Transylvania County than the chances for all individuals
- 18 children under the age of 18 are homeless in Transylvania County
- The Haven has served 42 children ages 0-5 in the shelter since 2012 and 45 children ages 0-18 in the Family House since 2014. 10 families are on the Family House waiting list.

County, State, and National Poverty Rates



- Transylvania County median worker income: \$22,034 compared to NC: \$ 27,425
- Transylvania County median household income: \$41,952 compared to NC: \$46,556

# Task Force and Next Steps

**Anders, Cindy**  
*Transylvania County Department  
of Social Services*

**Aull, Judy**  
*United Way*

**Beaver, Hannah**  
*Blue Ridge Community Health Services/  
Brevard Health Center*

**Brock, Erika**  
*Transylvania County Library*

**Canon, Ann**  
*NALC*

**Carland, Shelia**  
*United Way*

**Castro, Joe**  
*Smart Start of Transylvania County*

**Dalton, Will**  
*Hendersonville Pediatrics, Child Psychology*

**DePina, Betty**  
*WCCA HS/EHS*

**Dixon, Carleen**  
*Transylvania County Parks and Recreation*

**Drew, Erin**  
*The Family Place*

**Farash, Ann**  
*Hendersonville Pediatrics*

**Ferguson-Fisher, September**  
*Smart Start of Transylvania County*

**Gardner, Laura**  
*Transylvania County Library*

**Gash, Stacey**  
*WCCA*

**Griffin, Carson**  
*Transylvania County Department of Social Services*

**Grimm, Barbara**  
*Brevard Academy*

**Hagedorn, Annelise**  
*Penn State*

**Hawkins, Mike**  
*Transylvania County Commissioner*

**Kilgore, Tommy**  
*NAACP*

**Lambert, Amanda**  
*Transylvania Public Health*

**Laughter, Jaime**  
*Transylvania County Manager*

**Lee, Nan**  
*EESLPD*

**Lemel, Page**  
*Transylvania County Commissioner*

**Marr, Barbara**  
*United Way*

**McMinn, Lee**  
*Interested Individual*

**Nebbrig, Judy**  
*Community/El Centro Hispano*

**Norman, Shelia McBee**  
*Rise & Shine Freedom School*

**Parker, Kae**  
*Child Development Center (retired)*

**Pulliam, Steve**  
*United Way*

**Reneau, Audrey**  
*Transylvania County Schools*

**Russell, Elaine**  
*Transylvania Public Health*

**Schieve, Linda**  
*CDSA*

**Schieve, Ron**  
*Connect*

**Strassner, Cathy**  
*United Way*

**Vargas, Rodrigo**  
*El Centro Hispano*

**Walsh, Candice**  
*Cindy Platt Boys & Girls Club of Transylvania County*

**Weaver, Cameron**  
*Transylvania County Schools*

**White, David**  
*WCCA HS/EHS*

**Williams, Kathie**  
*Children's Center*

**Yount, Anna**  
*Transylvania County Library*

A special  
**Thank You**  
to  
**Tara Rypka,**  
Public Health  
Educator for  
design and  
formatting  
support

# Early Childhood Initiative (ECI)

- Monthly large group meetings to update/motivate
- Focus groups developed around topics, self identify and group appoints leader
- Initial focus on utilizing existing resources and aligning purposes through collaboration with partners
- No single agency or nonprofit “owner”
- County acts as coordination structure
  - ▣ Agendas, minutes, facilitation, meeting reminders
  - ▣ Commissioner/Staff Advocacy efforts

# Sub-grouping



- **Preschool Education**
- **Health/Mental Health**
- **Recreation**
- **Family Support**
- **Fundraising- Smartly United Early Childhood Collective**
- **Advocacy**

# Activities since report issued

- Workshop for preschool and kindergarten teachers
  - ▣ Increase communication
- First Kindergarten Readiness Rally
  - ▣ Multi-agency representation ~89 Families
- Town Hall on Childcare
  - ▣ Citizens and employers 119 people
  - ▣ CCR&R need
  - ▣ Affordability and availability
- Summer family happenings published
- Family Splash Day
  - ▣ Over 300 people attended
- Birth forward in summer reading
- Expansion of Headstart Slots through partnership between WCCA and TCPS
- Family Place started play and learn kits and Circle of Parents Groups

# Action Highlights

- Transylvania Public Health has engaged with Dr. Hartye, the chair of the monthly Substance Abuse in Pregnancy Workshop through the Behavioral Health division of Mission Health, to address drug addiction during pregnancy and in newborns and has identified in county treatment options
- Mental Health Forum and Kiosk by Vaya Health
- Hendersonville Pediatrics has added a behavioral consultant and has a partnership with Smart Start for Reach Out and Read
- Parks and Rec added indoor preschool play time and summer camp for preschoolers as well as Start Smart Basketball for 4-5 year olds
- Institute of Emerging Issues at NCSU Forum on Early Childhood hosted Commissioner Page Lemel
- Family dinner series from health cooking to parenting classes coordinated through Family Place
- Kindergarten Readiness Rally
- Community Resilience Training
- Participation in Institute of Emerging Issues as only Rural County Best Practices

# Advocacy!

- Continued work on the economic development component
  - Child care as infrastructure for economy
    - Availability and affordability
  - Research on early learning and why this is state issue
    - Baby 0-3 produces 700 new neural connections per second
    - Wages less than \$11 per hour, even for teachers with degrees
    - 22% decline in community college enrollment since 2008
- Rural Voice
  - Property Taxes are the local tool and it hurts the population we want to serve

# What about outcomes?

- Most meaningful look at measures will need to wait
- Early measures
  - ▣ 12% increase in kindergartners testing at proficient or above on entry
  - ▣ Decrease in babies born addicted\*
  - ▣ Increase in NC Pre-K slots for the County reflecting increase access- schools coming into serving early childhood
- Established a network to communicate and collaborate

# Best Practices and Take Aways

- Value of Elected Leaders bringing people together and championing the cause
- Communication, Communication, Communication
- Setting the stage to allow collaboration to happen
- Data as the first step focuses the effort and the messaging- Facilitating and Researching
- We all truly want the same thing for our children and our community

*Jaime Laughter, AICP, County Manager*

*Jaime.laughter@tconc.org*