

**Annual NC Pre-K Report  
State Fiscal Year 2020-2021**

**Session Law 2021-180, Section 9C.1.(f)**



**Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health  
and Human Services**

**Office of State Budget and Management**

**Fiscal Research Division**

**By  
North Carolina Department of Health and  
Human Services**

**November 13, 2023**

## Reporting Requirements

Session Law 2021-180, Section 9C.1.(f) requires the Division of Child Development and Early Education to submit an annual report no later than March 15 of each year to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, the Office of State Budget and Management, and the Fiscal Research Division. The report shall include the following:

- (1) The number of children participating in the NC Pre-K Program by county.
- (2) The number of children participating in the NC Pre-K Program who have never been served in other early education programs such as childcare, public or private preschool, Head Start, Early Head Start, or early intervention programs.
- (3) The expected NC Pre-K expenditures for the programs and the source of the local contributions.
- (4) The results of an annual evaluation of the NC Pre-K Program.

### The number of children participating in the NC Pre-K Program by county:

In Program Year 2020-2021, there were a total of 22,755 children participating in NC Pre-K services, see below for the distribution by county.

<b>County</b>	<b>Total # Children</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Alamance	422	1.85
Alexander	47	0.21
Alleghany	64	0.28
Anson	102	0.45
Ashe	70	0.31
Avery	65	0.29
Beaufort	105	0.46
Bertie	81	0.36
Bladen	159	0.70
Brunswick	234	1.03
Buncombe	319	1.40
Burke	344	1.51
Cabarrus	329	1.45
Caldwell	234	1.03
Camden	32	0.14
Carteret	168	0.74
Caswell	43	0.19
Catawba	358	1.57
Chatham	194	0.85
Cherokee	75	0.33
Chowan	89	0.39

<b>County</b>	<b>Total # Children</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Clay	52	0.23
Cleveland	450	1.98
Columbus	284	1.25
Craven	207	0.91
Cumberland	961	4.22
Currituck	49	0.22
Dare	153	0.67
Davidson	318	1.40
Davie	146	0.64
Duplin	292	1.28
Durham	467	2.05
Edgecombe	157	0.69
Forsyth	435	1.91
Franklin	148	0.65
Gaston	692	3.04
Gates	33	0.15
Graham	34	0.15
Granville	146	0.64
Greene	102	0.45
Guilford	1757	7.72
Halifax	222	0.98
Harnett	288	1.27
Haywood	117	0.51
Henderson	139	0.61
Hertford	91	0.40
Hoke	283	1.24
Hyde	21	0.09
Iredell	290	1.27
Jackson	54	0.24
Johnston	288	1.27
Jones	50	0.22
Lee	198	0.87
Lenoir	128	0.56
Lincoln	217	0.95
Macon	96	0.42
Madison	24	0.11
Martin	80	0.35
McDowell	190	0.83
Mecklenburg	1107	4.86
Mitchell	29	0.13

<b>County</b>	<b>Total # Children</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Montgomery	160	0.70
Moore	65	0.29
Nash	221	0.97
New Hanover	556	2.44
Northampton	76	0.33
Onslow	485	2.13
Orange	174	0.76
Pamlico	36	0.16
Pasquotank	141	0.62
Pender	266	1.17
Perquimans	37	0.16
Person	131	0.58
Pitt	403	1.77
Polk	77	0.34
Randolph	279	1.23
Richmond	154	0.68
Robeson	399	1.75
Rockingham	188	0.83
Rowan	294	1.29
Rutherford	213	0.94
Sampson	248	1.09
Scotland	218	0.96
Stanly	234	1.03
Stokes	156	0.69
Surry	221	0.97
Swain	91	0.40
Transylvania	92	0.40
Tyrrell	19	0.08
Union	258	1.13
Vance	254	1.12
Wake	1035	4.55
Warren	54	0.24
Washington	71	0.31
Watauga	86	0.38
Wayne	521	2.29
Wilkes	323	1.42
Wilson	54	0.24
Yadkin	116	0.51
Yancey	20	0.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,755</b>	<b>100</b>

**The number of children participating in the NC Pre-K Program who have never been served in other early education programs such as childcare, public or private preschool, Head Start, Early Head Start, or early intervention programs.**

Of the 22,755 children participating in a NC Pre-K in Program Year 2020-2021, 11,518 (50.6%) were never previously served in other early education programs.

**The NC Pre-K expenditures for the programs and the source of local contributions**

The SFY 2020-2021 average funds allocated for NC Pre-K Districts by source are listed below. Dollar values for in-kind resources are not included.

**SFY 2020-2021**

Total direct service funds allocated	\$1,768,605.76
Smart start resources	\$101,880.62
Head start resources	\$180,036.97
Title 1 resources	\$141,875.37
Preschool Disability resources	\$94,137.48
City count resources	\$410,95.13
Subsidy resources	\$19,002.02
CACFP resources	\$52,070.22
Private provider resources	\$23,917.18

The source of local contributions as certified and reported by NC Pre-K contractors from July 1, 2020 through November 30, 2020 (part year) are noted in the chart below. Certification of expenditures of other resources in each NC Pre-K Program through November 30 is an annual reporting requirement. Certified Other Resources are reported to the Division of Child Development by local contractors each year and should represent up to five (5) months of actual expenditures. These expenditures listed by funding source represent the amount of cash – not in-kind contributions- that has been spent during this time period from other sources to support the NC Pre-K Program. NC Pre-K subcontractors serve children for ten months. If a similar amount of funds were expended for the remaining five months of services, a total of \$77.5 million of other resources may be expended.

<u>Certified Other Resources</u>	<u>Expenditures Reported through 11/30/20</u>
Title I	\$ 7,693,172
Smart Start	\$ 4,227,307
Child and Adult Care Food Program	\$ 1,612,454
Preschool Disabilities Program	\$ 4,657,920
Head Start	\$11,711,556
Local Appropriations	\$ 2,494,183
Private Providers	\$ 1,122,494
Other	\$ 5,214,999
Total (Five months)	\$ 38,734,085

### **The Results of the Annual Evaluation of the NC Pre-K Program<sup>1</sup>**

The Division of Child Development and Early Education contracts with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute to conduct an annual evaluation of the NC Pre-K Program. Program evaluation and trend analyses were completed using administrative and descriptive data from three main NC Pre-K databases with the following key findings:

- For SFY 2020-2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the NC Pre-K Program served over 22,000 children in over 2,000 classrooms in nearly 1,200 sites.
- Most NC Pre-K classrooms were located in (52%) public school settings, about one-third (34%) private settings, and 15% Head Start.
- Average total class size was approximately 10 children and children attended an average of 126 days, representing 73% of the average days of operation (172) or 70% of the 180 intended days of operation.
- Characteristics for children enrolled resembled historic characteristics of children enrolled in NC Pre-K programs; specifically:
  - about half were boys and half girls
  - nearly a quarter (24%) identified as Latinx ethnicity, nearly one-half were White, over one-third Black or African-American, about 7% were multiracial, and fewer than 5% of children were either Native American or Alaskan Native, Asian, or

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<sup>1</sup> Zadrozny S, Chen P, Carr R, Seifer R,. (2022). Findings from the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute.

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (Children could identify as Latinx in addition to race categories)

- nearly 80% of the children attending NC Pre-K had at least one parent in the workforce
  - children served by the NC Pre-K Program primarily came from low-income families, with over 80% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
  - for other eligibility factors, 16% identified as having limited English proficiency, 18% with a developmental/educational need, and 3-8% with either an identified disability, chronic health condition, or military parent
  - information on children's prior placement indicated that over half had never previously been served in any preschool setting and an additional 14-18% were unserved at the time of enrollment
- For the NC star-rated licenses (the Quality Rating and Improvement System or QRIS in NC) approximately 80% of the sites had a five-star rating and 15% had a four-star rating.
  - About 90% of classrooms reported using Creative Curriculum and its companion assessment (Teaching Strategies Gold or the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum). All classrooms reported using an approved developmental screening tool, with most using either Brigance (~45%) or DIAL (~45%).
  - Teacher educational attainment is high across settings (99% of lead teachers have a bachelor's degree), and teacher qualifications (education and licensure/credentials) have increased over time. More teachers in private settings (5% in 2020-21) reported no credentials.

### **NC Pre-K Teacher Wellbeing Survey**

The SFY 2020-2021 NC Pre-K Program Annual Evaluation also included results from the 2022 NC Pre-K Teacher Wellbeing Survey, in which all 91 contracting Pre-K agencies were asked to participate. The goals of this survey were to:

- 1) understand teacher's experiences relating to COVID-19;
- 2) identify ways to support the health and wellbeing of teachers as they navigate teaching and life following this unprecedented pandemic from 2020-2022; and
- 3) identify ways in which teachers or schools may benefit from additional efforts to support teachers.

A total of 305 (25% of the 1243 invited to participate) teachers participated in the survey and they generally reported experiencing relatively stable employment, having some concerns about COVID-19, but mostly feeling comfortable returning to work in person. Other key findings included:

- Most teachers (80%) reported that their daily stress during the school year left them feeling more tired compared to previous years.
- Over a quarter of participating teachers (27%) indicated that they sometimes or often worried that their food might run out before they had more money; that they could not afford to eat balance meals (30%); and, several (22%) sometimes or often did run out of food.

- Among participating teachers, 41% had mild to moderate anxiety or depression scores and 9% reported moderate to severe depression, indicating a need for treatment or intervention for depression.
- One of the most notable results from the 2022 teacher wellbeing survey was that participation was much lower (25% response rate) compared to the 2020 teacher survey (89% response rate), even though similar recruitment methods were employed.