



Strategic Priorities

<p>Community Awareness & Advocacy</p>	<p><i>Messaging and Tactics Plan Partnership (Forthright Advising) include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategic kickoff with the task force team ● A strategy direction recap, including key audiences, goals and recommended partnership timeline ● A messaging toolkit ● A strategic tactics plan to help you reach the right audience, at the right time, with the right message, in the right place <p><i>Advocacy Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharing 3 minute message bits for general public/advocacy opportunities. ● Community gathering - “A day without childcare” scenario, data sharing, and next steps <p><i>Next Steps:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with Forthright Advertising <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lead: Smart Start Partnership - Kelly Hart 2. Gather Committee <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. CFRC - Jamie
<p>Expand Employer/ Business Investments to Increase Slots and Support Families: Tri-Share</p>	<p>The NC General Assembly created a TriShare pilot to be provided through the Smart Start Network. The state budget creates a financing mechanism that allows for a formal arrangement between business (1), state (2), and families (3) to contribute to the cost of access to child care.</p> <p>Smart Start Partnership for Children agreed to be included in the Cleveland County Partnership for Children’s application to be a regional hub.</p> <p>Smart Start Partnership for Children is in preliminary discussions with Carolina Village to pilot Tri-Share in Henderson County once the pilot launches.</p> <p><i>Next Steps:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wait to get updates from Sonia <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lead: Smart Start Partnership - Sonia <p>Financial Investment: Pilot is funded by North Carolina Partnership for Children, but additional costs are yet unknown.</p>
<p>Expand</p>	<p>Developed by Business of Child Care, the EarlyEd FlexPlex:</p>

<p>Employer/ Business Investments to Increase Slots and Support Families:</p> <p>Flex Plex</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● allows 4-6 individual child care businesses to operate in a shared building reduces overhead and regulatory burdens, expanding access in underserved areas. ● Providers operate dedicated spaces for up to 12 children each. They share common indoor activity and outdoor play areas. ● Shared administrative efficiencies reduce operating costs for small business owners, who earn competitive wages through models defined prior to opening that are sustainable for the operator. ● Regulatory approval was recently granted for the first FlexPlex project in Yadkin County, North Carolina. This will help address a major shortage in childcare slots for a rural population of 37,000. <p>Financial Investment: Estimated Capital Building Investment: The structure size is about 8,000 sq ft. Construction costs are estimated at \$200 sq ft for construction and adding in the other elements, expect \$2M</p>
<p>Expand Investments in Pre-K</p>	<p>The benefits of Pre-K for all students are resounding. We are discussing expanding the availability of NC Pre-K spots for more children in Henderson County by collaborating with existing partner WNC Source and learning from neighboring counties how to bring in the school system to support more slots.</p> <p>The first meeting, held 2/23/2024, the committee heard the expertise of folks from Polk and McDowell County Schools who have successfully universalized pre-K in their districts and from Buncombe Partnership for Children who has expanded NC Pre-K in private facilities with ARPA funding from the county commissioners.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Subcommittee will meet again to determine next steps, likely an analysis of the current situation and funding available across agencies to support pre-k expansion. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lead: Smart Start Partnership for Children- Kelly Hart <p>Financial Investment: Estimated cost for classroom start up: \$100,000. Estimated cost for classroom per year: \$120-150,000</p>
<p>Expand Talent Development through Opportunities in Schools</p>	<p>ECE classes no longer exist in HCPS schools due at least in part to low enrollment. Early Childhood Workforce Development Program at CFRC- developing early childhood workforce by training and offering on site experience, a stipend, and wages to participants interested in joining the Early childhood workforce. WNC Source is partnering with Blue Ridge Community College on the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs and a CDA credential program to increase education levels of early educators. BRCC's College and Career Promise partnership with HCPS is an avenue high school students can utilize to take EDU 119 during high school.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider partnership with HCPS for CFRC's Early Childhood Workforce Development Program and WNC Source/BRCC Apprenticeship to provide opportunities to high school students. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leads - CFRC Workforce Development Coordinator – Kim Guice, WNC Source Children's Services Director- Linda Carter
<p>Continue to Incentivize Slots</p>	<p>The availability of subsidized child care has significantly decreased since Covid-19 leaving unspent subsidy dollars on the table for Henderson County DSS. In response, Smart Start Partnership for Children has referred their subsidized child care clients to DSS to better utilize those funds and developed an enhancement program to provide additional funds to subsidized child care providers caring for infants and one-year-olds. In the first 6 months, \$167,700 has been provided for an average of 93 children per month. Providers report that</p>

enhancement funding has allowed them to improve the classroom environments for infants and one-year-olds by purchasing needed supplies and equipment and to pay bills that continue to rise due to inflation without having to shift the burden onto families.

Next Steps:

1. Determine priority areas for additional enhancements and seek funding to implement through Smart Start's existing system.
 - a. Lead: Ashley Lamb, Smart Start Subsidy Program Coordinator

Financial Investment: Current investment is \$30,000 per month. Additional investment depends upon populations included and level of enhancement.

Expand Workforce Compensation Efforts

- [Three salary supplement programs](#) exist that Henderson County early educators can access:
 - a. Smart Start funds WAGE\$ at ~\$90,000 per year providing education-based supplements to qualified early educators.
 - b. AWARD\$ is available for infant-toddler teachers through funding from DCDEE.
 - c. CFRC provides supplements for early educators ineligible for other programs through funding from Dogwood Health Trust.
- WNCSource has requested changes of scope to increase EHS, HS, and NCPK teacher pay and is close to parity with K-12 pay for NCPK teachers.

Next Steps

- Next Meeting Date:
- Subcommittee Dates:
- Marketing: TBD
- Pre-K:

Lead Partners

Smart Start Partnership for Children, Children & Family Resource Center, Community Foundation of Henderson County, WNC Source

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